

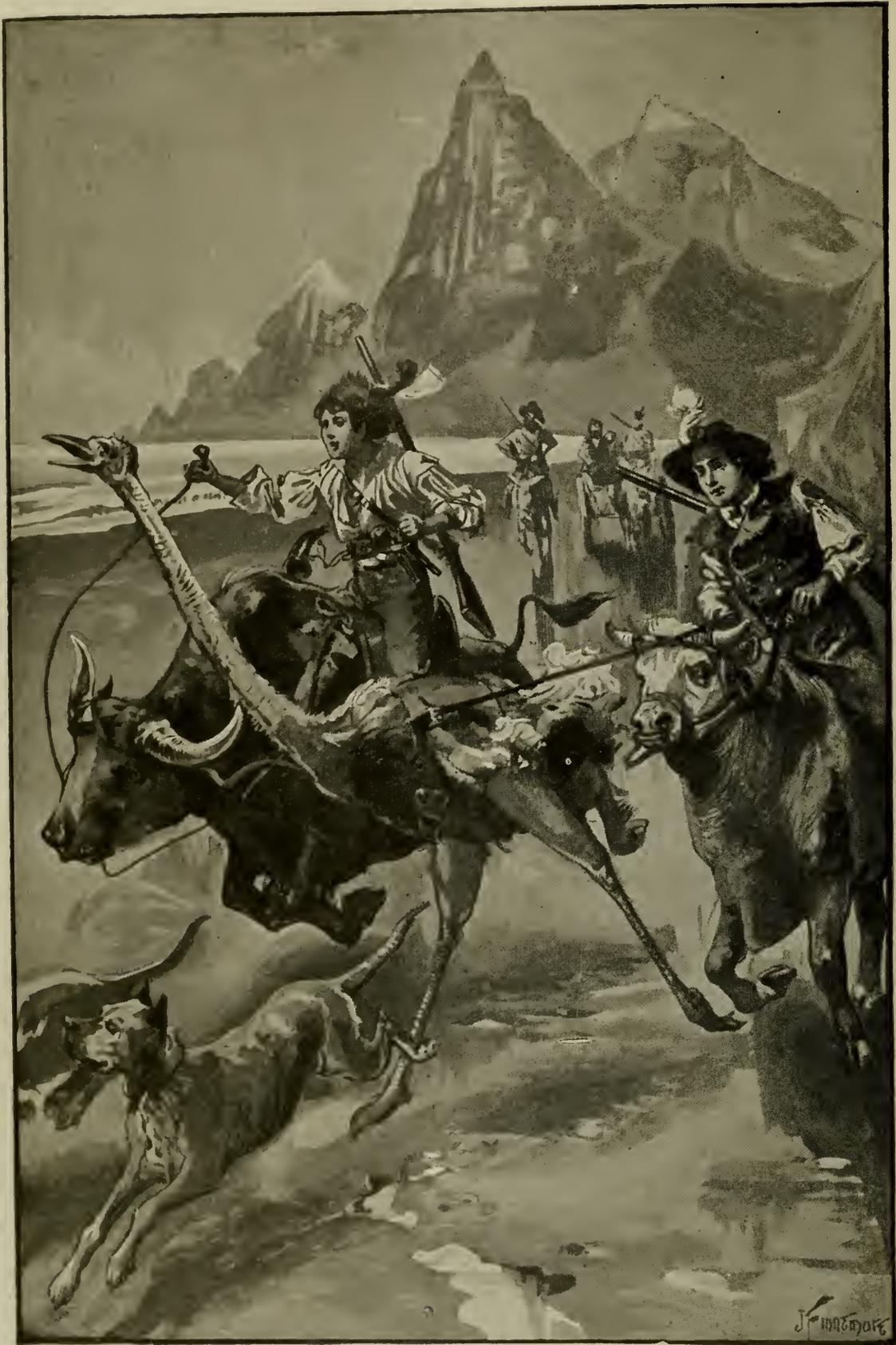
THE SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON



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THE CAPTURED OSTRICH.

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Journal
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THE
SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON,

A NEW VERSION

BY

E. A. BRAYLEY HODGETTS

WITH 100 ILLUSTRATIONS BY J. FINNEMORE



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PREFACE.

ROBINSON Crusoe is now justly ranked among the seven greatest masterpieces in literature, while the *Swiss Family Robinson*, a book equally masterly in style and vigor, and with a greater moral and educating purpose, still awaits the same recognition from the American reading public.

The woeful destruction of our birds has caused the organization of Audubon societies all over the country; this has led to a study of the habits of the feathered songsters, and from that has risen a new interest in all branches of natural history; and the greatest and best work for popular reading on that subject is the charmingly told story of the *Swiss Family Robinson* that was written by the Swiss pastor (J. D. Wyss) to teach his own family natural history in pleasant stages. Though this is his most famous, it was not his only work. He wrote a history of Switzerland, in verse, a handbook of natural history, another of universal history, and a number of hunting songs, for he was very fond of the chase, in which his sons used to accompany him. On these expeditions he camped out and lived as far as possible the life he described. The rare animals he shot he used to stuff on his return home. His boys' childhood was brightened by the number of toys which the good clergyman made for them, fortresses, harbors, farms, men-of-war, shops, etc. In the construction of these he showed great skill, accuracy and ingenuity. In 1781 he was made Archdeacon. He lost his second wife, and in 1792 he married a third, who helped to tend the wounded during the wars of the French revolution. At this period the natural benevolence of his character stood out in strong relief, and it was mainly due to his instigation that the town of Bern made for itself so noble a name at

this time of trial. With the funds placed at his disposal he was enabled to do an incalculable amount of good. Pastor Wyss lost his third wife in 1800. He now purchased an estate at König and spent the rest of his days in retirement. We have in the *Swiss Family Robinson* real people, not imaginary ones, for the Fred, Ernest, Jack, and Frank with whom we are acquainted are his four surviving sons. The mother was also a portrait. The book was not published until 1818, when it was edited by his son, Prof. John Rudolph Wyss, also a brilliant man.

What a great American colonist such a man would have become ! and so like the American is the character of the liberty-loving Swiss that we could not rest contented with the French translation of this wonderful work, but have presented to you our American translation, making this version as terse and vigorous as possible, for only as such would it appeal to the practical American reader.

The rude cuts in the first editions were acceptable to the readers of the beginning of the century, but the advancement in the art of illustration has made it necessary for us to employ the best artist versed in the habits of animals to give us the most correct and finished productions known in the latest half-tone process. We trust this edition will prove of lasting popularity for several generations to come, for the vigorous vitality of Robinson Crusoe will always appeal to the manly American boy, who is himself a descendant of colonists. At the same time there can be little doubt that the *Swiss Family Robinson*, written by that gentle, refined and high-minded pastor, has provided a work, the perusal of which will more than compensate one for the harsher portraits of character in the older English work.

Trusting that our efforts to interest and please may extend to you, your children and your grandchildren,

I am yours sincerely,

E. A. BRAYLEY HODGETTS.

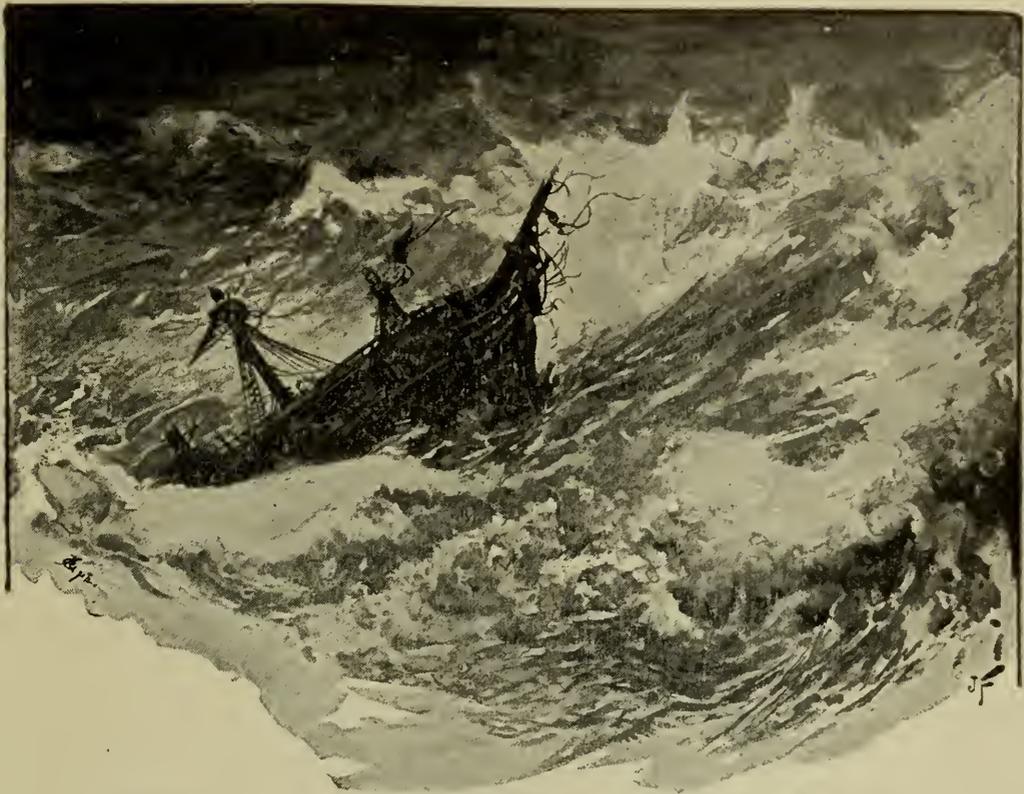


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"The storm . . . seemed to rage, if possible, more dreadfully than before."

THE SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON.

CHAPTER I.

THE SHIPWRECK.

FOR six terrible days the storm had continued, and on the seventh, instead of allaying its fury, it seemed to rage, if possible, more dreadfully than before. We had been driven so far south-east from our course that nobody knew where we were. All were disheartened and exhausted by weeks of hard work. The masts were partly disabled, we had sprung a leak, and the water in the hold was rapidly rising. The usually swearing sailors were groaning out prayers and making ridiculous vows. Everybody was alternately commending his soul to God and devising fresh means of saving his body.

"Children!" I said to my four terrified and weeping boys, "if it pleases God to save us He will certainly do so; but if we are to die we must be resigned. We shall meet in heaven!"

My good wife wiped the tears from her eyes, grew calmer, and lovingly comforted the children, who nestled close to her. But my heart was nearly breaking with grief. At last the poor things, hustled together, fell on their knees and began to pray. I was much moved to hear, amidst the fury of the roaring tempest, the sound of their trusting childish voices. Frederick begged aloud that God might save his dear parents and brothers, and seemed regardless of himself. All appeared for a time to forget their imminent peril. Even children can thus find strength in prayer.

All at once, through the rumbling of the crashing waves, I heard a voice shouting, "Land! land!" but at the same instant the vessel gave a violent lurch, and we were thrown off our feet, thinking that all was over. A fearful thump followed, and the rushing of the waters, which now broke in on all sides, proved that we had run ashore, and that the ship's bottom had been stove in.

The captain's voice now plaintively exclaimed, "We are lost! The boats are out!" I felt a pang at my heart as I heard the sobbing of the children, and cried, "Lost!" But I pulled myself together, and said, "Keep up your courage! Land is in sight, and we are standing dry. I will go and see what is to be done."

With these words I went on deck. A wave struck me, knocked me down, and wetted me to the skin. Battling with the elements, I managed to regain my feet. When I was able to look round I discovered, to my dismay, that the boats, filled with people, were putting off. As the last sailor jumped off the ship's side and let go the painter, I cried out, and implored and entreated him to take me and my dear ones with him. But my voice was drowned by the howling of the storm, and in that sea the fugitives could not possibly have returned for me. I gathered some consolation, however, from discovering that the water, although it had already completely covered a part of the ship, could not penetrate aft, where my beloved ones occupied a cabin, because her stern was jammed up between two cliffs, and was thus kept high and dry. At the same time I was able every now and then, between the clouds and the rain, to get glimpses of land. Bare and bleak as it looked, it was nevertheless the object of my hopes in this hour of need. The disappearance of all prospect of human help depressed me still, and I sadly went below to the cabin, though I strove to look calm.

"Take courage, children," I exclaimed on entering; "it is not all over with us yet! The ship is stuck fast on a rock, but our cabin is high above the water, and if the wind and sea are calmer to-morrow, we may get ashore all right!"

This news had a great effect on the youngsters, who, after the

manner of their kind, at once took the remote probability for a certainty, and rejoiced that the horrible rolling of the ship, which had so often pitched them about the cabin, had now come to an end. My wife, however, understood me better, and plainly discovered the fears I tried to hide. She at once comprehended, from a sign I had hurriedly made to her, that we were alone and forsaken. But her firm trust in God did not leave her, and this revived my spirits.

“Let us have something to eat,” she said, “and we shall feel stronger in mind and body for it. Perhaps we may have a hard night before us.”

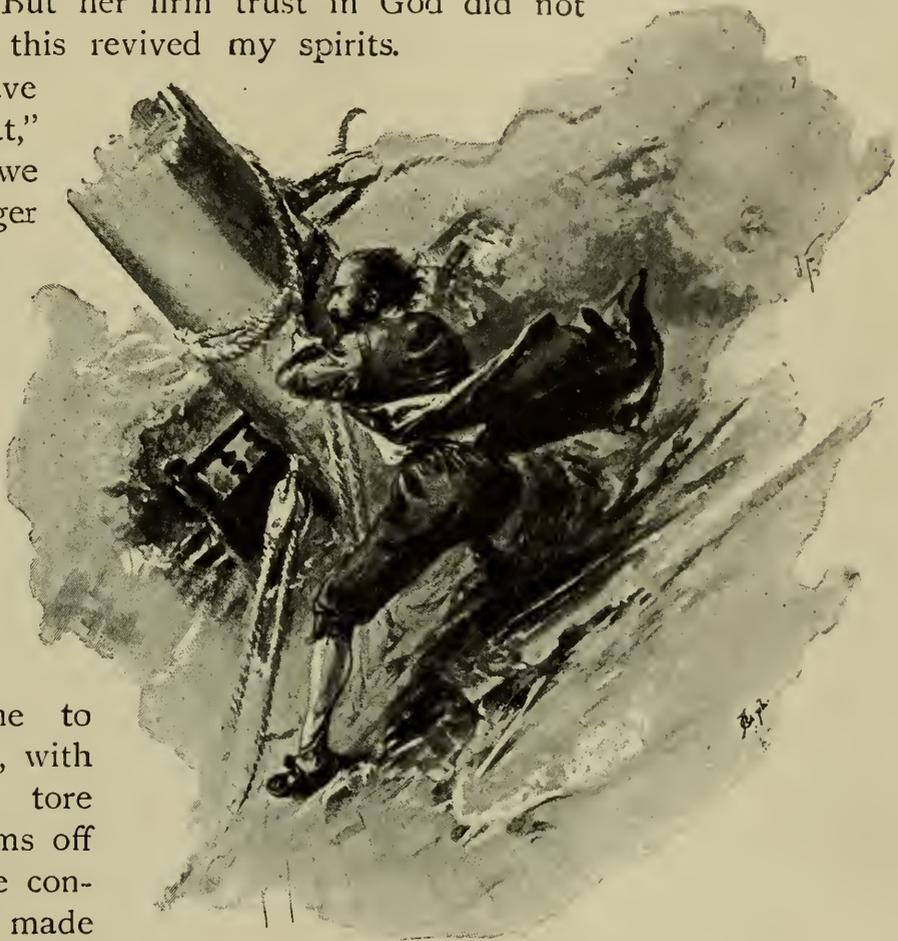
It was indeed already growing late, the storm was still raging, and from time to time the waves, with hideous fury, tore boards and beams off the wreck. The continued quaking made me fear lest at any moment the entire vessel would be broken to pieces.

“Oh dear!” cried my youngest boy. “Won’t God make haste to deliver us?”

“You donkey!” said Frederick, the eldest. “Don’t you know that we have no right to tell God what to do, but must patiently wait for His help?”

“Well said!” I exclaimed; “but you should not call your brother names. You are always too hasty with your brothers, however good you may be at heart.”

In the meantime their mother had prepared some food for us, and the young ones made a hearty meal, while we, their parents, had to force ourselves to eat. The younger boys then stretched themselves on their berths, and were soon fast asleep. But Fred,



“I managed to regain my feet.”

who seemed to be more sensible of our dangers than the others, showed a disposition to watch with us.

“Father,” he said, “I have been thinking how we are to save ourselves. If we only had some life-belts for mother and my brothers, we could all swim ashore—you and I could manage by ourselves.”

“That is a good idea,” I replied; “and in case of need, let us make preparations for the night.”

We found in the cabin a few empty casks and tin water-bottles, which were large enough to support a human body. We fastened them together, two and two at a time, by means of handkerchiefs of about a foot in length. These roughly constructed life-belts we fastened under the arms of each of the boys, and mother provided herself with one as well. Finally we equipped ourselves with knives, string, matches, and other necessaries, and thus armed awaited the final break up of the wreck, hoping to be able, partly by paddling and partly by swimming, and supplied with a few indispensable requisites, to reach the shore.

Fred, exhausted by his labours, threw himself down, and was soon fast asleep. Mother and I, however, stood apprehensively, keeping watch, and listening to the beating of the waves. Thus, in prayer and sorrow, and in the exchange of advice, we passed the most dreadful night of our lives, and we returned thanks to God when at last the day began to break.

The wind now abated its violence, the sky cleared up, and I perceived with joy the horizon red with a glorious dawn. With a light heart and in a cheerful voice I called my wife and children on deck. Great was the surprise of the youngsters to find we were alone.

“Where are the people?” they cried. “Why did they not take us with them? How are we to go on? How shall we find out where we are?”

“My dear children,” I answered, “He who has helped us thus far will not desert us if we do not despair. Our companions, in whose help and kindness we confided, have heartlessly left us in the hour of danger. God alone has not withdrawn His mercy from us! But now, turn to, and work. We must work hard if we wish to be saved; and every one must do his share, to the best of his ability, with cheerfulness and alacrity. Let us consider what is best to be done.”

Fred proposed, now that the sea was calm, to swim ashore. But Ernest said: “It is all very fine for you to talk; but what shall we do, who can’t swim? It is much better to make a raft, and let that carry us over.”

“Well,” I remarked, “that would be capital if we were sure of

being strong enough for such work, and if a raft were a safe conveyance. Think of something else."

At these words the boys ran off in different directions to explore the vessel, and see whether they could find anything that might be of use to us. I betook myself in the first instance to the place where the provisions and water were stored, so as to secure the main necessaries of life. My wife and the youngest went off to look after the cattle on board, which were in a deplorable state, half starved and famished. Fred ran to the armoury and magazine, Ernest to the quarters of the ship's carpenter, and Jack to the captain's cabin. But



"He rolled down on the deck and screamed for his life."

this little fellow had scarcely opened the cabin door, when two formidable mastiffs joyfully jumped at him, and welcomed him in their clumsy though friendly manner so roughly that he rolled down on the deck and screamed for his life. The poor beasts were so tame with hunger that they kept whining with pleasure, and licked him all over, while he was trying to beat them off.

Hearing his screams I ran to his assistance. Upon my approach he jumped to his feet, and, seizing one of the dogs by the ears, began pulling them violently.

"Leave off!" I said warningly. "It is quite right not to be afraid, but you should always be careful with big dogs like that. Their

savage nature may unexpectedly break out, and they may then do you an injury."

Gradually I got all my family round me, and every one had brought what he regarded of most use to us in our position. Fred had lugged up two fowling-pieces, with powder and shot, partly in horns, partly in bottles and bags. Ernest had a hat full of nails, an axe, and a hammer, beside pinchers, chisel and awls, which were peeping out of his pockets. Even little Frank carried a fairly large box, out of which he began unpacking a lot of "sharp-pointed little hooks," as he called them.

"The smallest of you would seem to have found the most important of all," I said. "This is often the way in the world. These little hooks are fish-hooks, and perhaps of more service to us for the support of life at present than anything you could find on board. But Fred and Ernest have not done badly either."

"And I," said mother, "bring only good tidings, although I hope they will be equally welcome. I can tell you that there still are left alive a cow, a donkey, two goats, six sheep, one ram, and a portly pig, and that we have given them food and drink in time to keep them from dying."

"All your gifts and arrangements are excellent," I said at last; "except that Master Jack, instead of thinking of something useful, has brought two terrible gluttons, who may easily do us more harm than good."

"Oh!" said Jack, "when we get on shore, they will come with us when we go shooting, and will be very useful."

"Very likely; but how are we going to get there?" I asked.

But Jack was not to be discomfited.

"Why should not we get hold of some big tubs and paddle ashore? I have often paddled about in god-papa's pond in that way; it's great fun."

"Good advice is accepted gratefully, even out of the mouths of children. Quick, boys! nails, a saw, and awls! We will go below and see what can be done."

My wife and the boys, all excepting Jack, soon followed me with tools, and we fished out four long and empty tubs, which were floating about in the hold. We joyfully rolled them up to the lower deck, which was only just above water, and were delighted to find that they were still serviceable, and made of excellent wood, and secured with iron hoops. Starting at the bung, we now commenced to saw them through the middle. This was hard work and took time, but was at last accomplished. After that we refreshed ourselves with wine and biscuits, which we had found in a couple of casks. Before

my delighted gaze there now stood eight tubs in a row, but I was astonished to find my wife looking at them despondently.

"I shall never trust myself in those things," she said.

"Not so quick, mother dear," I answered; "my work is not finished, and in any case it will turn out more comfortable than this wreck, which is stuck fast up here."

I now found two long and flexible boards, and placed my tubs on them, bending up the ends. Then I nailed the tubs firmly to the boards, and each to the other. Then I applied a similar board along each side, the ends of which projected. I attached a solid crosspiece of wood to each end, which kept up the bottom boards, which I bent upwards, and rested on the projecting ends of the lateral boards. Everything was firmly secured, and the projecting ends of the lateral boards nailed together to a point; and thus a vessel was constructed which, in a smooth sea, and for a short distance, bade fair to answer every reasonable purpose. Unfortunately I found my wonderful craft when completed so heavy and unwieldy that we were unable, notwithstanding our united efforts, to move it an inch from its place. I enquired for a windlass, and Fred, who had noticed one, dragged it up. With my saw I cut up a few spars, and then, by means of the windlass, lifted the nose of my craft, while Fred arranged the rollers, into which I had cut the spars, under it.

"Is it not wonderful," said Ernest, "that this clumsy thing enables us to do work which we, with all our strength, are unable to perform by ourselves? I wonder what is inside it?"

I was glad to explain, as well as I could, how the windlass was constructed, and promised to take it to pieces for him on some future occasion. For it was part of my method of educating the boys not to explain anything to them unless their curiosity was awakened. Nevertheless I usually stimulated this curiosity by some striking circumstance. I concluded my description of the windlass with the general observation that the natural weakness of man was greatly reinforced by reason and invention, and that human thought had constructed a regular science called mechanics, by which we had learned partly to save, and partly to increase to an almost incredible degree, our natural powers.

Jack objected that the windlass was, nevertheless, miserably slow in its action.

"Better slow than not at all," I answered. "Observation has shown, and it is a principle of mechanics, that every machine loses in power in proportion as it gains in velocity, and that in the same way it gains in power in proportion as it loses in velocity. The windlass is not intended to help us to work rapidly, but to lift

heavy weights, and the heavier the weights the slower the action. But do you know how to overcome this slowness, my boy?"

"Oh, yes!" the little fellow replied: "by turning the winch more rapidly."

"That would not be worth the trouble," I rejoined. "But by patience and sense: with the aid of these two charms I hope soon to get our craft to sea."

Hereupon I fastened a long rope to the stern of my craft, and attached the other end of it to a fixed beam, but so as to let it hang loose on the deck. Thus, with the help of another roller, my craft was at last put to sea by dint of shoving and winding, and ran off so rapidly that it was only thanks to the rope which I had ingeniously fastened to it that it was prevented from running out several feet away from us. It had, however, so strong a list to one side that none of the boys cared to jump into it. Indeed, there would have been some danger in trusting oneself to it, and I anxiously exercised my mind until a remedy suddenly occurred to me. I seized all the heavy objects I could lay my hands to, and threw them as ballast into the tubs; whereupon the little boat gradually righted itself, until it lay perfectly even on the water, inviting us to get in, so that the boys quickly boarded, and noisily played their pranks in, it.

However, I saw that even now a trip in her would be risky, for at the least motion the boat might be easily capsized. To remedy this disadvantage I bethought myself of the outriggers with which savages keep their craft from upsetting. Once more I set to work. Two spars of equal length were fastened fore and aft by means of wooden pegs, and in such a manner as to revolve on them, so as to enable us to sail out of the hold in which my craft was still lying at anchor. To each end of these spars an empty brandy cask was fitted by means of the bung, and made water-tight. I now felt assured that if I turned my spars straight across the boat, the casks would prevent it from listing.

The children watched me attentively.

"That is a most dodgy arrangement," said Jack.

"Yes," cried Fred, who was stopping up the bunghole of one of the casks, in obedience to my instructions. "How did you hit upon the idea, father?"

"This will prove to you," I said, "how useful it is to read instructive books in one's idle hours. What we have just accomplished is an imitation of an appliance which the Polynesians fit to their boats in order to prevent them from capsizing. In one respect I have departed from my model, inasmuch as I have attached the outriggers to both sides of the boat. The Polynesians have the

appliance attached to only one side of their boats, and to a floating beam of corresponding length, which, by reason of its floating, prevents the boat from capsizing in its own direction, and by its weight keeps it from turning over on the other. Our poor craft, on account of its fragility, must be supported on both sides, you see, and this is best effected by means of two floating bodies filled with air."

"Besides," Fred added, "we have not the right sort of wood on board which is wanted for such an appliance."

"You are quite right," I said; "and our tub-boat will, after all, render us quite as valuable services as the catamarans do the Polynesians."

"What is the thing called?" cried Jack, with glee; even Frank burst out laughing. "Catamaran! That is jolly! So we have carpentered together a thing with an outlandish name like that. I will always call it 'Catamaran' now!"

Nothing now remained for us to do but to take counsel on the best means of getting out of the hold of our wreck into the open sea. I jumped into the tub-boat and put her nose against the breach in the ship's side, which was to serve as a gateway. Then I commenced to saw and chop away at the projecting planks, and to clear away sufficient space for a free passage. When this was accomplished we had next to provide paddles for the morning's journey.

It had grown late, and as there was no chance of reaching the shore that evening, we were compelled to spend the night, however reluctantly, on board the wreck. We therefore sat down to a regular meal, for during the day we had been too intent on our work to do more than take an occasional bite of a piece of bread or a drink of wine.

Much less distressed in mind than on the previous night, we retired to rest, taking, however, the precaution of fastening improvised life-belts to the boys' bodies, so that in the event of the vessel being completely broken up by a fresh storm, a means of rescue might be at hand. I advised my wife to put on a suit of sailor's clothes, as I had done, because man's attire was much more convenient for swimming as well as for walking in.

With some difficulty she at last consented, and went off to find a suit that would fit her. A quarter of an hour later she returned in a most charming sailor's costume, which she had found in the chest of a young midshipman who had joined the vessel as a volunteer. Shyly she advanced in her new dress. But I commended her choice so heartily, and promised her such advantages from it,

that she climbed comforted into her hammock, and fell, like the rest of us, into a beneficial slumber after the fatiguing labours.

With the break of day we were all awake and stirring, for hope, like grief, does not give time for much sleep. As soon as we had taken some food, we recommenced work.

"First give the poor animals food and drink," I said, "and give them sufficient provisions to last a few days. Perhaps we may be able to fetch them, if we succeed in saving ourselves. When you are ready, collect the most necessary things for us to take."

I intended the first cargo of our boat to consist of a cask of gunpowder, three fowling-pieces, three powder-horns, with ammunition, as much as I could get together, and two pairs of holster pistols. To this was added, for each boy and their mother, a well provided hunting wallet, of which we borrowed a few from those which the ship's officers had left behind. Further, I took a case of meat-tablets, and another of the best biscuits, besides an iron cooking-pot, a fishing-rod, and a stick, a barrel of nails, and hammers, pincers, saws, axes, awls, and some sail-cloth to make a tent of. We got so much together that we had to leave a good deal behind, although I exchanged all useless ballast against necessary articles.

We now prepared to embark, when we unexpectedly heard the whining of the dogs, whom we had forgotten, and who seemed to be sadly bidding us farewell; and so I proposed to take them with us, together with all the geese, ducks and doves on board.

"For," said I, "if we should not be able to feed them, they may serve to feed us."

My advice was followed. Ten hens, with an old and a young rooster, were put into one of the tubs, and quickly secured with wooden rails. The other fowls were let loose, and found their way on shore of themselves.

We waited for my wife, who arranged all this, and finally she appeared, carrying a large sack in her arms.

"That," she said, "is my contribution," and threw it into one of the tubs where our youngest was, who promptly sat down on it, for which purpose I assumed she had brought it.

My wife took up her position in the foremost tub, a hearty, pious and sensible spouse and mother. In the second, just in front of her, sat Frank, a child of good capabilities, but with a vacillating will; he was not quite ten years of age. In the third stood Fred, a hot-headed, good-tempered, curly-headed fellow of sixteen. In the fourth was the powder-barrel, with the fowls and the sail-cloth. In the fifth were our provisions. In the sixth was Jack, a careless, amiable and enterprising little lad of twelve. In the seventh Ernest, a sensible,

but rather self-indulgent and lazy youth of fourteen. Into the eighth tub I got myself, with the tenderest of paternal hearts, and entrusted with the important task of using the rudder-paddle for the safety of my dear family. Every one of us had some useful articles beside him, and held a paddle in his hand ; in front of each lay a life-belt, which he was to don the moment an accident occurred, and every one had received instructions how to use it.

CHAPTER II.

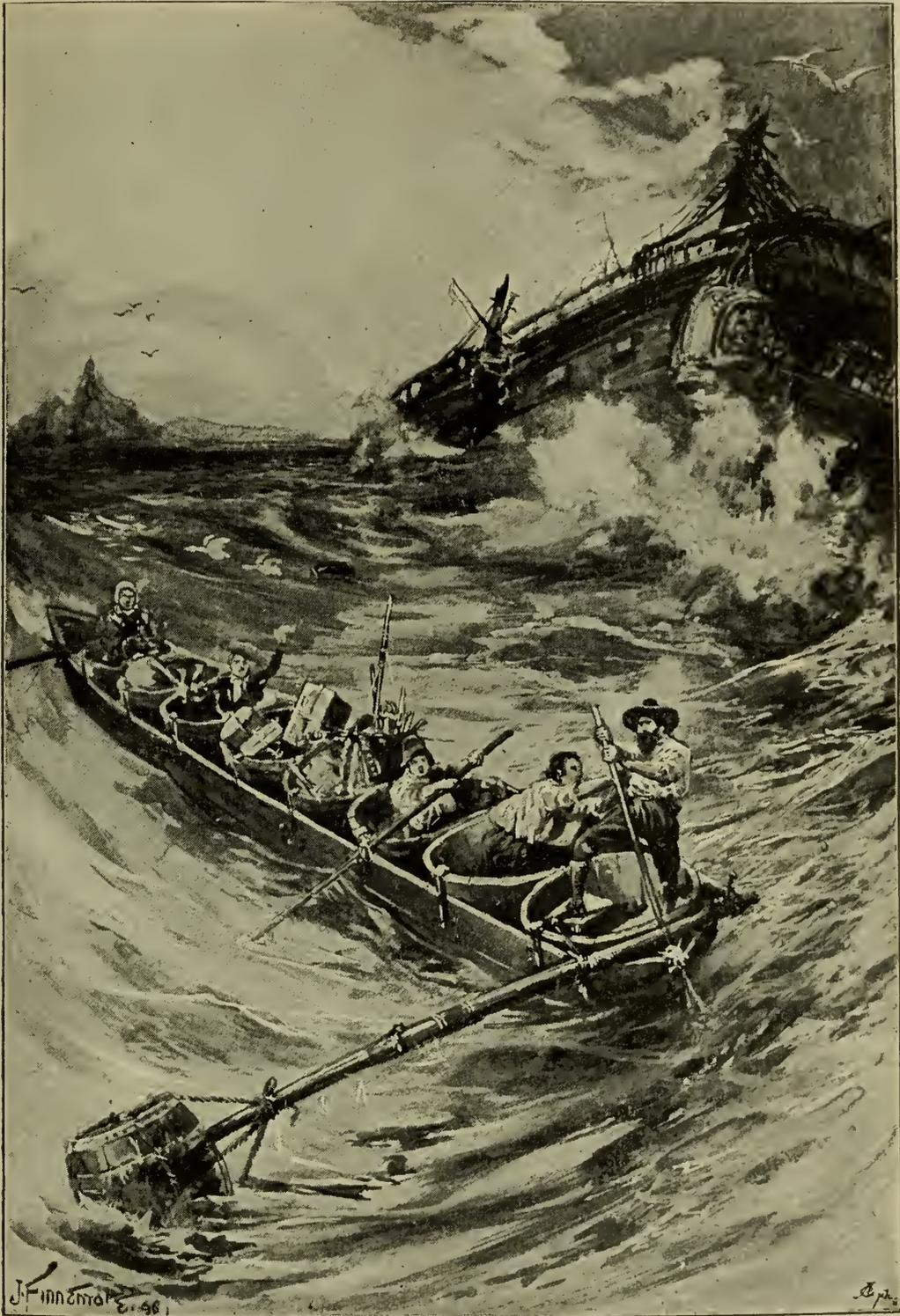
LANDING.

THE tide was at mid-flood as we shoved off from the wreck, and I had calculated on its aiding our indifferent rowing powers. We succeeded in getting safely through the breach in the wreck out to sea. The children devoured with their eyes the rocky coast, upon which Fred could already descry trees and even palms. Ernest was delighted at this, and looked forward to eating cocoanuts, which were larger and better than walnuts. It took some time to get any way on the boat, but we cheerfully paddled on.

When the two dogs on board the wreck saw us slowly moving off, they jumped into the water and soon overtook us. They were too large for our craft, for Turk was an English mastiff and Bill a Danish one. I took compassion on the poor brutes, and was much afraid that they would not be able to keep up with us. But they were intelligent, and laid their fore-paws on the outriggers, and this was a great help to them. Jack was at first for throwing them off, but I pointed out to him that the brutes might prove useful, both as a protection and for hunting.

Our journey continued slowly and uneventfully ; but as we got nearer to the shore the prospect grew melancholy, for the bare rocks seemed to prophesy starvation for us. The sea was calm, the sky bright, and we were surrounded by floating boards, bales and cases from the wreck. Hoping they might contain food, I steered up to a couple of casks, and told Fred to be ready with rope, hammer and nails. We succeeded in securing them, and we towed them after us towards the shore.

As we drew nearer to the land it gradually lost its wild appearance. I could now plainly see the noble palms of which Fred had spoken. I loudly lamented leaving the captain's telescope behind me, when Jack produced a small spy-glass from his pocket, delighted at being able to supply my wants. I was now able to make the necessary



"WE SHOVED OFF FROM THE WRECK."

observations, and direct our course accordingly. I noticed that though the shore in front of us looked bare and desolate, that to our left bore a less forbidding aspect. But as I tried to make for this more hospitable shore, we were driven back towards the rocky coast by a strong current, and we soon descried a small channel, in which our geese and ducks were swimming before us. These acted as our guides. Close by a fine spring was rushing noisily out of the rocks, over stones and pebbles, into the sea, presenting an imposing picture which we stopped to admire. The channel led to a little cove, where the water was remarkably calm, and neither too deep nor too shallow for our craft. Very carefully I guided the boat to a spot where the banks reached the height of our tubs and the water was yet deep enough to keep us afloat. It was a small, sloping plain in the shape of a triangle, the apex of which ascended between two rocks, while the base extended along the banks.

All who could jumped nimbly on shore ; even little Frank tried to climb out of his tub, in which he had lain like a pickled herring. In spite of his efforts he failed, and his mother had to give him a hand. The dogs, who had reached the land a little before us, received us, yelping and jumping with joy ; the geese cackled incessantly ; the ducks blew their trumpet notes through their waxy noses. But a few curious strangers, who soon bolted at our approach, greeted us with discordant noises.

“ Look, father, what wonderful birds ! ” cried the children. “ Look at those long-legged, bright red fellows, and see those other stupid ones on the beach standing erect and stiff. What curious rags they have hanging at their sides, like sleeves without arms in them ! Hulloo ! they are gone—they have dived.”

“ Those are penguins,” I explained. “ They are indeed strange fellows—water-fowl, as you have seen. The rags at their sides are their wings, if they can be called so ; they are useless for flying, and have only very short feathers. The pretty red birds are flamingoes ; they also are water-fowl, and, I have been told, very good to eat. They are therefore very welcome in this desolate and deserted region.”

No sooner had we safely landed than we all involuntarily sank on our knees to thank the gracious and almighty Saviour of our lives for His protection. Then we proceeded rapidly to unpack our cargo ; and oh, how rich we thought ourselves when we contemplated what we had saved ! The fowls were given their liberty until further notice, because we had no place to put them in. Then we selected a suitable spot for the pitching of our tent. As we had sail-cloths and poles, this did not take long. The coping-pole was rammed into a rock, and

supported upon a spar which we planted into the ground ; over this we spread the sail-cloth, which was extended at each side and fastened to the ground by means of pegs. For greater security we put our provision chest and the heavier tools upon the lower edges, and attached strings to the overhanging ends, so as to close the entrance at night.

I now told the boys to collect as much moss and grass as they could, and dry it in the sun, so that we need not sleep on the hard ground. In the meantime I arranged a small fireplace, with the aid of some stones, and at a short distance from the tent. We got a few dried branches together, and presently had kindled a splendid fire. We filled the iron pot with water, and put a few meat lozenges in it, placed this over the fire, and solemnly entrusted mother, for whom Frank acted as a kitchen-boy, with the preparation of our meal. Frank wanted to know what father was going to do with the glue which was getting ready ; but it was explained to him that this was intended for soup.

“ Yes,” he cried, “ but where shall we get meat ? There are neither butchers nor markets here.”

“ What you took for glue, my boy,” mother replied, “ are tablets of meat, or, to speak more correctly, is gelatine boiled down and hardened and prepared from good meat for the purpose of being taken to sea.”

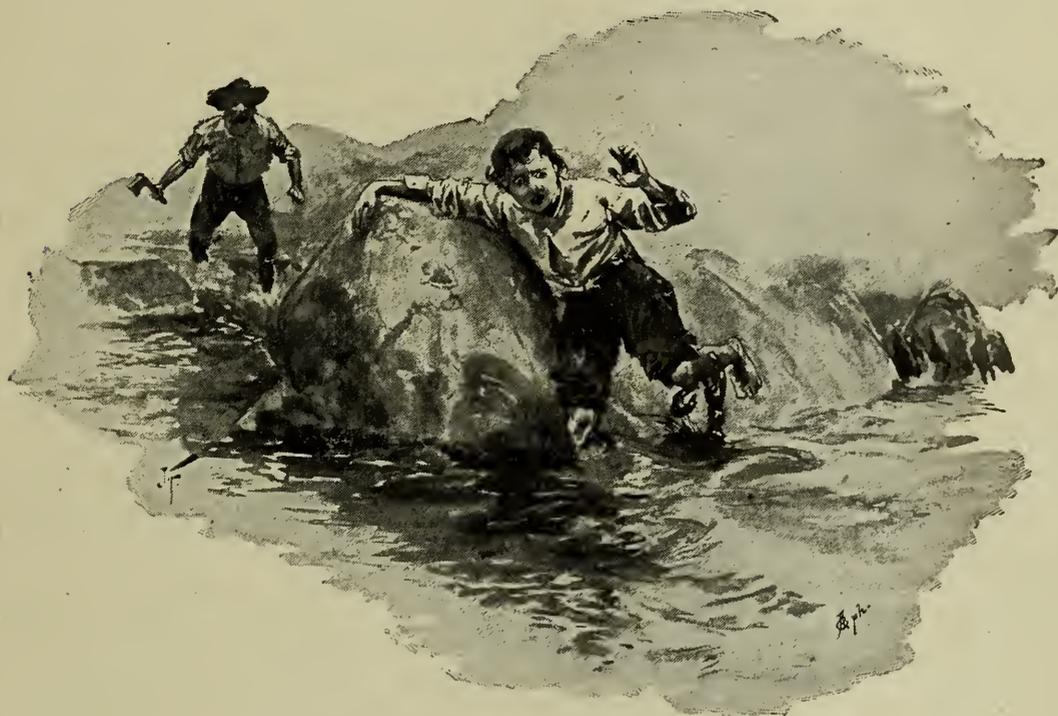
Meanwhile Fred had loaded our guns and marched off to the spring with his own. Ernest, remarking that a bleak coast was not attractive, slunk off to the right towards the sea ; while Jack went off to the left to look for shells among the rocks. For myself, I tried to land the casks which we had picked up at sea ; but I soon discovered that our landing-place, however convenient for our boat, did not slope sufficiently to enable me to draw them up. While I was looking round for a more favourable spot, I heard a piercing scream from Jack. Seizing my axe, I rushed to his assistance, and found him in a shallow place, standing up to his knees in water, while a huge lobster had seized him by the leg. The little fellow was kicking violently, and vainly trying to get free. I jumped into the water, but as soon as the uninvited guest saw me coming to the rescue, he tried to retire backwards and get away. But I took a different view of his little joke, and seized the animal carefully round the body, from behind ; and thus I carried it to land, while Jack expressed his relief in shouts of triumph. Anxious to offer his big catch to his mother himself, Jack seized it hastily ; but he had scarcely taken it into his hands before he received so severe a blow from the animal's tail that he let it drop. I could not help

bursting out laughing as I saw the tears in his eyes. This irritated Jack, who picked up a big stone and smashed in the head of the crustacean.

"That," I said, "was acting tyrannically. Revenge is wrong. But you should have been more careful, and not have held him so confidingly by the nose."

But the boy once more picked up the now lifeless animal and carried it joyfully to his mother.

"Mother!" he cried, "a lobster! Ernest! a lobster! Where is Fred? Look here, Fred; he will bite you?" They all got round him and admired the animal, which was of exceptional size. Ernest



"A huge lobster had seized him by the leg."

gave his opinion that the lobster should be boiled, and would taste capitally if it were immediately thrown into the beef tea. But mother was less keen about it, and determined to leave the soup as it was. I went off to the shallow spot where Jack had been bitten, and used it to land my casks, which I rolled up on the beach and then stood up on end, so that they could not slip back.

When I returned I praised Jack for making the first happy discovery, and promised him the entire claw of the lobster, which had held him by the calf, as a reward.

"I have also seen something eatable," said Ernest; "but I could not bring it, because it was lying in the water, and I should have wetted myself in getting it."

"Was it worth the trouble?" said Jack. "I saw them also; they were horrible shells, which I at least would not care to eat. I would sooner have a lobster."

"But perhaps they were oysters," said Ernest; "although they were scarcely lying deep enough."

"Well, Master Slothful," I said, "if you have noted where they were, you may go and bring us a sample, as we want them for our next meal. In our bad circumstances, everybody must do something for the common good, and wet feet are of no consequence. See how the sun has already dried me and Jack!"

"Then I will bring salt as well," Ernest replied, "of which I noticed handfuls in the rocks. It must have been extracted from the sea water by the sun. It tasted very salt."

"Yes, Philosopher," I said reproachfully, "it would have been better to have taken a sack with you than to jaw about it. If you do not want to eat unseasoned soup, rush off, and bring us some of your discovery at once."

It certainly was salt which Ernest brought; but it was dirty, and mixed with sand and earth, so that I had very nearly thrown it away, and scolded the boy for not being more careful in gathering it. But mother put the salt in a water-bottle with some fresh water, dissolved it, and then, after filtering it through a cloth, poured it into the soup.

"Could we not have taken sea water at once?" Jack inquired.

"Oh, that is too bitter! It made me sick when I tasted it," said Ernest.

I stated that it had a tarry and very disagreeable ingredient, which was lost when the salt was separated from it. While I was speaking, mother tasted the soup with a short stick which she had used to stir it up with, and pronounced it excellent.

"But we must wait for Fred. Besides, how are we to eat it? We cannot possibly put the big hot pot to our lips, nor fish out the biscuits with our hands."

We were baffled, and stood there, like the fox in the fable, when the stork, who had invited him to dinner, offered him a long-necked bottle. At last we could not help laughing at our straits.

"If we only had some cocoanut shells we could use them as ladles," said Ernest.

"Yes," I replied, "but while we are wishing, we might as well wish for a complete service of plate. What is the use of vain wishes? 'If' and 'And' were brothers, but they had no possessions."

"Oh," said Ernest, "then we can use sea shells!"

"Capital," I said; "that is a brilliant idea! Go and fetch the

oysters. But we must not be dainty, for we shall have to dip our fingers in the soup; the shells have no handles."

Jack ran off; Ernest proceeded slowly. Jack stood up to his ankles in water before the other joined him. He eagerly collected the oysters, and threw them in handfuls to Ernest, who was still afraid of wetting his feet. Ernest put a big empty shell in his pocket besides, and at last they both returned with their handkerchiefs full of oysters. Just then we heard Fred's voice calling to us in the distance, and we gaily replied. He returned, holding one hand behind his back and looking blank.

"I have caught nothing," he said.

"Nothing?" I asked.

"No, nothing at all," he replied sadly.

But the boys surrounded him, and began to shout joyfully: "A little pig, a little pig! Where did you get it? Where did you shoot it? Let us look at it and see!"

With pride and pleasure he now produced his prey.

"You have caught something after all, then, and told us a falsehood," I said sternly. "That you should never do, not even in fun."

Fred penitently told us that he had been beyond the spring.

"How many casks, how many cases, logs of wood and things lie there!" he exclaimed. "Shall we go and recover them? And shan't we go back to the wreck to-morrow and see what we can rescue there? Can't we fetch the animals, or, at least, the cow? Biscuit steeped in milk would at least be less hard. Yonder there is grass for pasture, and a wood where we could enjoy the shade. Why do we remain here on this blank coast?"

"Patience, patience!" I answered. "All in good time, Fred. To-morrow is another day, and will bring its troubles in its train. First tell me, have you seen no trace of our companions?"

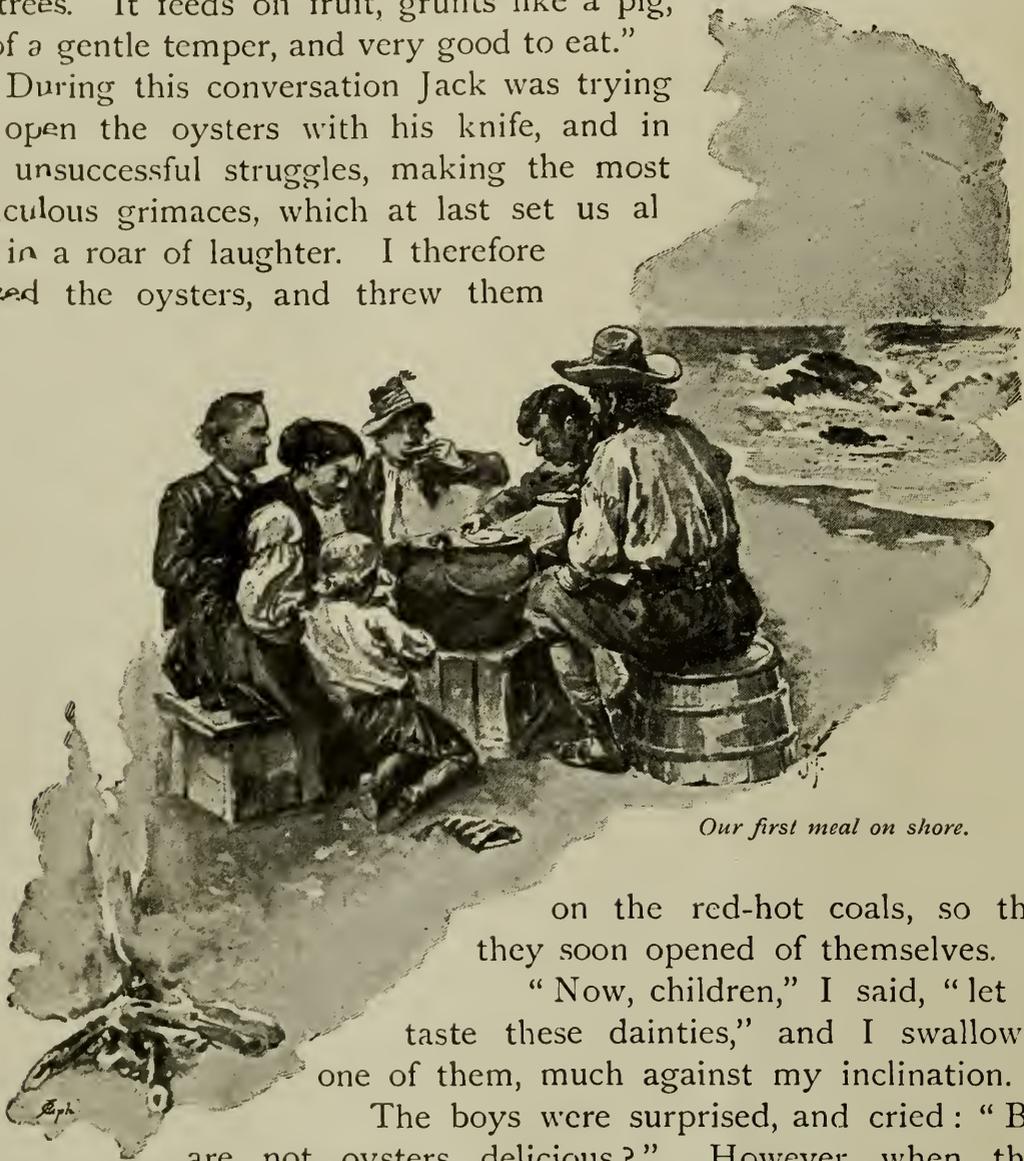
"No, not the least trace of any human being whatever," Fred replied, "either on land or in the sea. But there are plenty of pigs, and of a peculiar kind, for the young one that I have shot has the feet of a hare rather than of a pig. I saw it jumping about in the grass, and sometimes it sat on its hind legs, and wiped its mouth with its fore feet, and then it dug up roots and gnawed them like a squirrel. Had I not been afraid of losing it altogether, I would have tried to catch it alive; it seemed so tame."

Ernest now remarked: "I have looked your animal all over, but it does not seem to me to be a pig at all. It has, indeed, hair like bristles, but its teeth are not those of a pig. It has only four incisors in front, like a rodent, and it generally resembles the pig-squirrel in my picture-book, and is called, if I am not mistaken, agouti."

"Oh," said Fred, "you great Dr. All-know, tell me what you don't know!"

"Gently, gently!" I cried. "Ernest is probably right. I know the agouti, which is a rodent, only from descriptions and engravings; but your quarry here seems to me to resemble it in every detail. The agouti lives in America, and has its lair in caves under the roots of trees. It feeds on fruit, grunts like a pig, is of a gentle temper, and very good to eat."

During this conversation Jack was trying to open the oysters with his knife, and in his unsuccessful struggles, making the most ridiculous grimaces, which at last set us all off in a roar of laughter. I therefore seized the oysters, and threw them



Our first meal on shore.

on the red-hot coals, so that they soon opened of themselves.

"Now, children," I said, "let us taste these dainties," and I swallowed one of them, much against my inclination.

The boys were surprised, and cried: "But are not oysters delicious?" However, when they proceeded to examine them more closely, they were less emphatic. Still, everybody was compelled to eat at least one, for we wanted their shells for spoons. Jack heroically swallowed one, and the others followed his courageous example; but they all voted the oyster a bad dish, and promptly plunged the shells into the pot. Of course they all scalded themselves, and howled in chorus. At this juncture Ernest produced his large mussel-shell, and began to help himself carefully, and laughed at the others

saying he could now cool his ration, and need not take it until it suited him.

"You have taken good care of yourself," I said; "but you should have got us a few such soup plates as well."

"There were plenty about," he replied.

"That is just what displeases me, for you are always thinking only of yourself. You deserve to be punished, and to have your portion of soup given to our attendants, the dogs. At any rate, you can wait until we ordinary human beings have had our share."

My rebuke went to Ernest's heart, who obediently offered his soup to the dogs. These took little time over it; indeed, it seemed but to whet their appetites. While we were longingly regarding the pot, they seized Fred's agouti and tore it to pieces. A pitiful cry broke from the children when they discovered what had happened, and Fred jumped up in a rage and beat off the dogs with the butt end of his gun, which he bent quite crooked in his violence. Not content with this, he threw stones after the dogs, and began to shout and scold till the rocks re-echoed. I reprov'd his anger, and told him how it grieved me to hear him use bad language, how he had spoiled his gun, and how he had nearly killed the useful animals. At this he collected himself, and, covered with shame, begged my pardon.

Soon after our repast the sun began to set. Our fowls collected by dozens, and picked up the crumbs that remained. My wife, on seeing this, produced her mysterious bag, and began to feed them with oats and peas, showing me meanwhile several other garden seeds which she had brought with her. I praised her forethought, but enjoined her to be careful of her store, which we could use for sowing, and to feed the fowls with the crumbs of biscuits instead. Our doves at last flew into the adjacent rocks. The hens sat down to roost in a row upon the coping-pole of the tent, and the geese and ducks went off chattering to a bushy spot on the swampy banks of the bay. We also prepared for rest, but, by way of precaution, loaded our guns and pistols, and placed them within easy reach. Hereupon we said our prayers, and by the light of the fast setting sun crept into our tent, where, huddled close together, we laid ourselves trustfully to sleep.

The children were surprised at the suddenness with which the darkness now set in, and that the night was heralded by no twilight.

"This," I said, "leads me to suppose that we are not far from the equator, where such is generally the case. For twilight is produced by the breaking up of the sun's rays. The more acute the angle at which the sun sinks under the horizon, the further does its faint glimmer extend; but the more perpendicular or straight the drop,

the slighter is the deflection of its rays, and hence the sooner does night set in after it has set. Therefore the tropics, which are most directly under the noonday sun, must change from light to darkness more rapidly than any other region."

I once more looked out to see whether all was quiet, and then secured the entrance to the tent. The cock, awakened by the rising moon, crowed his morning song, and I lay down to sleep. But although the day had been very hot, the night was bitterly cold, and we had to keep together for warmth. Gradually my dear ones sank into a sweet and gentle slumber, and, much as I wanted to watch, at least until mother had awoke in the first dawn of the morning, my eyes refused to keep open, and so we soon were all peacefully asleep.

Day had scarcely broken before the crowing of the cock again awoke me, and I immediately roused up my wife, so as to consult her quietly as to what we should do next. We soon agreed that our first duty was to try to find our companions, and the next to discover something of the nature of the land upon which we found ourselves. Not till then could we form any definite plans for the future. My wife understood that a journey for this purpose could scarcely be undertaken with the whole family, and proposed to keep Ernest and the smaller boys with her, while Fred and I, who was the strongest, should go and explore. The next thing was to get breakfast ready; but my wife informed me that this would perforce be a poor repast, as we had nothing but soup.

"What has Jack done with the lobster?" I asked.

"You had better ask Jack himself," she replied, and left me to light the fire and boil the water.

The children were soon roused, and when I asked Jack for his lobster he ran off and brought it out of a cleft in a rock where he had carefully hidden it.

"You see," he said, "I did not want the dogs to eat it, as they did Fred's agouti. Those chaps seem to have a good twist on them."

"And it seems also," I added, "that you can be thoughtful when it suits you. It is wiser to profit by the example of others. But will you let Fred have the claw I promised you?—for we are going a journey together."

"Oh!" they all shouted. "A journey! a journey! May we come too?"

"For this once," I answered, "it is not possible. We do not know what we may encounter. Fred and myself are best able to face danger; besides, if we were all to go together we should have to go very slowly. Therefore you must remain here with mother, as this

place seems safe, and for protection I leave you Eill, while Turk will accompany us."

Ernest remarked that our mastiffs could bite the calves of the savages pretty severely, and Jack even offered us the whole of his lobster for the journey. But Ernest remarked, with superlative wisdom, that we would doubtless find cocoanuts, as Crusoe did, and that they were much better than a miserable lobster.

Fred now shouldered his gun, and slung his wallet on his back, and took an axe in his hand. He had humbly begged for another gun, as his own was bent; and so, until I had mended his own, I was obliged to let him have one. I had reason to be grateful that in the schools of Switzerland—my country—boys are taught the use of muskets at an early age. I made Fred put a couple of holster pistols in his belt, while I proceeded to equip myself similarly, and provided myself with biscuit and a water-bottle.

Presently mother summoned us to breakfast. But the lobster turned out so hard and tasteless that a good deal of it remained over, and nobody grudged our putting it in our pockets. Still we were all satisfied, for the lobster was much larger than fresh-water ones, and more nourishing. Fred now proposed that we should start before the sun had gained too much power.

I enjoined the youngsters to obey their mother, and reminded her to keep the guns handy, and to keep close to our tub-vessel, which could be used either for defence or flight. Then we parted, not without great misgivings, for we could not tell what dangers might threaten us on this strange coast.

CHAPTER III.

EXPLORING.

THE banks of the brook were so rocky that there was only one possible approach from our side—where we had fetched water. I was glad that my dear ones were thus fairly well protected. On the other side of our little encampment they were guarded by steep perpendicular cliffs. We had to ascend the banks of the brook for some distance before we could cross it, and even then we had to pick our way over the stones which lay in its bed. With much difficulty we now wended our course through long grass, which had been bleached by the sun, along the opposite bank of the brook, in order to get back to the beach, where we hoped to meet with fewer obstacles to our progress. Suddenly, about a hundred paces off, we heard a mighty rustling, and saw the grass, which was as high as an ordinary man, moving and bending in our direction. But I was delighted to see Fred fearlessly and coolly getting his gun ready to receive the wild beast which might be approaching. Fortunately it turned out to be our faithful Turk, whom we had left behind us in the confusion of our departure. I welcomed the beast joyfully, and praised Fred for his courage and for not losing his head and running away into possibly greater danger or even shooting his faithful hound by mistake.

“You see,” I said, “what dangerous enemies of man our passions are. Yesterday your rage, and to-day your fear, might have done incalculable harm.”

“But if our passions are so dangerous,” Fred answered, “why were they given to us?”

“They are not so bad,” I replied, “but that the good in them does not outweigh the evil, for which reason we must always keep them in hand. They have manifestly been given us to stimulate our activity; for man is naturally lazy. Are there not thousands of circumstances in which inordinate exertions are required to save body and

soul, to prevent evil and to do good? Are not ambition, love, anger and fear more likely to prompt us to action than the cold impassiveness of reason? But we must never allow our reason to forsake us: it should always keep our passions in proper limits, and give them worthy objects for their exercise; otherwise they will lower us to the condition of the brutes, or lead us to crime and wickedness."

These discussions made the time pass rapidly, and we were getting on fast. The sea was close to our left, and to our right, at a distance of about half an hour's walk, was the wall of cliffs, which



"We hoped to descry the boats of our companions."

extended from our landing-place in nearly a line with the beach, and whose heights were crowned with green and with luxuriant palms. The space between the cliffs and the sea was partly covered with tall withered grass and partly with forests, which stretched sometimes from the sea right up to the top of the cliffs.

We kept carefully along the beach, and were too much engrossed in watching the sea to be mindful of the beautiful scenery on land, for we hoped to descry the boats of our companions. Nevertheless we did not neglect to look for footprints along the shore, or other traces, without, however, finding any signs of them.

"Let me fire a shot from time to time," said Fred, "so that our comrades may hear us if they should be anywhere about."

"Yes," I said, "if you can ensure our shots being heard only by our friends, and not by the savages who may live here, and who, if they noticed us, might possibly attack us."

"But," said Fred, "why should we take all this trouble about people who left us so basely in the lurch?"

"For many reasons, my boy," I replied. "First, because it is wrong to reward evil with evil; secondly, because they can be of use to us and help us; but chiefly because perhaps they may themselves be in need of assistance."

"In the meantime we are roaming aimlessly about the beach," said Fred, "when we might go back to the wreck and save the animals."

"When there are many conflicting duties, my son, we must first fulfil the most important ones; and to try to save human beings is nobler than to prevent a few animals from famishing. Besides, we have provided the animals with food for several days, and the sea does not appear to threaten the complete destruction of our vessel for some time."

Silently we journeyed on, until after a two hours' march we arrived at a point at some little distance from the sea. Here we halted and refreshed ourselves at a clear spring in the cool shade of the trees. Numerous kinds of birds that we had never seen before flew and twittered about us. These birds were more distinguished for brightness of colour than sweetness of voice. Fred thought he had seen something resembling a monkey in the trees; and indeed Turk began to grow restless, and commenced to bark so loudly that wood and field resounded with his bellowing. Fred crept about, to see whether he was right, and, looking up suddenly, stumbled heavily over a round body, and fell to the ground. He picked it up with disgust, and brought it to me, wondering whether it was a bird's nest.

"Anything else?" I said. "It is a cocoanut!"

"But are there not birds who build round nests?"

"Of course there are," I said; "but you should not have jumped at conclusions, and taken this round and fibrous thing, without further question, for a bird's nest. Don't you remember reading how that the cocoanut was wrapped in a bundle of fibres, which are kept together by a thin and fragile skin? In the case of this one the skin has rotted away, and that is why the fibres stand out so ruggedly. Now we will cut it all away, and you will find the hard nut underneath."

This was done. We opened the nut, but discovered nothing but a withered kernel, which was uneatable.

"Why, father," Fred exclaimed, "I thought that cocoanuts contained a sweet fluid, like almond emulsion, which was most palatable!"

"That is indeed the case when the nuts are unripe, just as in the case of ordinary nuts. But the riper the fruit gets, the more does the fluid congeal, until it dries up and forms a kernel. If the ripe nut falls on good ground, the kernels suppurate and burst through the shell; but if they fall on unsuitable ground, they wither away, through internal putrefaction, like this one. I suspect it has been brought here by monkeys, for it could not have fallen from any of these trees."

"What surprises me is that they do not all putrefy, seeing how hard the shell is," said Fred.

"Our peach stones are not softer, and yet the kernel bursts them when they fall into suitable ground."

"That I can quite believe; for they have a thread, by means of which the shell opens when the kernel swells from damp."

"You can understand that it may be easier to open the shell from the inside than from the outside. The cocoanuts are differently constructed, it is true; but you can judge by these fragments that Nature knows how to help herself even here. Close to the stalk you will find three round holes, which are covered with a softer substance than the rest of the shell; they are closed by a spongy mass, and here the kernel can find an exit. But let us see whether we can find one that is eatable."

After looking about we at last found one, and it saved us so much of our provisions that we kept a quantity for our dinner. Although the cocoanut was a little rancid, it had at least satisfied us, and we jumped up to proceed on our journey. For some distance we continued through the wood, where we had frequently to cut our way with our hatchets. After a time we again reached the beach, and obtained a better view of the country. The wood stretched away on our right, and every now and then we encountered strange looking trees.

"What curious trees are those, father?" said Fred, whose keen eyes had quickly detected them: "they have cups on their trunks."

Upon nearer approach I was delighted to find that they were calabash trees, which bear gourds. Fred soon found one on the ground, and I explained to him how they could be converted into dishes and bottles.

"Savages," I added, "cannot do without them, for they keep liquids in them, and even use them for cooking."

"That is impossible," said Fred. "The fire must burn them."

"I did not say that they were put in the fire."

"But how is it possible to cook without a fire?" objected Fred.

"Neither did I say that it was possible to cook without a fire. But it is not necessary to bring the utensil in contact with it."

"Then I am completely done! There must be some miracle about it."

"Or perhaps some magic," I replied. "Where man fails to understand the reason of things, or is too lazy to use his brains, he sees miracles and magic!"

"Well, then, if you say so, I will believe you."

"Then you will take what I say on trust to save trouble? That is a good recipe for not exercising one's reason. However, I will explain. Know, then, that in order to turn a gourd into a cooking utensil, it must be cut in two in the centre; the inside must be scooped out, and then it can receive water, fish, crabs, or what not. Red-hot stones are now dropped into the water until it boils and the food has been cooked. Thus the gourd remains intact."

"Is all that worth while?" said Fred. "I would have hit upon that myself had I thought of it."

"That is just like the story of Columbus and the egg," I said: "we seldom think of the simplest things."

"But let us make a few plates and dishes at once," said Fred. "Mother will be pleased if we bring her a few kitchen utensils."

And with these words he drew out his knife and commenced to cut a gourd open. He had soon completed his task, but spoiled the gourd, because the knife had cut it irregularly.

"This will drive me to despair!" he exclaimed. "I had no idea that so simple a thing was so difficult. My work is no good," and he threw the gourd away.

"You are always too hasty, my boy," I said. "Why do you throw it all away? The little pieces will serve to make spoons of. While you are making them, I will try to make a couple of dishes."

Fred collected his broken pieces together, and began to cut at them. In the meantime I took a piece of string and tied it round the gourd, as high as possible, and gently knocked it with the handle of my knife into the gourd; then I pulled it tight, and knocked again, until I succeeded in cutting the gourd through.

"How on earth," cried Fred, "did you think of that? That is a splendid soup tureen, and the other is a plate."

"You see," I said, "how useful it is to read. From books of travel I have learned that savages and negroes, who have no knives, do just as I have done."

"But how do they make the bottles?"

"For this purpose we must hollow the whole gourd. To do this a hole must be bored at the top and the juice drawn out; then some gravel is put in, the gourd is shaken up, and the remaining marrow is dislodged, broken up, and knocked out."

"That, however, will only give you a round flask, which is inconvenient to carry."

"A better shaped bottle takes more time. If you wish to have a neck to it, you must bandage the young gourd, while it is still growing, into the shape you require, so that the unbandaged part can alone become circular, and so you obtain a bottle of the best shape."

"Are the gourd bottles that I have seen at home made in this way?"

"No, my boy; they grow like that on a diseased gourd plant."

We now placed our plates and dishes on the ground for the sun to dry, previously filling them with sand, so that they might absorb as little as possible of the heat of the sun. Having placed a landmark on the spot where we left them, so that we could fetch them on our return, we continued our journey. Fred kept carving away at his gourd spoon, whilst I tried to prepare another from the fragments of a cocconut. I must confess, however, that we succeeded but indifferently. Nevertheless, we determined to make the best of them, Fred saying that necessity made us easily contented.

For that sensible sentiment I praised Fred, telling him that I would rather he had that idea than that I should have a hundred pounds.

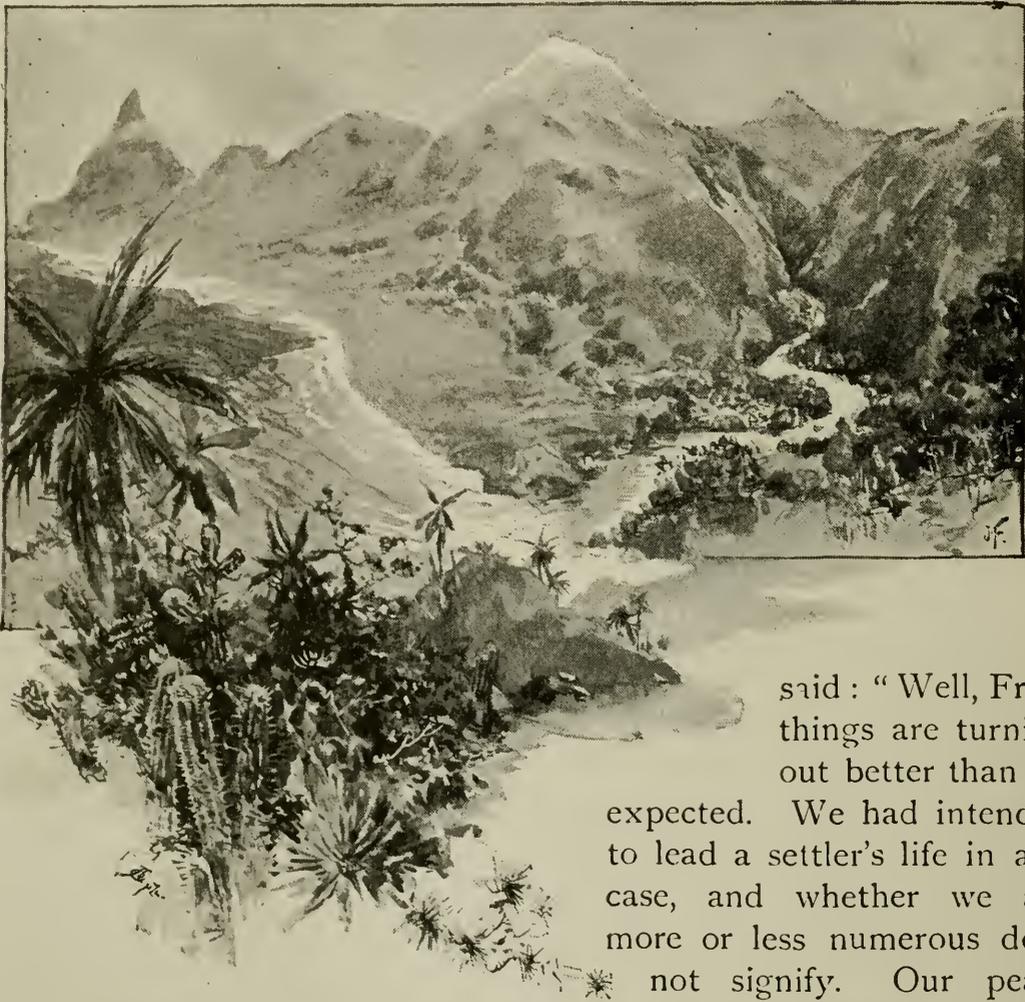
"And what use would a hundred pounds be to you?" said Fred. "If we had some good soup, that would be something worth having."

"That, again, is a sensible remark. Money is only a means of exchange among human beings; but here, on this desolate coast, Nature would not give us a single cherry stone for it."

After walking for another four hours we arrived at the extremity of a tongue of land which stretched far into the sea, and had a well-sized hillock at the end of it. This seemed a proper place for us to make our observations from. We reached the top after much trouble, and dripping with perspiration, and saw a magnificent view

unfolded before us. We swept the horizon with our spy-glass, but could detect no sign of any human beings. But nature lay before us in all her beauty; and although the hand of man had done nothing to improve it, the prospect was beyond expression charming. The luxuriant shore of a handsome bay encircled the crested sea, on which the sun was playing; the opposite coast was mountainous.

The fertile appearance of the country soothed me, for I realised that we were threatened neither by hunger nor want; and so I



"Nature lay before us in all her beauty."

said: "Well, Fred, things are turning out better than we expected. We had intended to lead a settler's life in any case, and whether we are more or less numerous does not signify. Our peace and trust will not be disturbed. We will endeavour

at least to be as good and as happy as possible."

"I am quite content," said Fred, "so long as you, dear father, and my dear mother, keep well and sound. I shall not pine for our wicked companions on board ship."

"Do not talk in that way," I rejoined. "They were not all wicked, and most of them would have grown better here, for they would have had fewer temptations. Social life, union of strength and intercommunication of thought: these are the things which

help us to effort, and which have the best effects even on the individual."

"Well, we are, at least, a larger society than that of Adam, before he had children; and when we grow up, you and mother will derive comfort and help from us also."

"That is truly encouraging, my dear Fred. Who knows what God's intentions may be? In the days of old He said to a solitary man, 'I will make of thee a great people!'"

"Why should not we become ancestors then!" Fred exclaimed; "and the founders of a race, if God should bless and save us?"

"Why not indeed? Yet come along, my little incipient ancestor; come out of the sun, so that you be not roasted before your time. Let us rest in yonder wood, eat our dinner, and then return to our dear ones."

We therefore descended into a charming palm forest; but before we could reach it we had to pass through a quantity of cane, which somewhat impeded our progress. We had to walk with much care; for at every step I feared we might be bitten by some serpent concealed in the cane, for these creatures are fond of such places. For this reason I kept Turk well in front as a sort of scout. I also cut off a good piece of cane as a weapon. But I was not a little surprised to see a sort of juice trickling out of the stalk. Upon tasting it, however, I discovered with joy that I had hit upon a magnificent natural plantation of sugar cane. Repeated tasting convinced me of this, and the delicious juice was most refreshing. But I did not tell Fred, who was a little in front of me, for I wanted him to have the pleasure of making the discovery for himself; so I told him to cut himself a cane. This he did; and he flourished it to the right and left so vigorously, in his search for snakes, that it split and allowed the juice to ooze out. Very cautiously he proceeded to lick it, but the moment he had tasted it he laughed, and shouted: "Father, father! sugar cane! Taste it! It is capital! How pleased the youngsters will be when I bring them some!"

Hereupon he commenced cutting away with a will, and sucking the bits he cut off, until the juice trickled all over him. I shouted to him to be more moderate, but he excused himself by saying he was very thirsty and that the sugar was so good.

"Your excuse is like that of the drunkards: they also drink immoderately because they are thirsty and because they like the taste; but for all their excuses they injure both body and soul."

"At least let me gather a sufficient quantity to take back to mother and the others, and to refresh ourselves with from time to time on the way."

"I have nothing against that," I replied; "only do not overload yourself; we have a lot to carry, and have far to go."

My sermonising was of no avail. The boy cut down at least a dozen of the finest canes, cleaned off the leaves, tied them together, and took them under his arm. Meanwhile we kept pushing on until at last we got into the palm forest. We were just on the point of sitting down to make a good dinner, when suddenly a number of good-sized monkeys, frightened by our arrival and the barking of our dog, climbed up the trees, and so quickly that we had scarcely time to notice them before they were already seated on the tops of the palms, and chattering away at us with their teeth, and uttering most horrible yells of hostility. Seeing that the palms were cocoanut trees, I began to have hopes of getting, by the help of these monkeys, a few unripe cocoanuts with milk in them. But Fred, with his usual impetuosity, threw down his bundle and began to take aim. I had just time to stop him, and said to him:

"What are you about? What would be the use of shooting one of these animals?"

"Oh! why did you stop me?" he said plaintively. "Monkeys are malignant and dangerous beasts. See how they have turned their backs on us and are jeering at us!"

"And is that what has excited the revenge of the reasonable Fred?" I said. "Now mind! as long as an animal does not hurt you, and is not likely to serve you by its death, you have no right to kill it, and still less to vent a foolish revenge on it."

"But we could have roasted them like any other game."

"I am afraid mother would not have thanked you for that. Besides, the monkey would not have walked home for you, and I have no intention of carrying it, while you yourself are loaded up with sugar cane. Moreover, I think the live monkeys may prove of more use to us than dead ones. Take care of your head! I am going to see whether I cannot make them give us a few cocoanuts."

With these words I began pelting the monkeys with stones. Although I could not of course throw the stones high enough to hit them, the monkeys got angry, and in their imitative rage proceeded to tear the cocoanuts off the palms and throw them at me, while I kept dodging them.

Fred laughed loudly at the success of my stratagem, and when the pelting had ceased collected as many cocoanuts as he could carry. We looked for a safe spot where we could enjoy our harvest, and opened the shells with our axes. Before doing this, however, we sucked the juice through some holes which we pierced with our knives, but were surprised to find the fluid so tasteless. The

delicate cream which adhered to the shell we found more palatable. We sweetened it with cane sugar, and thus made a splendid meal. Turk now got the remains of the lobster, which we disdained, and some biscuit. But, insatiable, he commenced chewing sugar cane, and begged for cocoanut shells.



I then took a couple of cocoanuts which had stalks, Fred seized his bundle of sugar canes, and we started on our homeward journey.

But Fred soon began to complain, for the sugar canes pressed heavily upon his shoulders. He kept changing them from one shoulder to the

other; then he took them under his arms, but it was all of no use.

"I had no idea," he cried, "that a bundle of canes could be so hard to carry! But I want mother and the boys to have some."

"Keep up your pluck, Fred, my boy. Don't you remember Æsop and his breadbasket? That was the heaviest of all at the beginning of his journey, but grew lighter towards the end. So it will be with your sugar canes, for we shall punish them again and again before we have done with them. Sling them over your back, so that they form a cross with your gun; in that way they will not weigh quite so heavily. We

must use our brains, my boy, if they are in the right place. Reflection and invention will have to help us out of many difficulties when we find our strength failing us.



"The monkeys . . . proceeded to tear the cocoanuts off the palms and throw them at me."

While we were thus journeying on, Fred noticed that I kept sucking my sugar cane from time to time, and seemed to derive great comfort from it in the oppressive heat.

"Oh," he said, "father, that is a good idea! Let me try to suck mine."

But with all his sucking he was unable to get any juice, and yet his cane was as full as mine. He asked me why this was.

"Probably," I replied, "because you have again forgotten to use your brains."

"Now I know!" he said: "there is no air! It is just like a marrow-bone. If there is no opening at the bottom, all the sucking in the world is useless."

"Quite right," I said. "But what is the remedy?"

He wanted me to tell him how I had managed; but I refused, and said:

"No, that won't do. You must invent a plan of your own."

He reflected a moment, and then exclaimed:

"I've got it! The thing to do is to cut an opening over the first joint of the cane: that will admit the air; and then when I suck, the juice will be forced into my mouth."

"Quite right," I replied. "But why should the slit be cut over and not under the joint of the cane? And how can the air force the juice into your mouth?"

"Oh, that I know all about! The cane is impervious at the joints, and if I cut a slit underneath the joint it would be of no use at all. When I suck I create an empty space in my mouth, and the outer air forces its way through the slit in the cane to fill up this space. The juice stops it, and is therefore forced up into the mouth. But if we are going to go on in this way we shall not bring many back home."

"Don't let that worry you," I replied; "never mind their number decreasing, for the juice will not keep in the sticks of cut cane, and the sun will soon turn it sour. If we are able to bring back a few samples, that will be quite sufficient."

"And even if the sugar should spoil," he said, "I have at least got a goodly quantity of cocoanut milk in one of my tin water-bottles; and that will be something."

"My dear boy!" I cried, laughing, "you have loaded yourself up; but in the end I am afraid you will bring back nothing but vinegar, for the juice of the cocoanut spoils rapidly when taken out of its natural receptacle."

"Dear me! What a bore! I must see how matters are."

With these words he took the bottle down from his back, and

took a good pull at the stopper. It suddenly came out with a loud bang, and the juice foamed up like champagne.

"That is capital! But do not look too deeply into the bottle or you may have a headache to-morrow."

"Dear father!" he exclaimed joyously, "taste it! taste it! It is splendid! It is not a bit like vinegar, but like new wine, and is pleasantly sharp on the tongue."

"That is in consequence of fermentation," I explained. "Most palm juice, and cocoanut juice, even honey and water mixed, from which mead is prepared, all produce the same effect. As soon as the first fermentation is over, and the fluid has got somewhat purified, wine is the result, more or less good or bad, according to the juice. This is followed by a second fermentation, induced by heat, and the result of this is vinegar. But this second fermentation can be delayed, especially by cold. Finally a third fermentation takes place in the vinegar itself, and that causes putrefaction, which spoils the vinegar. With a heat such as we have to endure, this threefold fermentation would proceed very rapidly; and so you can scarcely hope to bring back more than vinegar, if not putrid water."

We were now close to the place where we had buried the gourds, and found them hard and in good condition, so that we were able to carry them without difficulty.

We had scarcely got through the wood, where we had lunched, when Turk suddenly left us, and rushed like a mad creature at a tribe of monkeys, who were playing on the fringe of the wood, and had not noticed our approach. They were taken completely by surprise; and before we could get to the spot the bloodthirsty Turk had overtaken an old she-monkey, torn it up, and was feasting himself on its quivering flesh. A young monkey, who had been perched on its back, and had probably hampered its movements, was crouching in the grass, and looking on with chattering teeth. Fred had run on as fast as he could to prevent the tragedy; but although he lost his hat, and threw away his flask and bundles, he arrived too late. But his appearance gave rise to another and a very comic scene.

For the young monkey had scarcely seen him when it jumped on his back, and caught hold of his hair so firmly that no screams and no efforts would make it relax its grasp. I ran up to quiet poor Fred as soon as I could, and told him there was no danger; but the boy's fright was so comic that I could not help laughing.

"That is a stroke of genius on the part of this little fellow," I said. "He has lost his mother, and so he has selected you for his foster-father. He must have seen a strong family resemblance."

"The rascal instinctively felt that I was a good fellow, I suppose," said Fred; "and that I would never harm a living creature which was under my protection. But the little beast is hurting me frightfully. Can't you pull it off?"

With gentleness and some adroitness I succeeded in releasing Fred from his unbidden guest. I took it in my arms, like a child, and looked at it compassionately, for it was scarcely bigger than a kitten, and quite unable to take care of itself.

"What shall I do with you?" I exclaimed, "you poor little orphan! And what assistance can we in our poverty give you? We have already too many mouths to feed and too few arms to work."

"Oh, father!" Fred implored, "hand the youngster over to me. I will take care of it, and give it cocoanut milk, till we can get milk from the cow and the goats which remain on the wreck. Perhaps his scent will help us yet to find many a fruit."

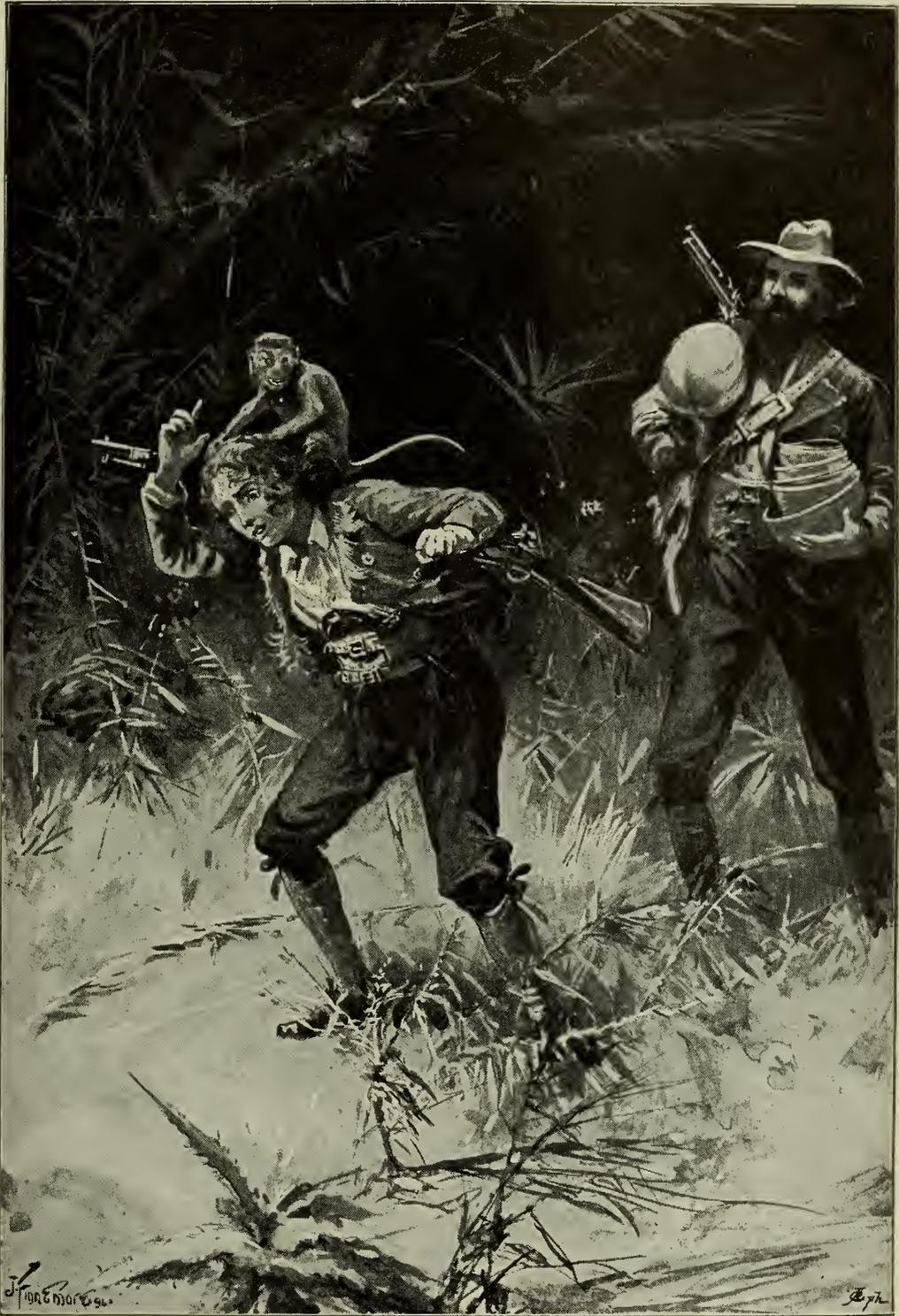
"Very well. You have behaved like a brick, although you allowed yourself to be too easily frightened. Still I am satisfied with you, especially as you did not give way to anger. I will let you keep your ward. Whether he will ever be of use to us will depend very much upon how you educate him."

In the meantime Turk was continuing his feast, and as the murder had now been committed we did not interfere, for all we had given him had been as nothing to his magnificent voracity. However, we did not wait for him, but went on our way, with the little monkey on Fred's back, while I took the sugar cane. Quite a quarter of an hour elapsed before we heard the trot of Turk and were overtaken by that ogre, who was still licking his chops. We looked askance at him, and reprovèd him for his bloodguiltiness; but he was sublimely indifferent, and trotted contentedly behind Fred. This very much disturbed the monkey, who climbed over Fred's shoulder on to his chest, and began to inconvenience him seriously. It had the effect, however, of waking up Fred's inventive faculties; and, tying a rope round Turk's neck, he tried to put the monkey on his back, saying, "You have killed the mother, so you ought to carry the brat."

But Turk took a different view. He began to growl, snapped at the shivering monkey, and finally rolled over on the ground. Fred was compelled to take back the monkey for protection.

"How horrible it was to see Turk tearing up that monkey!" he said, after a pause. "It made me think of those Spaniards who hunted the natives with dogs. The Spaniards must be a cruel people!"

"It is wrong, my boy, to jump at conclusions in that way. You



"THE YOUNG MONKEY . . . JUMPED ON HIS BACK, AND CAUGHT HOLD OF HIS HAIR."

must take into consideration the rudeness of the times when America was discovered, and remember that this discovery drew to the country the lowest types of greedy, uneducated, inhuman fanatics, full of zeal only for the external forms of their Church. Finally, do not forget how insignificant were the Spaniards in numbers, and how they were surrounded by natives."

"And what could poor naked and unarmed savages do against mounted Spaniards provided with guns and swords?"

"They were at least better equipped by nature than the Spaniards were; for, according to all accounts, they had a sense of smell which enabled them to scent a European as a dog can scent game. You can easily imagine how many a worn-out, straggling Spaniard must have fallen into their hands. Besides, the savages were so quick of foot that the Spaniards were quite unable to get up to them even on horseback, especially in the bush. Therefore the Spaniards may have hit upon the plan of setting dogs on to them, because they alone possessed these two qualities in a sufficient degree to be of use against them. The fact that certain bands of Spaniards availed themselves of these allies with cruel brutality scarcely justifies us in accusing the entire nation of cruelty. Besides, you can see how even here the dog has been helpful to man. Dogs and horses are our orderlies in our campaign against nature, and wild beasts especially. It is wonderfully providential that these indispensable animals should be so friendly to man, and so tameable. On horseback, and surrounded by a pack of good trained dogs, man need fear neither lions nor hyænas—not even the tiger."

Soon we got close to the brook, and were near home. Bill now loudly announced our arrival, and its barking was responded to by Turk, who began to recognise the country, and presently left us to inform Bill of our coming. Our dear ones speedily came to welcome us. But the youngsters, after the mutual greetings were over, began to shout loudly:

"A monkey! a monkey! How splendid! Where did you get it? But how shall we feed it? What have you got those sticks for? What are those nuts which father is carrying?"

When they had quieted down a little, I told them that though we had brought many good things, we had not found our companions.

"Then let us at least praise God," said mother, "that we are safe and well and united. I have been very anxious about you. Let us help you to take off your burdens, and then tell us your adventures."

The children now busied themselves in helping us to unload;

and Fred distributed his sugar cane, and made the lazy Ernest take his gun and the cocoanuts. Ernest looked so miserable with his heavy load that mother relieved him of it; whereupon Fred exclaimed:

“Do you know, Ernest, that those things which you despise are cocoanuts?—your beloved cocoanuts!”

“Never mind,” said mother; “I will take care of them.”

“But I can throw these sticks away, and carry the gun in my hand,” said Ernest.

“Indeed you shall not. Those sticks are sugar cane. I will show you how to suck them,” said Fred.

“What!—sugar cane! sugar cane!” they all shouted.

I now recounted all our discoveries, and displayed all the things we had brought. But nothing pleased mother more than the gourds, which, perhaps, we needed most of all.

At the camp kitchen we saw with pleasure preparations for a glorious meal. At one side of the fire, on a wooden spit over a couple of wooden forks, were all sorts of fishes. On the other side a goose was roasting, and the rich dripping was falling into a large mussel shell. In the midst of the flames was the iron pot, which gave out a delicious perfume of strong broth. Behind the fire there lay a few casks, which had been fished up, and contained splendid Dutch cheese cased in lead. All this was calculated to arouse our appetite, which had been lulled to sleep rather than satisfied with the cane sugar.

“Well,” I said, “you do not seem to have been idle either in our absence, for I see the fruits of much work. Only it is a pity you should have killed one of the geese, which we could spare so ill.”

“Do not fret yourself about that, my dear,” said mother. “That is not one of our own geese, but one of the wild ones which we saw in the distance on our arrival, and which Ernest has caught. He assures us it is good to eat.”

“Yes, father,” said Ernest, “I think it is a water-fowl. Besides, it was so stupid that I was able to knock it down with a stick.”

“What sort of feet had it?” I asked.

“It was web-footed, for treading the water,” Ernest replied. “All the four toes were connected with a skin. The beak was long and narrow, but strong, and a little bent in front. I have kept the head and neck for you to see. They look something like the penguins which we saw yesterday.”

“All right, my boy,” I answered; “you see how useful it is to keep one’s eyes open. What birds are web-footed?”

"Tropical birds," he replied: "cormorants, pelicans and sea-mews."

As I was going to ask him more questions, mother called us to dinner. We picnicked on the ground, while mother served out in our service of gourds. In the meantime the boys made short work of a couple of cocoanuts, found them excellent, and made spoons of the shells. The monkey was not forgotten, and got his share. The boys dipped their handkerchiefs into the coconut milk, and enjoyed letting the monkey suck them. They were just about to crack a few more cocoanuts, when I stopped them.

"Bring me a saw," I said. "I will make dishes of the shells."

Jack, who was the quickest, got me a saw, and soon I had constructed a dish for each of us, in which mother served out the soup. She was delighted at our no longer having to dip into the general pot with our dirty oyster shells.

"This is simply grand!" said Jack, lifting his spoon in the air. "We have made our own utensils just like real savages! In this way the savages sit round the fire with coconut spoons in their hands."

"With this difference, my boy," I said, "that the savage gentlemen do their work much more beautifully than we do. You must not imagine that they just smash up a few nuts and put the hollowed shells into their mouths. They cut and polish them nicely and smoothly, and then they fit a wooden handle to their ladle, which is often made quite pretty, and cut and carved till it gets the right curve. Finally, the way they attach the handles by means of fine threads of hemp or bark is quite wonderful. I once saw such a spoon, and marvelled at the way in which the threads had been plaited together. The so-called savages are much handier and more patient than we vaunted Europeans, because we are really much more 'savage'—that is, more clumsy and less capable."

"That is quite true, father! What a lot we shall have to learn!" they all cried, "and how lucky it is that we have you to answer all our questions for us! What should we do if we were by ourselves!"

The fishes were rather dry, and the penguin had an unpleasant, oily flavour. Still we did our duty bravely; and we now learned that Jack and Frank had caught the fish for us, and that mother had opened the cheese casks by the sweat of her brow.

While we were at supper, Fred suggested our trying some coconut champagne; but on tasting it, he exclaimed:

"Oh, dear! It has all turned to vinegar!"

"Never mind," I said; "perhaps the vinegar will come in useful with the dry fish," and so we poured it over what remained.

After supper we very naturally turned to our lair, especially as the sun was setting. Mother had collected some more dried grass, and had strewn it on the ground in the tent, so that we hoped to have a still softer couch than that of the previous night. Our fowls left us, and went off to roost in their accustomed spot on the coping; the ducks and geese disappeared likewise, and we ourselves, thoroughly tired out, were longing for rest, so that we got into our tent. Fred and Jack took care of the monkey between them, and we were soon all wrapped in slumber.

But I had not tasted its sweets long, before I was awakened by the restlessness of the fowls and the loud barking of our watchful dogs. Mother, Fred and myself instantly jumped up, seized our guns, and went out.

We were terrified to see by the pale moonlight a fierce battle. A dozen jackals had surrounded our mastiffs, but these had already settled three or four of their opponents, and were keeping the others at bay.

Fred and myself at once took aim, and two of the marauders were stretched on the sand, while two others limped wounded after their routed companions. Turk and Bill overtook these, and tore them down, and then proceeded to feed on the remaining victims, showing us how little we understood their voracity, for dogs, as a rule, do not feed on the flesh of wolves, foxes and jackals, who belong to the same family as themselves.

Fred now dragged up the jackal he had himself brought down, laid it before the tent, so that the dogs on their return might feast on that also if they were still hungry, and retired again to rest.

This time we were not disturbed, and we slept peacefully until the morning, when I was woke up once more by our chanticleer. I immediately woke up my wife, in order to discuss undisturbed with her the order of the day.

"My dear wife," I said, "I see there is so much to do that I have scarcely heart to begin. It is indispensable to go back to the wreck to get the animals landed and rescue a few necessaries. But there is also a lot to do here. Before all things we must try to prepare a better lodging for ourselves."

"With patience, method and industry," she answered, "all will come right, my dear. I do not like the idea of returning to the wreck, but it is necessary to our well-being; therefore that must be our first undertaking. The rest will come of itself gradually."

"Very well, then. You had better remain behind with the little ones, and Fred and I will go off."

With these words I roused the children.

But the little ones had some difficulty in opening their sleepy eyes. Fred, however, was up in a minute and off to look for his jackal. The body had grown stiff during the night, and so he put it on its legs in front of the tent and waited for the others to appear. But the dogs, seeing their enemy erect, barked furiously, and it gave Fred some trouble to restrain them, which he did so quietly that I was delighted.

The children now looked out one by one to see what all this barking was about, and even the monkey had



a peep. As soon as he saw the jackal, he flew into the extreme corner of the tent and buried himself in the hay. The boys were much astonished, and wanted to know where the strange beast had come from. Ernest said it was a fox, Jack a wolf, Frank a yellow dog.

"We were terrified to see by the pale moonlight a fierce battle."

"Ho! ho! my learned friend, Dr. Ernest! you knew the agouti, but are unable to recognise a jackal!" cried Fred.

"Yes," said Ernest, "I thought it was a yellow fox!"

"Why not a yellow wolf?" said Fred. "But a yellow fox! Ha! ha! ha! Listen to him!"

At this Ernest began to cry, and said:

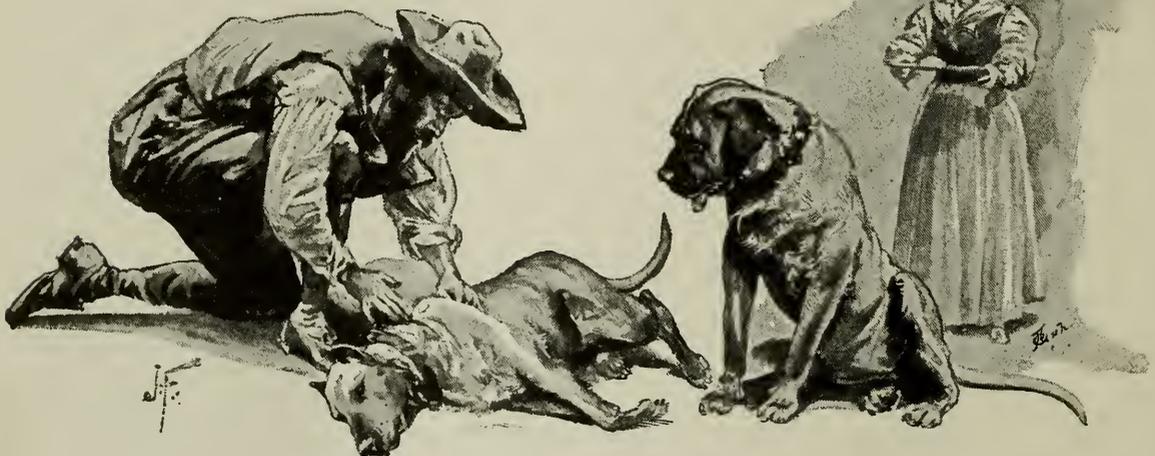
"You are a brute, to laugh at my mistake. You would not have known what it was yourself if father had not told you!"

"Now then, boys!" I shouted; "no rows! One of you is too sensitive, and the other will not leave off chaffing. Come and make friends. These disputes are as useless as those of the scientific gentlemen themselves. You are both of you right. This animal could be correctly described as a yellow fox or a yellow wolf or a yellow dog, for it strongly resembles those species of animals."

Peace having been restored, there was a demand for breakfast. The boys attacked a cask of biscuits, but they could scarcely manage to gnaw this hard tack. In this difficulty Fred got up to the cheese, when he was joined by Ernest, who presently returned, looking hopeful, and saying:

"Oh, mother! if we only had some butter, that would help down the bread and cheese wonderfully!"

"If, if!" I said. "You and your perpetual 'ifs'!—a piece of biscuit and cheese is better than a whole dish of 'ifs'!"



"They had several bites and wounds."

"Could not we open that cask over there?" he said.

"Which? Where? What for?"

"That one over there. Why, to get butter, of course! Something has trickled out of it which smells like it!"

"Praised be your nose, if it has led you right," I said solemnly.

We went off to the cask, and I found the boy was not mistaken. The question was how to open the cask. Fred suggested taking off the first hoop, and then taking out the top; but I pointed out to him that the butter was already oozing out at the sides, and that we were in danger of losing it.

Finally I decided to bore a small orifice, and to ladle out as much as we wanted for the present. Soon we had a cocoanut shell full of excellent salted butter for breakfast. The biscuit was still terribly hard, but we buttered and toasted it, and found it capital.

The dogs lay quietly near us while this was going on ; but we now noticed that they had not come out of their fights of last night with a whole skin, for they had several bites and wounds, especially at the throat.

Mother pitifully offered to butter their wounds for want of a better ointment ; but I pointed out that the butter was salted, and would increase their pain. She therefore carefully washed the salt out of some of the butter, and allowed Jack, who delighted in that sort of thing, to put it on them. The dogs now commenced licking each other ; and thus, by dint of frequent licking and buttering, they soon got well.

“It would be a good thing,” said Fred, while Jack was thus engaged, “if we could find some spiked collars for the poor beasts, for now that the jackals have discovered our whereabouts, they may visit us again, and perhaps overpower the dogs.”

“Oh !” said Jack, “I will make some myself, and very good ones too, if mother will help me.”

“All right, Master Jack Brag,” said mother, smiling ; “let us see what you can invent.”

“Yes, my man,” I added ; “practise your inventive faculties. If you think of something clever you shall have praise and honour. But it is time for us to begin our day’s work. Fred, get ready ! Mother and I have determined that you shall accompany me to the wreck, to salvage whatever can be saved. You little ones will remain here and be industrious, and obedient to your mother.”

CHAPTER IV.

SALVAGE WORK.

WHILE we embarked in our boat of tubs, I arranged that my wife should erect a pole, with a piece of sail-cloth as a flag, which we should be able to see with our spy-glass from the wreck; and if she wanted us to return, she was to knock this down and fire three shots. I even succeeded in getting her to form the courageous resolve to spend the night alone with the children, in the event of our being prevented from returning that day.

We took nothing but our guns and ammunition with us, for there were plenty of provisions on board; but I allowed Fred to bring his little monkey, for he wanted to refresh him with goat's milk as soon as he could.

Silently we put out to sea, Fred rowing manfully, while I paddled at the stern. When we had got some distance from the shore and were in the middle of the bay, I noticed that this had another opening besides the one by which we had entered, through which the brook—which ran into the bay—rushed into the sea. I immediately determined to profit by this current in order to save labour, and, notwithstanding my bad steering, I succeeded. We were thus gently carried three-quarters of our way; and when we found that the current had lost its strength, we recommenced with fresh vigour to row towards the wreck, where we made fast our boat.

We had scarcely got out of the tubs, before Fred, monkey and all, jumped on to the deck, where the animals were assembled. I followed, delighted with his zeal to succour these unhappy victims. How pleased the poor beasts were at our arrival! It was not so much want of food as the sight of human beings which seemed to call forth all their curious noises; for they still had plenty of food and drink. The monkey was immediately put to the goat's udder, and made the most curious grimaces as he pulled at his strange foster-mother with ever increasing vigour, much to our amusement.

Having supplied the animals with food and drink, we looked after ourselves, and ate whatever we could find with least difficulty.

While we were thus eating, I consulted Fred as to what we were to begin our work with. He proposed that the first thing we should do should be to make a sail for our boat.

"But surely we have more important things than that to do!" I exclaimed.

"Well, I don't mind confessing," said Fred, "that while I was rowing I felt the wind sharp in my teeth, and though the current was with us, the wind was against us; so I thought that on our return journey, when the current will be of no use to us, the wind would help us; and if we load up our boat, I can assure you, from my experience, that we shall be very slow, for I am not much good."

I thought the idea excellent, and immediately proceeded to carry it out.

First I selected a spar which seemed suitable for a mast, then I found a slighter one to fasten the sail on. Fred had to make a hole in a board with a gouge, in order to pass the mast through it; while I went down into the sail-loft, and cut myself a triangular sail from a roll of sail-cloth. I then procured a pulley, which I intended to fasten to the top of the mast, so as to be able to raise or lower the sail as I wanted. Fred had, meanwhile, completed his task, and the board with the hole in the middle was now fastened across the tub-boat, and the pulley hung upon a ring at the top of the mast, so as to make it movable. A rope, which had been attached to the corner of the sail, was drawn through the ring, and then the mast was let down to the bottom of one of the tubs through the board with the hole in it, so that it stood erect for the time. It had now to be fastened at the beam, and this was done without delay.

My sail formed a rectangular triangle, one side of which hung straight down along the mast, and was tied to it. The shortest side was tied to a slight spar which projected from the mast, and was attached to it at one end, and had a rope at the other which reached as far as the stern, and by means of which I was enabled to direct the sail or let it go in case of need. Holes were made in the boat fore and aft to fasten the rope to, so that the sail could be used on both sides without putting the entire vessel about.

While I was thus employed Fred kept a look-out towards the shore, and reported all well. He produced a small streamer, which he asked me to fasten to the mast-head, so as to make it look ship-shape. This vanity in the midst of our miserable circumstances made me laugh.

“Father, you have delivered me from toiling at the oar; now think of yourself, and make a rudder,” he said.

“That is also a good idea; but it would compel us to sacrifice an important advantage—namely, the power of going in any direction without putting about. But I will fit rudders fore and aft, so that we may be able to steer more easily and gain power.”

For this purpose the necessary preparations were immediately made; and two strong vertical handspikes were attached to each end of the boat, between which the rudders were placed, so that they could impinge against them at every pull.

The evening was now approaching, and I saw that we should be compelled to spend the night on the wreck, if we did not wish to return empty handed. We had agreed to hoist a flag, to announce to the others our intention of staying the night here; and this we did.

We spent the rest of the day in unloading our boat of useless ballast in the shape of stones, and to collect in its place a number of appliances and materials. We therefore plundered the wreck like regular Vandals, and rapidly loaded up our boat.

In view of the great probability of continued solitude, we took care, in the first place, to have a goodly supply of powder and shot, as a precaution against wild beasts and for the purposes of the chase. All the tools I could find, and there was an abundance of them on board, I also deemed indispensable. Our vessel had been destined for the foundation of a new colony in the South Seas, and consequently contained a number of things which are not usually found in large quantities on board ordinary vessels.

I had some difficulty amidst this quantity of useful and necessary articles in making a proper selection. But besides the things already mentioned, I took knives, forks, spoons, and kitchen utensils, of which we were much in need. In the captain's cabin I found several services of plate, spoons and forks, and metal plates, platters and dishes, besides a well-furnished bottle case. All these I packed up. From the galley we took away the best grills, ladles, pans, kettles and pots I could find. Finally I took away from the captain's state-room a few Westphalian hams, and a small bag of corn, maize and other seeds.

Upon Fred's reminding me how hard and uncomfortable our resting-places were at night, I threw a few hammocks into the boat as well, with blankets. Fred collared a couple of guns, and loaded his arms with cutlasses and hunting-knives. Besides these, we took a cask of sulphur, a good supply of rope, and a roll of sail-cloth. The sulphur I destined for lighting the fire with.

When our little vessel was fully loaded up, it sat so deep in the

water that I would certainly have lightened it had not the sea been perfectly smooth. But I secured a couple of cork jackets, which I intended we should wear on our return journey to be prepared for the worst.

By this time night had set in, and it would have been dangerous to return in the dark, for we might easily have come to grief against a rock. A bright fire on shore testified to the safety of the others, and we endeavoured by means of four large lanterns to advise them of our own well-being. In answer to this signal, as previously stipulated, two shots were fired to indicate that they had been understood.

Not without misgivings for the safety of my dear ones, we now laid ourselves to sleep, thoroughly tired out, in our uncomfortable boat, so that if the wreck should go to pieces in the night we might be ready to escape.

With the dawn of the morning, as soon as the shore was visible, I took a sight of the tent in which my dear ones were sheltered, while Fred prepared a hasty breakfast. We sat down to it facing the shore. Soon I thought I could see the form of my wife leaving the tent. We immediately signalled with a piece of sail-cloth, and received the pre-arranged reply, which consisted of a threefold waving of the flag on the shore. A load seemed to be lifted from my heart.

“Well, Fred, I thought that I would not waste a moment, but start off at once this morning for shore. But now that I know that my dear ones are all right, I have had time to think of the poor creatures on board. I should like to land a few of them.”

“Why should not we construct a raft,” said Fred, “and take them all with us?”

“But think, my dear boy: apart from the difficulty of construction, how are we going to get the donkey, the cow and the vicious pig on the same raft together and keep them quiet until we land?”

“Then we will just simply throw the pig into the sea as we shove off. It is fat, and will swim, and we can pull it after us with a rope.”

“That is indeed a heroic suggestion, my boy, but I am afraid it will serve us only in the case of the pig; yet the goats and sheep would be more useful.”

“Why, we can put cork jackets on these, and then they will be able to swim like fish, and give us lots of fun besides.”

“Your idea of fun, my dear Fred, gives me a new light. Let us to work at once!”

We captured a lamb, and, putting it into a cork jacket, threw it into the sea. I watched the animal with anxiety. At first the water

closed over it and seemed to engulf it; but presently it reappeared, kicked about, and swam—swam beautifully!—until, tired out, it stretched its legs and remained motionless.

“Capital!” I cried. “Now they are ours. But I wish the lamb was back again.”

Fred saw that we could not leave the lamb in the water all day waiting for us to get ready; so he promptly strapped on a cork jacket and jumped into the sea, taking a rope with him, with which he lassoed the lamb. He then gently pulled it towards the gap in the wreck, from whence we were able to get the animal on its legs again.

I now collected four water barrels, which I emptied and fastened



“Pushed it into the water.”

up again. Then I bound them together in couples, and stretched some strong sail-cloth across their entire length, so that it hung over from one to the other. This sail-cloth I intended for the support of the bodies of the donkey and the cow, so that the barrels might serve as floats at each side of them. We then fastened the barrels to the backs of the animals, and filled up the interstices with straw, so that they might sustain no injury from pressure. The entire appliance was attached by means of a belt across the chest, to prevent its slipping away over the hind legs of the animals. Thus the cow and donkey were fitted with floating apparatus in about an hour and a half. The pig gave us more trouble. Not until we had tied up its jaws could we fasten a cork jacket on it. But the goats and sheep were more easy to manage, until we finally got the entire flock on

deck ready for the journey. Each animal was further secured by means of a rope which we passed round its body or its horns and attached to a piece of wood which we could get hold of in the water, and by means of which we could draw it to us. Then we made an opening in the ship's side, through which we could shove the animals into the water. Fortunately the wind and waves had prepared things for us, so that all we had to do was to remove a few planks and boards. When we had made an opening, we selected the donkey for our first experiment. We led it up to the side, placed it sideways, and pushed it into the water. It fell heavily, and the water closed over it; but it soon reappeared, and swam so beautifully between its barrels that we loudly applauded it.

"Say, father," said Fred, "have you ever seen so small a donkey at home? I have often wondered at its size. Do you think it is very young?—and will it grow?"

"No," I said. "Don't you remember that we touched at Gibraltar, and that the captain bought it there? It is of the Algerian species; but although it is so small, it is very strong, and will be of great service to us."

It was now the cow's turn, and as I valued her much more, I was much more anxious about her. But she was floated as successfully as the donkey.

We then threw the smaller animals overboard, and they all swam comfortably round the wreck. The pig alone was unruly, and swam away from us, but luckily towards shore.

We ourselves did not waste a moment, but slipped on the cork jackets, jumped into our catamaran, and were soon in the open sea in the midst of our swimming flock. We then collected the floats attached to the ropes, tied the latter to our boat, and set our sail, which, favoured by the wind, wafted us towards shore.

We sat contentedly in our tubs, and enjoyed our impromptu lunch. Fred played with his monkey, while I, my soul going out towards those on shore, kept a sharp look-out for them with my spy-glass; for I had noticed on board ship that they had sallied forth on some expedition, and I had since then lost all trace of them.

This seriously interfered with our rejoicing at rescuing the cattle, when Fred, with his keen eye, suddenly announced an impending danger.

"Father! father!" he shouted, "we are lost! A monstrous fish is following us!"

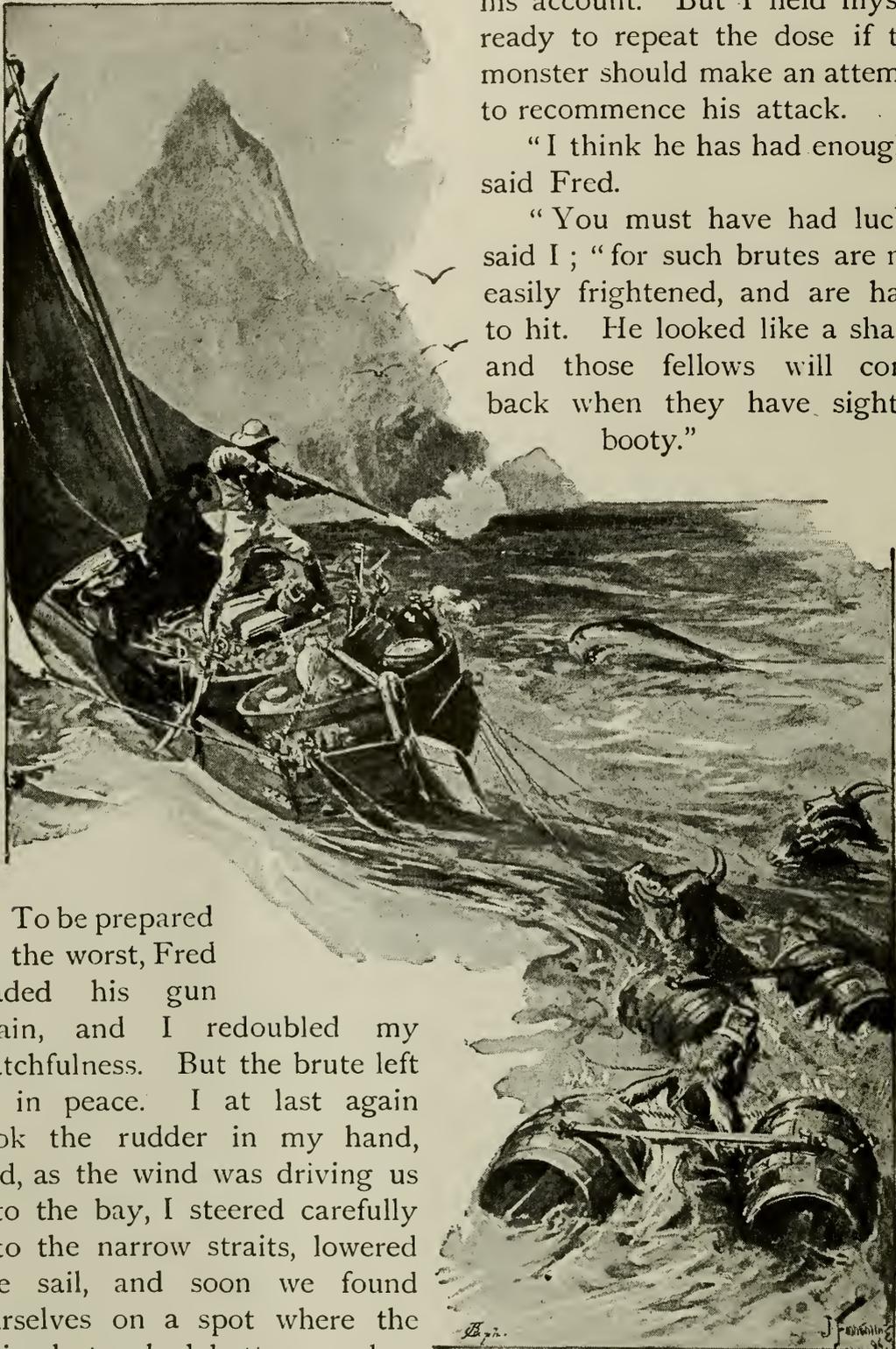
We both seized our guns, and stood ready to greet the marauder. He approached us from the front, and, darting past us, bore down rapidly upon the nearest sheep. Fred fired, and hit him in the

head, and he turned up, exposing from time to time his bright belly, while a bloody streak in the water showed that Fred had settled

his account. But I held myself ready to repeat the dose if the monster should make an attempt to recommence his attack.

"I think he has had enough," said Fred.

"You must have had luck," said I; "for such brutes are not easily frightened, and are hard to hit. He looked like a shark, and those fellows will come back when they have sighted booty."



To be prepared for the worst, Fred loaded his gun again, and I redoubled my watchfulness. But the brute left us in peace. I at last again took the rudder in my hand, and, as the wind was driving us into the bay, I steered carefully into the narrow straits, lowered the sail, and soon we found ourselves on a spot where the animals touched bottom, and so I let go the ropes, and they quietly walked on shore. Presently our boat was lying at its old landing place.

"Fred fired, and hit him in the head."

I was nevertheless uneasy to find that our people had not come to meet us. Evening was setting in, and I did not know where to look for them. But we had scarcely got on shore before a loud cheer broke upon our ears, and our young folk came jumping up, followed by their mother.

As soon as the first joy of meeting had subsided, I commenced, squatted on the ground, to tell the story of our adventures. Mother was surprised at the ease with which we had succeeded in bringing the animals.

"I have been racking my brains," she said, "thinking how you would manage to land the cattle. But I never thought of your plan."

"On this occasion," Fred said proudly, "I was the privy councillor whose advice was followed."

"He is right," I added; "and he deserves all praise."

"You both have my gratitude," said mother; "for you have saved what is of most value."

The children now began to admire the flag at the masthead of our boat, as well as the sail, and we had to explain to them how we had prepared them. We then proceeded to unload our cargo. This was a species of hard work which did not suit Jack, who slipped away, and began to divest the cattle of their cork jackets and swimming apparatus. He succeeded with the goats and sheep, but could do nothing with the do key, at whose appearance he laughed heartily; so he jumped on its back, and, seating himself between the two barrels, rode majestically up to us, flogging his noble steed manfully.

I was much amused at the little fellow, and lifted him off his seat, when I was astounded to find him equipped with a couple of small pistols, stuck into a hairy yellow belt.

"Where did you get that gipsy-belt from?" I asked.

"Made it myself!" he replied proudly; adding, "Look at the dogs!"

I now noticed that each of the mastiffs had a similar collar, fitted with a number of nails, thus making a formidable weapon.

"Well done!" I cried. "Have you invented and carried that out yourself?"

"Indeed I have; but mother did the sewing."

"But where did you get the skin from? and where did you find needle and thread?"

"Fred's jackal had to yield up his skin," said mother, "and every good housewife should be always supplied with needle and thread. You men may think of the big things; but you forget details, yet they help us out of many difficulties. That is why I took a few

trifles with me in my magic bag, and I hope we shall find them most useful."

Fred looked askance when he found that Jack had desecrated his jackal and cut the beautiful skin into strips; but he concealed his displeasure as best he could. Nevertheless, as Jack was standing between him and the wind, he suddenly exclaimed:

"Ough! what an awful stench!"

"Very likely," said Jack coolly. "That is probably my belt, which is still a little high, but the smell will go down when it gets dried;" and he strutted about, very indifferent to the sensitiveness of our noses. But the others ran off, and threw the remains of the jackal into the sea.

As I saw no signs of supper, I ordered Fred to bring forward the Westphalian hams; and when Fred produced one, his arrival was greeted with shouts of delight.

"Do not get excited, my children," said mother; "for if you do not get anything to eat till this is properly cooked you will have to wait a long time—perhaps until to-morrow morning. But I have brought you a couple of dozen of eggs from my expedition, and if Ernest is right, they are turtle eggs. With these I can make a splendid omelette, for we have lots of butter."

"Yes, they must be turtle eggs," said Ernest, "for they look like white balls, and they have a skin like damp parchment; besides, we found them in the sand on the beach."

"Then I daresay you are right," I said. "But how did you find them?"

"Thereby hangs a tale," said mother; "and if you will give me your attention, I will tell you the history of our day's proceedings."

"All right, mother," I replied. "But let us first have your omelette, and while we are eating, you can serve up your adventures by way of sauce. With regard to the ham, I may tell you that it is very eatable even in a raw state, although, of course, it is much better cooked. Meanwhile I will liberate the cow, the donkey and the pig from their apparatus; and I trust the youngsters will come and help me."

With these words I went off to the beach with the boys, and we worked away at the animals.

While we were thus employed, mother had got the omelette ready, and summoned us to supper. We now made ourselves thoroughly comfortable with plates, spoons, forks and all table requisites. What with ham, cheese, biscuit and eggs, we made a very respectable meal, and the dogs, fowls and cattle now surrounded us to look on. The ducks and geese, however, did not join the company, but preferred to

keep their wet feet in the water, which was much warmer than the land, and where they found a lot of worms and crawfish, which formed more succulent food. I was glad to see the number of our boarders thus reduced, for I felt that we might soon have neither time nor means to feed and look after all the animals in our care.

After supper I made Fred produce some champagne out of the captain's cellaret, and then settled down to listen to the thrilling story of mother's excursions and alarums while I had been away. But I first made her take a good drink of champagne to encourage her, and because I felt sure that I would be too much interested in her recital to suffer her to interrupt herself while she was telling me her story.

CHAPTER V.

BREAKING UP.

“ I DARE say,” mother began, “ that you are anxious to listen to me, but you have not given me a chance to put in a word all the evening. Now the pent-up waters of my talkativeness shall flow, and I will talk to my heart’s content.

“ As a special favour I will spare you the history of the first day, for, to tell the truth, nothing very remarkable occurred, as I kept timidly on this spot. This morning, however, after I had seen with joy your signal, I got up before the boys were awake to look for a shady place, and began to think seriously over our position.

“ I felt it would be impossible to remain much longer at our present place. The sun is broiling hot, and our only refuge is this miserable tent, in which the heat is even more unbearable. So I thought that while you were at work on the wreck, I would not be idle either. We should certainly gain in strength and courage if we could exchange this melancholy abode for a more pleasant and shady one. Yonder wood, I thought, probably contained a suitable place for us to settle in.

“ In the meantime the boys had got up, and Jack had crept to that side of the tent where Fred’s jackal was lying. With his pocket-knife he cut long strips, two hand-breadths’ wide, off the skin on the animal’s back, cleaned them of all flesh, and drove big nails, of the length of my finger, with broad flat heads, into them. He then cut a piece of sail-cloth, about twice the breadth of the strips of skin, folded it in two over the heads of the nails, and pleasantly suggested that I should sew it on to the fleshy side of the skin. At first I declined with thanks ; but as he began to fumble about with needle and thread, and tried to do it himself, I took pity on him, overcame my disgust, and complied.

“ I now had to prepare another strip for him, which he intended for a belt in which to wear his pistols. I pointed out to him that

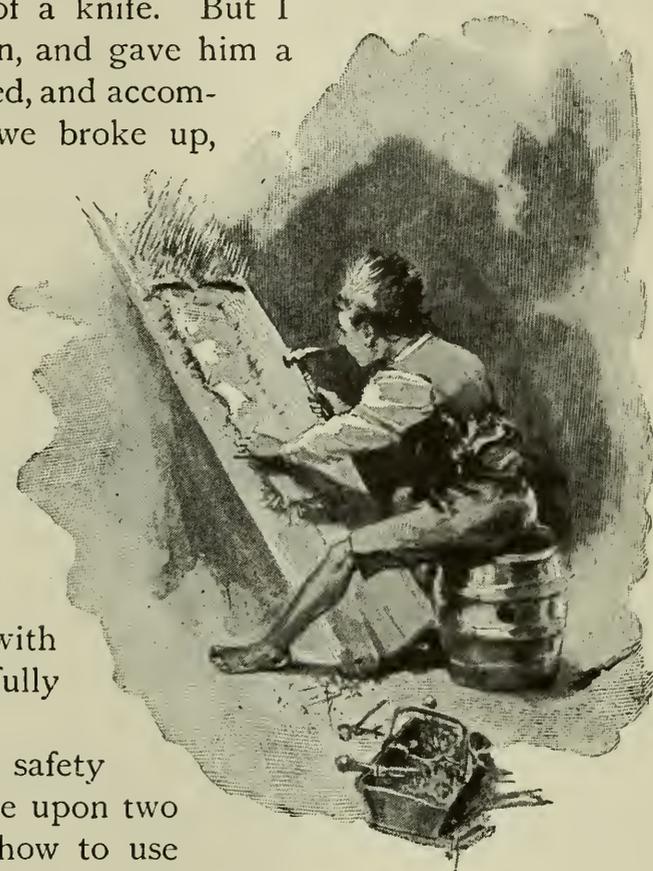
the heat of the sun had shrunk the skin, which was now good for nothing ; and Ernest suggested satirically that he should nail his belt to a board, to protect the skin from the sun. Jack adopted this advice, without paying any attention to his brother's chaff, and had speedily buckled on a board, with which he strutted about quite proudly.

"This being settled, I proceeded to unfold my plans in the event of your not returning soon, to which they all joyfully assented. Without loss of time we loaded our guns, selected some hunting knives, and packed some provisions on our backs. I took with me a water bottle, and an axe instead of a knife. But I shouldered Ernest's light gun, and gave him a fowling-piece. Thus equipped, and accompanied by our two dogs, we broke up, and started on our journey by way of the brook, for you still showed no signs of returning.

"Turk, who had been with you on your expedition, seemed to know at once that we were going the same road you went, and led the way. He showed us where you had crossed the brook, and with some difficulty we successfully got over.

"I reflected that our safety depended in a large measure upon two little boys, for they knew how to use their guns, and I felt so grateful to you for having taught them shooting at an early age, and for having instilled into them the virtues of courage and prudence.

"Having filled the water bottle at the brook, we continued our journey, and reached the rising ground, from whence we beheld that beautiful view which you had so glowingly described to us. At last I began to feel hopeful. For in the distance I saw a splendid little forest, and thither I determined to direct our steps. But the grass was so high that it nearly covered the heads of the little boys, and made all progress very hard work. So we turned to the left, and kept near the seashore until we got into the open and were able



Jack nails his belt to a board.

to walk without obstacles. We saw your footprints of the day before, and followed them closely until we were in a straight line with the wood, when we again left the shore, and made straight for the trees. On our way we encountered the long grass, which impeded our progress and fatigued us.

“Suddenly we heard a noise which frightened us terribly, and we beheld an enormous bird which flew up out of the grass. Each of the boys tried to get a shot at him, but before they could get ready the bird was flown.

“‘What a pity!’ said Ernest. ‘If I had had my light gun I would have potted that fellow.’

“‘Yes,’ I replied, ‘you would make a good sportsman, would you not, if you want all that time to get ready? Game does not usually announce when it is coming and when it is going to be off.’

“‘What bird was that, mother?’ asked Jack.

“‘An eagle, certainly,’ said Frank; ‘for it was terribly big.’

“‘As though all big birds were eagles!’ Ernest replied mockingly.

“‘Let us see where he has been sitting and what he has been about,’ I suggested.

“Jack immediately jumped off to the spot, when another, even bigger than the first, rose up before us with a terrific noise.’

“The boys stood dumfounded; but I laughed at them, and said:

“‘Oh, you great marksmen! You had hardly allowed one good roast to escape you, and had resolved to be alert and ready, when another gets off as easily. You have to learn much before you will be any good as sportsmen.’

“Ernest was so annoyed that he burst into tears, but Jack looked quizzingly after the bird, took off his cap, made a polite bow, and said: ‘To our next meeting, Mr. Bird, sir! Your very humble servant, sir!’

“Approaching the place from which the birds had risen, we found a huge kind of nest, made of dried reeds and grass, but entirely empty, with the exception of a few fragments of broken egg-shell. We looked to see whether the young ones had only just been hatched and had gone off in the direction of the waving grass in front of us, but we could find nothing, especially as the motion of the grass subsided.

“‘Now, Frank, my boy,’ said Ernest, ‘how about the eagles? Eagles do not build their nests on the ground, and their young are unable to run out of their eggs as these seem to have done. Only quails and partridges can do that.’

“‘Or possibly all fowl-like birds,’ I interposed; ‘for turkeys, peacocks, pheasants and others do the same.’

“‘But none of those have white bodies and bright red wings like those two whom we saw just now,’ Ernest replied. ‘By the way, I rather think they were bustards, especially as one of them had a kind of moustache on its beak—just like a bustard.’

“‘What a lot you seem to have noticed, instead of shooting!’ I remarked. ‘Fred in your place would have used his gun first and made his observations afterwards.’

“We had now reached the wood, towards which we had been travelling. A number of strange birds flew towards us to welcome us, and sang us their greeting. The boys made preparations to shoot them; but I prevented this, seeing that the trees were so high that it was doubtful whether our guns would carry far enough.

“But what wonderful trees they were! You cannot form any idea of them. I am sure you have never seen trees of such a size in all your life. What we had taken for a wood in the distance was but a copse of ten or fourteen trees. The most singular thing about them was that they were really growing in the air, and supported by enormous spreading roots, which had the appearance of holding the trunks in mid-air, although these were firmly rooted in the centre to the ground, but tapered down.

“I made Jack climb up one of these archlike roots and measure the thickness of the trunk of the tree. It took forty yards of packing thread to do it. To walk round the space occupied by the roots I had to make forty paces, and the height of the trunk, from the ground to the branches, was about forty yards also. The foliage and branches were dense, and afforded excellent shade. The leaves resemble the leaves of our nut trees, but I discovered no fruit. The ground under them was covered with a clean, smooth grass, and was free from undergrowth.

“I liked this place so much that I determined to make a halt here for dinner. Our bags were produced, a neighbouring brook allowed us to slake our thirst, and we stretched ourselves in this beautiful forest palace. Our dogs also came up, but to our surprise did not beg for food, but lay down at our feet apparently satisfied, and went off to sleep.

“I could not sufficiently feast my eyes on this charming place, and I thought that if we could only make our abode in one of these lofty trees we should be safe. I looked round, but in vain, for a spot that seemed more pleasant and better suited for our purpose; so I made up my mind to waste no more time, but to

return at once, and try to pick up whatever remnants of the wreck the sea might have washed ashore.

“But Jack would not let me go until I had finished sewing the collars for the dogs, as well as the belt, which he had dragged with him upon a board, and which was now perfectly dry. He had got me to sew ribbons to them, and with these he fastened the belt round his waist and stuck his pistols into it; whereupon he was so pleased with himself that he allowed Ernest to fasten the collars on to the dogs. So anxious was he to let you see him



“Most of the things proved too heavy for us to carry.”

that we had to follow him pretty quickly, so as not to lose sight of him.

“We found little on the beach, and most of the things that had been washed ashore proved too heavy for us to carry. But what we could we dragged inland, so as to save it from the tide; and during this work I discovered what the dogs had eaten, for I saw them watching for crabs, and dragging them adroitly by the leg on land, or even eating them voraciously in the water.

“‘Look, boys!’ I cried, ‘how necessity is the mother of invention! We have reason to thank God that He has provided food for

such gluttons, otherwise they would have devoured us in their greed !’

“‘How about my pistols?’ said Jack.

“‘Do not imagine,’ I said, ‘that they would have eaten us bodily—bones and hair and all ; but they would have devoured our provisions. Nevertheless, my poor little fellow, if they should really have taken it into their heads to gobble you up, I should be sorry for you. You would not be able to defend yourself very long. If I did not know all about you, I would take you for a bragging Gascon, rather than an honest Swiss.’

“While we were thus wending our way homewards and about to turn our backs on the shore, I noticed that the dog Bill had scratched up something round out of the sand and was swallowing it. Ernest noticed it also, and said composedly :

“‘Turtle’s eggs, no doubt !’

“‘Oh !’ I cried. ‘In that case let us save what remains, for they are good eating !’

“We had some trouble in getting our gluttons away from their succulent booty, but finally succeeded in capturing about two dozen eggs, which we carefully packed up in our bags.”

“Glancing accidentally across the sea, we were surprised to see a sail making for the shore. I did not know what to think of it ; but Ernest insisted it was you, while Frank began to fear that the savages were coming to eat us. But Ernest soon proved to be right, and we ran rapidly to the brook, crossed it, and were soon at the landing-place to welcome you.

“That, my dear, is the circumstantial account of our expedition ; and now, if you will do me a favour, we will move to-morrow, and settle on one of those beautiful trees.”

“Oh, mother !” I said, “is that all you have discovered for our future comfort and safety?—a tree forty yards high, upon which we are to roost like fowls ! How shall we get there without a balloon?”

“Make as much fun of me as you please,” mother replied ; “but my idea is not so bad after all. At least we shall have nothing to fear from jackals and such gentry ; and I remember a couple of linden trees at home, into the branches of which people were able to climb by means of a ladder, where there was a beautiful arbour on a wooden floor. What should prevent us from constructing a similar bed-chamber in those trees?”

“Well, we shall see what can be done,” I said.

As we had now finished our supper, and darkness had set in, we concluded to retire for the night, after our prayers.

When we woke up next morning, I said :

“Wifey, dear, you gave me a difficult problem to solve last night. We must take counsel about it. I think Providence has led us to the most suitable spot, both for our safety and sustenance. We are within easy reach of the wreck, and the cliffs round us shelter us so well that we need fear nothing except from the direction of the brook, across which there are only a few approaches. How would it be if we waited patiently for the present, until we had rescued all that can be saved from the wreck?”

“You are right, my dear, and your proposal is a good one,” she answered ; “but I have already told you that during the day this place is unbearable. You have no idea what we suffer from the sun’s heat. While you are at sea with Fred, or wandering among shady trees, enjoying delicious fruit, we have to collect a few oysters or catch a putrid penguin. Besides, as regards the great safety of this place, you have seen that the jackals found us out, and tigers and lions could do likewise. I do not want any more of the treasures of the wreck, for I see an abundance of salvage, and am always in a state of anxiety when I know you are on the treacherous sea.”

“How fluent your resolution has made your tongue!” I said. “But it is true—your reasoning is sound. Still we might fuse our mutual views and derive profit from the best. How would it be if we made your wood our dwelling-place, but reserved this spot among the rocks for our storehouse and fortress? If I blasted the banks of the brook at several places with gunpowder, no cat could get across. But our first care, if we wish to move off with bag and baggage, should be to build a bridge over the brook.”

“Then we shall have to wait an eternity before we can go!” she rejoined. “Why should we not pack up and be off? The donkey and the cow could carry the most necessary articles.”

“That they will have to do, of course; but in the meantime we shall want baskets and bags, and while you are getting these ready, the others can do a lot towards building the bridge. When that is once built, it will be always useful. Suppose the brook should overflow its banks and prevent us from crossing! Besides, I should not care about risking our sheep and goats; and even the boys may not always have the same luck in jumping over.”

“In God’s name, then,” she cried, “I submit! But you must work without interruption; and I hope you will leave the gunpowder behind you, for I do not like having such a quantity in our immediate neighbourhood.”

“We will parcel it out,” I said, “and bury it in the rocks, so as to preserve it from fire and damp. It is certainly our most dangerous

enemy, if we are not careful; but it is also our most useful friend, if we are prudent."

Thus the important question of change of domicile was settled, and our task for the day allotted to us. We woke the children, and imparted our plans to them. They were delighted; but would have gladly been excused from bridge-building, in order to be able to prance off at once to the pleasant wood, which they now christened "the promised land."

We all looked about for breakfast, and Fred allowed his monkey to refresh himself at the expense of the goat. Jack slipped up to the cow, and tried to milk it into his hat; but as he was unable to extract a drop, he laid himself down in imitation of the monkey, and commenced to suck the cow with a will.

"Would you like some too, Frank?" he said. "It is capital milk!"

This drew our attention to him, and we were much amused with what he was doing. His brothers laughed at him, but his mother reproved his greediness, for not waiting until the cow had been milked.

"Yes," said Jack, as he saw his mother milking successfully; "if I knew how, as you do, I would have milked her properly, and not have sucked like a monkey. But there must be some dodge about it."

They all watched their industrious mother, who proceeded to milk the cow and the goats in rotation, and served out the product to them. What remained she poured partly into the pot over the fire, in order to prepare a milk broth with biscuit, and partly into our water bottle, in order to keep it.

Meanwhile, I got ready my tub-boat to go off to the wreck and fetch boards for the bridge. We then had breakfast, and immediately afterwards I started with Fred and Ernest in the boat.

We paddled along as rapidly as we could so as to get into the current of the brook, and to be taken quickly out to sea. We had hardly passed the island at the mouth of the bay when we came upon a large number of mews and other birds, who nearly deafened us with their screams. Fred had a great wish to have a shot at them, and would have done so had I not stopped him; for I wanted to discover what had caused so large a number of birds to collect there. I therefore steered the boat out of the current, and then set the sail, so as to get back to the island under a favourable breeze.

Ernest was delighted to be with us, and to see the sail filling so splendidly. But Fred was all eyes, and kept watching the island, where the mews had again settled down.

"Aha!" he said at last; "I believe the birds are pecking at a huge fish, and are feasting on him without inviting us."

His surmise proved to be correct. Carefully we approached the shore, until the boat ran aground, and we jumped out, making an anchor out of a heavy stone, and waded to the beach.

Close to the water there lay a sea monster, upon whose body the birds had settled. They were so busy that they took little or no notice of us as we came up.

We walked round the various groups, and looked with astonishment at the greed and jealousy of these birds. Had we cared to do so, we could have killed dozens of them with sticks.

"I wonder where that monster could have come from?" Fred said. "Yesterday there was not a sign of him here."

"I say, Fred!" Ernest shouted, "I am sure that is the shark you punished so severely; for I see his head is all bloody, and he has three wounds in it."

"Yes," I said, "I am certain it is he. Ernest is right. Look, boys!—what terrible jaws he has! What an awful snout protruding over them! and what a rough, sharp skin: it would do to saw wood with! He is a big fellow, about twenty feet long. God be praised for delivering us from the jaws of this monster! But we should take a piece of his skin with us; for I think it would be useful. But will these hungry birds of prey let us get at him?"

At these words Ernest drew the ramrod from his gun, and made plenty of room for me, hitting right and left, killing many of the birds, and driving away the others. Fred now cut several broad strips of skin off the shark's body, very much as Jack had done with the jackal, and we got into our boat again.

I noticed with pleasure that a number of boards and planks had been washed ashore, and that we should thus be saved the trouble of sailing right up to the wreck. I therefore selected the most suitable, constructed a raft, loaded the planks on it, and took it in tow, so that four hours after our departure we were on our way back, and amply provided with materials.

During our return journey, Fred, at my bidding, attached some of the strips of shark's skin to the mast to dry, and stretched out others in the sun, while Ernest commenced to inspect the birds he had so manfully slain.

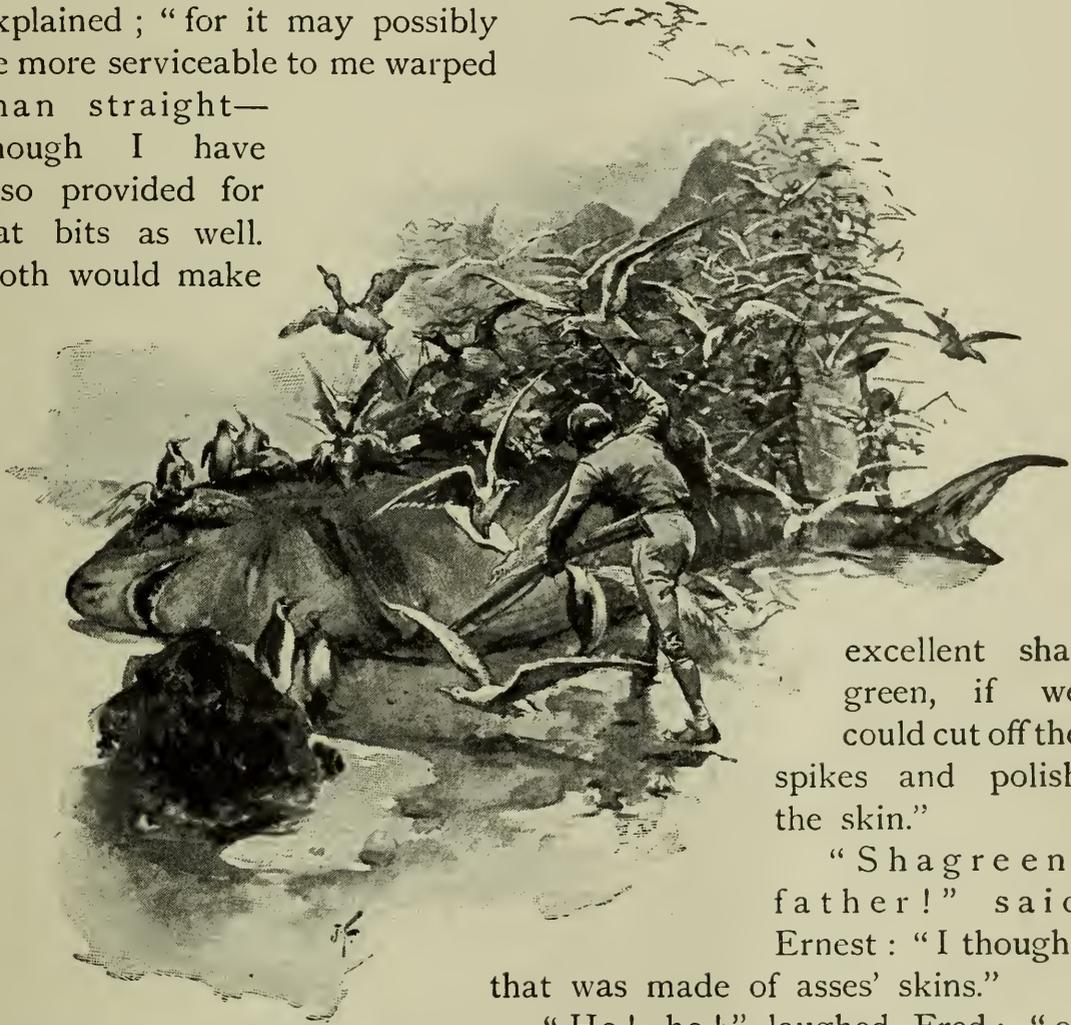
"Father!" he cried; "what birds are these? Are they not good to eat?"

"Hardly, my boy," I answered; "for I take them to be gulls which live chiefly on the carrion of fish, and this gives them a disagreeable flavour. There are many kinds of gulls, and they are mostly so

stupid that whalers have to kill them to get them out of the way when they have caught a whale, for the gulls settle on the whale's back and peck away at it, regardless of the whalers."

"Yes," said Fred; "if they had not been so stupid, or so blindly greedy, they would not have let themselves get killed with a ramrod. But why, father, did you make me fasten a piece of shark skin to the mast?—it will bend and get warped from it."

"That is just what I want," I explained; "for it may possibly be more serviceable to me warped than straight—though I have also provided for flat bits as well. Both would make



excellent shagreen, if we could cut off the spikes and polish the skin."

"Shagreen, father!" said Ernest: "I thought that was made of asses' skins."

"Ho! ho!" laughed Fred: "of asses' skins! Why not of boy's skin?"

"Ernest drew the ramrod from his gun, and made room for me, hitting right and left."

"Well, yes, my sarcastic gentleman, of asses' skins," I answered. "Ernest is quite right. In Turkey, Persia and Tartary the best shagreen is prepared from the skins of asses' and horses' backs. Seeds are passed into the soft and carefully scraped skin, which is then dried; the seeds are afterwards beaten out, and a rough surface is thus produced. But in France a very good shagreen is prepared from the skins of fishes, and it was of this that I was thinking."

"What a good thing," said Ernest, "that the shark has not got his mouth at his snout, but underneath it!"

"Why?" I asked.

"Well," he answered, "with his enormous greed and quickness, he would swallow all that came in his way, if he were not forced to turn to seize his prey, thus giving it a chance to get off."

"Not bad, Mr. Philosopher," I said. "Although we cannot always tell the intentions of the Creator, in the construction of His creatures, sensible conjectures beneficially exercise the mind."

Upon our return we found nobody to receive us on the beach, but this did not distress us as it had before. We shouted loudly until the others called back to us, and soon mother appeared, with the youngsters, from behind the rocks of the brook, each carrying something in a handkerchief, while Frank had a small fishing-net attached to a forked pole.

When they came near to us, Jack could not refrain from throwing up his handkerchief, and displaying before our gaze a number of crawfish. Mother and Frank followed his example, and presently there was a heap of crawling, quivering crawfish at our feet. But the little animals, set free, tried to make off, and the boys had their work cut out to recapture them. Shouts of laughter accompanied their efforts.

"These are the right sort, are they not, father?" said Jack. "There are thousands of them over there! We have brought over two hundred with us! Look how big some of them are, and what nippers they have got!"

"Who was the lucky finder?—you, yourself, no doubt?" I asked.

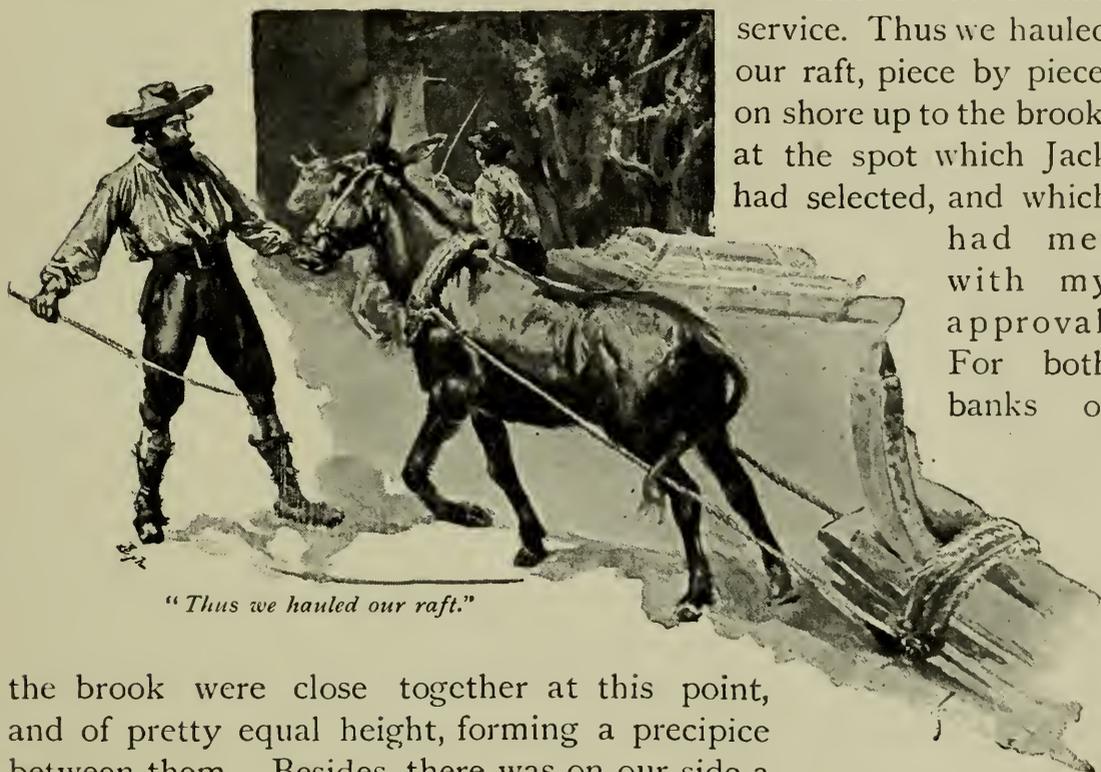
"No: little Frank was the chap; but I was the one who ran and told mother, and fetched the net, and waded up to my knees in water, and caught dozens of them. And now I will tell you how it all came about. While mother was sewing, I went off with Fred's monkey to have a look round and find the best place for the bridge."

"So," I said, interrupting him, "then your flighty mind had for once an important thought. The master has been reconnoitring, and now we, his journeymen and apprentices, will carry out his instructions. Never mind, my boy; it was a wise idea!"

"Well, we went along the brook, and Frank picked up a lot of coloured pebbles; and when he found a bright one, he would show it me and declare it was gold. Presently he got close to the water, and called out to me to come and see how many crawfish were feeding on the carcass of Fred's jackal. So I ran off to fetch mother, and we caught all these. Are they not a lot?"

“Yes. Even if we allow the smaller ones to escape, we shall still have a magnificent meal. And thus we have found a new source of supply. God be thanked for all His mercies!”

We then made our own report, and Ernest produced his gulls; whereupon mother prepared us a goodly portion of crawfish, whilst we were engaged in getting the timber on shore. This was not easy, for we had no means of harnessing our animals to it; but I bethought myself of the way the Laplanders harness their reindeer to their sledges. I made a loop at one end of a long rope, and slung it over the donkey's neck, so that the rope passed under its body and backwards beside its legs; the other end I fastened to the planks. The



“Thus we hauled our raft.”

cow had to do similar service. Thus we hauled our raft, piece by piece, on shore up to the brook, at the spot which Jack had selected, and which had met with my approval. For both banks of

the brook were close together at this point, and of pretty equal height, forming a precipice between them. Besides, there was on our side a convenient stump of a tree, against which I could lean my main beam, while a couple of strong trees on the opposite bank afforded likewise a good support.

“The question is,” I said, “whether our beams are long enough to reach across. I think they are. But I wish I had a surveying board; then I should know for certain—for I do not like guess work.”

“But mother has pack thread,” said Ernest. “We could tie a stone to a piece and throw it across; then we need only pull it back again, and we shall have found out the breadth of the chasm.”

I liked his idea, and put it into execution, and so discovered that we had a distance of eighteen feet to span. As, however, I

considered that the beam should overlap by at least three feet on each bank, we selected a good solid plank twenty-four feet long.

Our next difficulty was to get the long and heavy bits of timber across the brook, and this formed a good subject of discussion over our belated dinner.

We found the crawfish boiled and ready, and mother awaiting us. She had spent the morning sewing, and had prepared a couple of saddle bags of sail-cloth for the donkey's back, sewn with pack thread. As she had no needles large enough for this purpose, she had been obliged to punch holes with nails, and this had taken time and patience.

"That is just like our dear, splendid mother," I said admiringly. "But you have given me an idea. Do you see my poor ragged looking sail? Does it not fill your heart with pity? I cut it off a large bale of sail-cloth, as well as I could; but if you could manage to hem it, it would be much improved."

"Certainly, my dear, as soon as we have got a little peace and quietness in our nest in the trees," she answered smilingly.

Our dinner was soon over, and then we jumped up and went back to our bridge-building.

I laid a beam along the bank of the brook, and close to the stump, to which I fastened it at about four or five feet from its end, so that I could easily swing it round, while the short end was long enough to afford a leverage. I then fixed a long rope to the other end of the beam, to which I attached a stone, which I threw across. As I did not see my way to get the cow and the donkey over immediately, I took a rope and a pulley, and jumped from rock to rock across the brook. I then attached the pulley to a tree, drew the rope which I had thrown over into it, and, retaining the end of the rope in my hand, recrossed the brook. Now all was easy. The cow and the donkey were yoked to the rope's end and driven forward. The beam began to move gently round the stump, and kept fast, although its longest and heaviest end was already swinging in mid air over the brook. Presently it touched the opposite bank. Jack and Fred immediately jumped on and ran across. My heart leapt to my mouth, but I restrained myself from calling to them lest they should miss their footing and fall into the chasm below.

Having laid the first beam, our difficulties were materially reduced. A second and third were shoved across over the first, and laid next to it. All that remained was to place planks and boards crosswise upon this substructure, and the bridge was completed. My young folks danced over in the greatest glee, and I myself nearly cut a caper with pleasure. The bridge was about eight or nine feet wide,

and a grand success. I had not fastened the boards to the beams, because I thought it advisable to be able to remove them, and thus to render the passage of the bridge less easy when it suited us.

We were fairly tired out with our work, and as the evening was now upon us, we had supper and went to sleep.

The next morning my first care was to caution the boys never again to rashly run such risks as they had incurred the day before, bridge-building.

"We are now going to an unknown neighbourhood," I said, "and one that is less sheltered by nature than this. As yet we are ignorant of the country and its animals and its possible inhabitants. We must therefore be prudent and on our guard. On the march especially we must keep well together, so that no one runs too far in advance or straggles too much behind."

With this warning we said our prayers and had breakfast ; and then commenced to get ready.

The boys received orders to collect our flocks, and to bring up the donkey and cow to be loaded, to which these animals submitted patiently.

We had struck our hammocks and got everything ready, when mother came rushing up, excitedly saying :

"The fowls ! We cannot possibly leave them here for the night ! If we do, it is all over with them ! And then Frank must be put on the donkey : he cannot run along with us all the way. Then there is my bag ! Don't be in such a hurry !"

Fortunately I had been considerate of the donkey, and so I was able to plant little Frank between the saddle-bags, with his mother's bag as a rest for his back. He was very comfortable, and had so safe a seat that he could have galloped easily, especially as I had tied him to the donkey's back.

Meanwhile the others were trying to collect the fowls and pigeons, but without success.

"Never mind," said mother, as the boys came back empty-handed and disconsolate ; "we shall get them yet. To use one's head is better than to use one's legs or strength," and she began to call the fowls and pigeons gently to her, and to strew the ground with peas and seeds. The fowls approached timidly. Mother threw more seeds into the tent this time, and into this the fowls slowly tripped. While they were thus engaged, she softly crept up, shut the tent, and held them all prisoners.

"There, you see !" she said to the astounded boys.

She now sent Jack into the tent, like a fox, to bring them out one by one. We tied their legs together, and attached them as

well as we could to the load on the cow's back. A couple of half-hoops placed over them and covered with sail-cloth put them in darkness and ensured their quietness.

Whatever we were compelled to leave behind us that might be spoilt by the sun or the rain we carefully put into the tent, which we surrounded with empty tubs and commended to the protection of Heaven.

CHAPTER VI.

CHANGE OF RESIDENCE.

WE now commenced to move, equipped with guns and side-arms, carrying our bags on our backs, in heavy marching order, and all in the best of spirits. Mother and Fred formed the vanguard; the cow and donkey, with the knightly Frank, followed next. The goats, commanded by Jack, formed the third section. The monkey sat quaintly on Fred's back. Ernest led the sheep; and behind them—a watchful rearguard—I marched myself. The dogs acted as gallopers. There was something so patriarchal about all this that I could not refrain from shouting to Fred: "Now our ancestral life is beginning in earnest! I feel like a sort of semi-Abraham!"

"It's awfully jolly!" said Ernest. "Are there not entire nations which are always on the move like this, and always fit?"

"Quite true, my boy: Tartars, Arabs and others live that sort of life, and are consequently called nomads; but they have camels and horses, which are more comfortable and expeditious than a donkey or a cow. For my part, I hope this is the last journey of the kind that we shall undertake."

"God grant it!" said mother. "And I hope we shall like our new abode so much that we shall not wish to leave it. I will, nevertheless, willingly bear the blame of this fatiguing expedition."

Meanwhile I remembered Fred's telling me he should like to become a patriarch, and felt he was beginning his apprenticeship.

We crossed the bridge successfully, and our procession was made glorious by the addition of the pig. It had absolutely refused to join us hitherto; but, seeing us all departing, it finally gruntingly gave us its adhesion.

And now we were confronted by a fresh difficulty. The luxuriant grass on the opposite bank so fascinated our cattle that they all started grazing, and began to straggle about. I do not know what

we should have done with the greedy brutes if our dogs had not acted as our lieutenants, and brought them together again, barking furiously.

To prevent a repetition of this incident I commanded my army to march to the beach, where there was no grass.

But we had scarcely got on open ground when the dogs jumped back into the grass again, and began to bark and howl as though they had been wounded, or were fighting some formidable animal. Fred made ready to shoot. Ernest looked somewhat alarmed, and got nearer his mother, although he also got his gun ready. Jack ran after Fred, his gun slung behind him. Fearing some powerful beast had attacked the dogs, I also proceeded carefully, my gun prepared, after the boys.

In their eagerness the boys reached the place of combat before me, and Jack shouted :

“Come, father—look! An enormous porcupine!”

It was indeed : and the dogs were jumping round it, their mouths bleeding; and whenever one of them came too near, the animal drew itself together, and gave it such a dig with its prickles that some of them remained in the dogs' bodies, which made them howl horribly.

Without more ado Jack took out one of his pistols, and placed it as close to the porcupine's head as he dared, shooting the animal dead before we knew where we were.

“How rash!” said Fred angrily. “You might have hit father, or me, or one of the dogs.”

“Very likely!” said Jack, “when you were all behind me!”

“Fred is angry,” I said, “because he would have liked to kill the animal himself. Never mind! He may have another chance yet. Still, you were rather careless, Jack; but we won't spoil your pleasure on that account.”

Jack now gave the prostrate animal a few blows with the butt end of his gun to make sure of its being dead, and proceeded to drag it out of the grass, assisted by his brothers. But they only hurt their fingers, and retired discomfited.

But Jack was not to be beaten. He pulled out his handkerchief, tied it round the porcupine's neck, and dragged his booty thus to his mother.

“Look, mother! Is not this a splendid find?” he cried. “I shot it with my pistol! It is good eating: father said so.”

Ernest looked at it coldly, and said :

“It has incisors, and ears and feet almost like a human being.”

“Yes. You should have seen how it pitched into the dogs. It



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Exp.

“MOTHER AND FRED FORMED THE VANGUARD.”

is a terrible brute. But I went for it, shot at it, and—bang!—there it lay as dead as a door nail!”

“Oh, oh!” said Fred. “If it had really been so terrible, you would not have cared to get so close to it.”

Mother and I sat down and pulled the quills out of the dogs’ bodies, and inspected their wounds, while the boys examined the animal carefully.

“Is it really true that I have shot a porcupine?” said Jack exultingly. “I alone! Look what a tuft it has on its head!”

“That is why it is called the tufted porcupine, and in Latin *hystrix cristata*. But, confess, were you not frightened lest it should stick its quills into you?”

“Frightened indeed! I know that is only a fable!” said Jack boldly.

“How about the dogs? We have already pulled out six quills.”

“That is right enough,” he rejoined; “but if they had attacked the animal in front as I did, and if they had not thrown themselves so wildly over it, they would not have run the quills into their bodies. But as for its firing off its quills, that is nonsense!—I watched it carefully.”

“You are quite right, my valiant little fellow,” I said: “that is all nonsense. But an occurrence like the present may have given rise to the superstition. It is very remarkable that in natural history, where all is tangible, men have perpetuated more superstitions than in all the sciences and all religions—perhaps because nature seemed too simple and orderly for them. Rude races like crudities. Nature has been so overloaded with fable that our men of science have not yet succeeded in divesting her of all of it. Still, this example will show that there is generally a foundation of some sort for every tradition. But what shall we do with our booty? Shall we take it with us, or leave it here?”

“Oh! please, please, do let us take it with us!” Jack entreated; “it is such good eating!”

I could not resist him, and tied the porcupine to the donkey’s back, behind Frank and the bags. I wrapped the head in grass, put back the fretful quills, and covered the body with a blanket. This done, we continued our journey.

But we had scarcely proceeded a hundred paces before the donkey began kicking desperately, and bolted, plunging wildly, with Frank sticking manfully to its back. We were convulsed with laughter; but I sent the dogs after it, and they stopped the fiery steed.

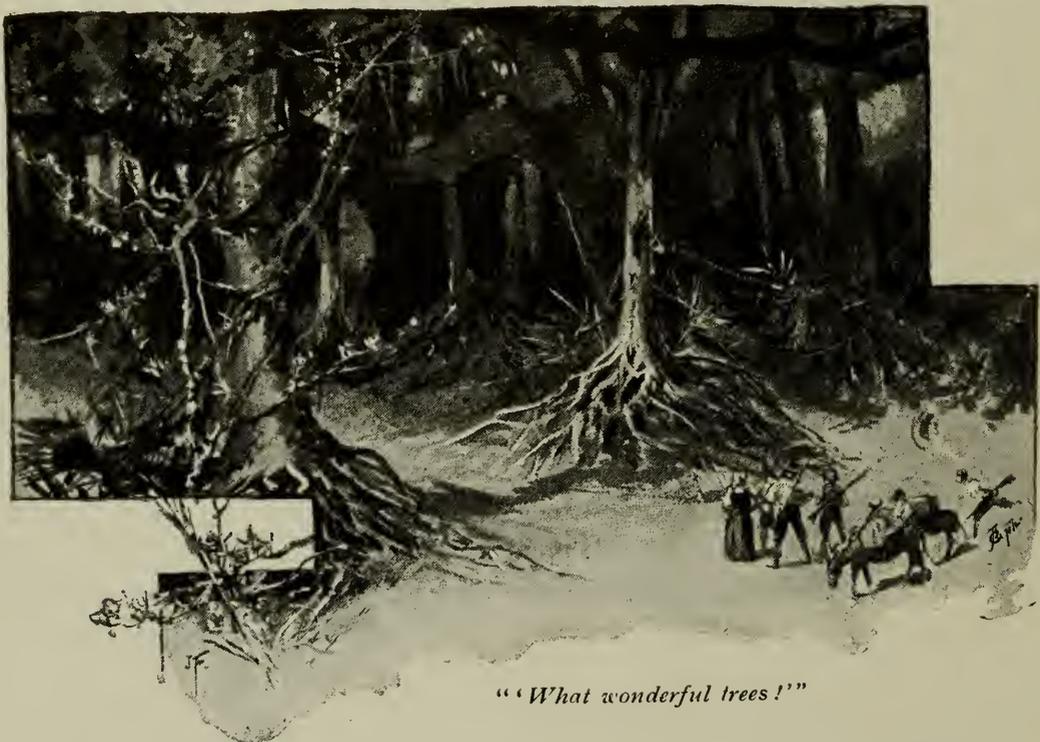
Frank was very proud of having kept his seat, though he had been securely tied on, and had enjoyed the stampede. I immediately

examined the donkey, and discovered that the quills of the porcupine had worked their way through the blanket, and had thus spurred the donkey's back.

I changed all this by tying the porcupine over mother's bag, and put another blanket under that, and started once more.

Fred preceded us, with his gun ready, hoping to encounter even higher game than Jack's porcupine, especially as mother had made his mouth water with her account of the partridges she had seen. But we arrived at our destination without any fresh adventures.

"Hulloa! What wonderful trees!" shouted Ernest. "They are tremendous, father; are they not?"



“‘What wonderful trees!’”

"Indeed," I said, "I had not expected this! Mother, I congratulate you! This would make a beautiful dwelling-place. If we can manage to climb into those trees, and build a nest there, we shall be completely sheltered from animals. Why, even a bear, although he is so good a climber, could not get up there!"

We unpacked our goods and chattels, and tied the fore feet of our cattle, with the exception of the pig, together, so that they could not get away, but we gave the pigeons and fowls their liberty. We then squatted on the grass and took counsel. I was particularly exercised about where we were to pass the night and the danger we were exposed to from wild beasts if we camped on the ground. Suddenly Fred jumped up and disappeared, and immediately we heard two shots in quick succession.

"Hit him!" shouted the boy, with the enthusiasm of a born sportsman, and came running up to us, crying: "Father, father! come and see! Such a splendid tiger-cat!" and he lifted up the animal by its hind legs and showed it us.

"Well done, my boy!" I said. "You have done knight-errant's service for the pigeons and fowls. That fellow would have saved us the trouble of roasting them this very night. But take care! perhaps there are a few more such marauders about. If the brood has taken root here we shall have to exterminate it."

"But," Ernest asked, "why has God created all these bad animals?"

"It is not for us, my boy," I replied, "to search the ways of God. With regard to beasts of prey, however, I believe they are intended to display the variety and beauty of creation; and that they, while enjoying life in their own way, help to keep a balance in the animal kingdom, and make use of much that would otherwise be useless. Finally, they render many services to man."

"Why," said Jack, "we should be eaten up by mice, rats and sparrows if cats, weasels, sparrow-hawks and owls did not make war upon them!"

"Besides, dogs are little more than tame wolves," said Fred, "and yet they are our most faithful friends."

"Well argued, my boys!" I cried. "And what would people do in cold countries if they could not obtain the skins of these wild beasts?"

"In that case they could use the skins of seals," said Ernest philosophically.

"Quite so, professor," I replied; "but seals live in the water, and are quite as much beasts of prey as the others."

"Well then," he continued, "there are the feathers of the birds; the down of swans and geese."

"They are not so useful as the skins of quadrupeds; and these are the means of opening up trade between savage and civilised countries. Besides, the chase is a wholesome and stimulating occupation, from which even civilised nations derive many benefits. It makes us hardy and courageous."

"That is all very well," said Jack; "but of what use on earth can fleas and bugs and such parasites be?"

"They teach man, whom they plague, the valuable lesson of cleanliness. But to return to our quarry: tell us, Fred, how you shot it."

"With my pistol," said Fred.

"Not in the trees?" I asked.

"No," Fred answered. "I saw something moving in the branches, and spied the spotted cat; so I shot at it with my gun, and that brought it to my feet. But it jumped up again immediately, and tried to get back into the trees. Then I let it have my pistol, and that did for it."

"You were lucky it did not go for you!" I exclaimed; "for these animals, when they are wounded, do not appreciate jokes. I suppose you shot at it from some distance?"

"Not a bit of it," Fred replied: "I had no wish to risk wasting my shot. No: I stood close to him, and held the pistol at his ear."

"Ha, ha!" I laughed; "you are as good a marksman as Jack, who shot the porcupine! Yet you made no end of fun of him. Let everybody do the best he can, and do not spoil sport."

"I hope Jack won't spoil mine," said Fred, "as he did the jackal. Look at the beautiful skin, with the dark brown spots and stripes on the yellow ground! What sort of cat is it, father?"

"For the present you may stick to your first description, and call it a tiger-cat. But I do not think it is the same as those found on the mountains of the Cape of Good Hope. It is more like the margay of America, which is an extremely dangerous animal, and I am particularly pleased that you have killed it, for the sake of our fowls, and even our sheep and goats."

"But, father," pleaded Fred, "may I keep the skin? I wish I knew what use to make of it."

"If you will strip it off yourself," I said, "and take care not to injure the legs, I will make a suggestion, though scarcely, perhaps, a useful one. The tail would make a capital belt; the four legs will serve as cases for knives, forks and spoons; and the body, cut into four pieces, would make covers for the cases."

"And what can I do with my porcupine skin?" asked Jack.

"The four legs would also serve as cases, for Fred can only furnish four; but, as there are six of us, we should have half a dozen. Of the rest of the skin we can make fresh collars for our dogs, and the few quills on the legs we can keep to use as needles for pack thread, and as lance heads if needful. But it would be a splendid thing if we could make a complete coat of armour out of the skin as a protection to one of the dogs."

"Oh, how jolly!" cried Jack. "Just like the pictures which one sees of boarhounds in leather coats!"

The boys would not give me any peace until I had hung their animals by the hind legs to the trunks of trees, and shown them how to skin them. Ernest was despatched to collect large stones for a

hearth, and Frank had to go in search of twigs and branches for the fire, by which mother was to prepare our dinner.

Ernest soon found a sufficient quantity of stones for our purpose, and on his return asked me whether the trees were nut trees, for their leaves looked as though they might be.

“Trees with similar leaves are not necessarily of the same kind. Besides, these are not alike. For these leaves are paler and whiter underneath than those of nut trees. I remember reading that mango and wild fig trees are thus lifted in the air by their roots.”

“I thought mangoes grew only on the sea-shore and on damp, boggy ground,” said Ernest.

“That is partly true, my boy,” I replied, “with respect to the black mango tree. But there are also red mangoes, which have small berries like currants, and whose roots do not rise out of the ground. These grow at a good distance from the sea. Their wood can be used for making red dyes, just as the bark of the black ones is used for tanning. There is, finally, a third species, which are called mountain mangoes or yellow wood, and they have roots just like these.”

Frank now arrived, with his arms loaded with twigs and his cheeks puffed out, for he was eating something and enjoying it.

“Excellent!” he cried; “excellent!”

“What is it, you greedy boy?” cried mother nervously. “Take care you do not swallow it! It may be poisonous! Take it out of your mouth at once!”

With these words mother seized the boy, and pulled the remains of a small fig out of his mouth.

“Where did you get that?” she asked. “Thank God, our fears were groundless! I do not think these are poisonous figs.”

“I found it in the grass yonder,” Frank replied, “where there are thousands of them; and as they tasted well, I did not think them poisonous. Besides, the pigeons, the fowls and the pig are gorging themselves with them.”

“So you see, mother,” I said, “that our handsome trees are fig trees, or rather what are called fig trees on the Antilles, for they cannot be compared to our fig trees which we grow in pots. Now I remember that mango trees have round and not oval leaves, like these. I must, however, caution you, children, against tasting any fruit you may find until I have decided whether it is poisonous or not—especially, do not be guided by the taste. But, if I should not be at hand, remember in any case that only such fruits are wholesome which the birds or monkeys will eat.”

“How about the cocoanuts?” asked Ernest, “which are very good, but which no birds will eat.”

I laughed, and said: “If the cocoanuts were not so big and heavy and so hard, the birds would certainly not despise them. But of course there are fruits which are not injurious to man and which may be poison to certain kinds of birds. Take bitter almonds, for instance, which are death to fowls and parrots. But these are rare cases, and in general my rule will hold good. Only I would rely less upon our own fowls than on those of the country, for ours may perhaps have partly lost their natural instincts. But our monkey is sure to be a safe guide.”

The boys now surrounded Frank, and proceeded to search his pockets to see whether he had not concealed a few figs. When they had found some, they offered them to the monkey, who was making grimaces on the root of a tree, and who ate them with gusto, for which he was rewarded with cheers.

Mother had succeeded in making a fire, and began to prepare our dinner; while I assisted Jack in his work of skinning. Both porcupine and cat were soon skinned, and the carcass of the latter was thrown to the dogs, who devoured it voraciously. The porcupine was disembowelled, cut into pieces, and destined partly for the pot and partly for roasting. I now took the quills, and with a nail, which I heated in the fire, made holes in them, so that they could be used as pack-thread needles, to the delight of mother, who promised to set to as soon as she could and hem the sail.

I now recollected that we had no traces for our cattle; but I counselled mother to be careful with her pack thread, for we would want it to climb the trees with.

We tried to knock some figs off the trees with sticks and stones, but failed, from want of practice and owing to the height of the trees.

Repulsed in this endeavour, we went to a brook which was close at hand, and softened the skins in the water, leaving them there with stones on them to keep them in position.

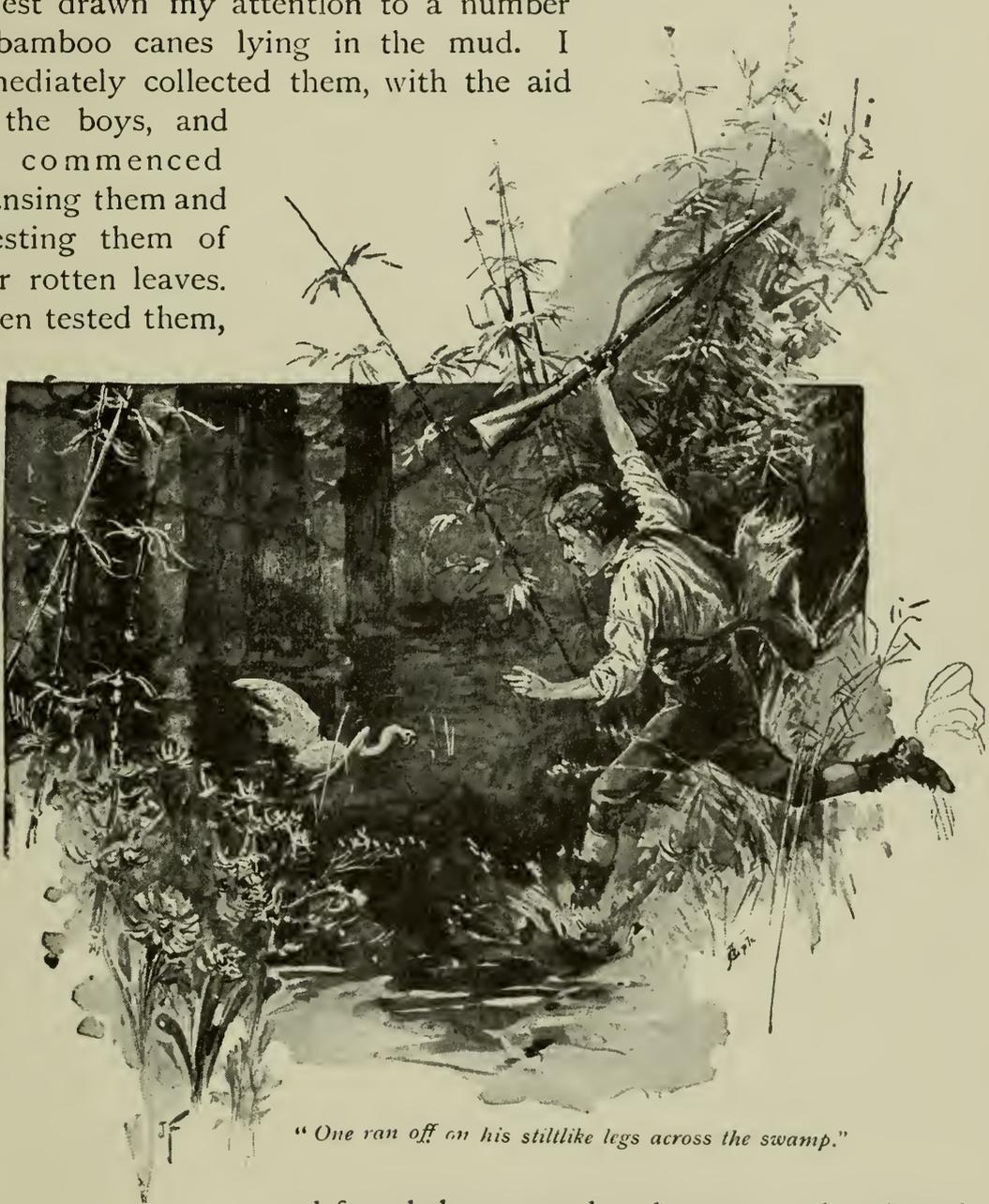
Dinner had by this time been got ready, and we found the porcupine capital.

After dinner I said to my wife: “For the present I am afraid we shall have to camp on the ground, for I do not see how we are to get into the tree to-day. You work at the traces, so that the donkey and cow can bring up as much timber as we may require when I have hit upon a plan of getting into the trees.”

While mother set to work, I slung the hammocks from the roots, which was an easy job, and I also managed to make a sort of covering of sail-cloth.

Fred, Ernest and myself now ran off to the shore to inspect the timber which had been washed up by the tide, and to see whether I could find suitable material for a ladder of ropes.

There was certainly a lot of timber on the shore, but it was in such a condition that it would have filled me with despair had not Ernest drawn my attention to a number of bamboo canes lying in the mud. I immediately collected them, with the aid of the boys, and we commenced cleansing them and divesting them of their rotten leaves. I then tested them,



"One ran off on his stilllike legs across the swamp."

and found them sound and strong, and eminently suited to my purpose. I therefore began cutting them up with my axe, in lengths of from four to five feet, and divided them into three equal bundles, so that we could carry them back easily. I also looked round for a few slighter canes to make darts with, by means of which I intended to make my ascent into the trees, and discovered some bushes of reeds which seemed suitable, but required a nearer inspection.

We were all armed with guns, and, accompanied by Bill, marched upon the reeds as though we intended to carry them by storm.

Suddenly Bill bolted into the bushes, and started a flight of beautiful flamingoes. Fred let fly instantly, and brought down two of them. One was dead, the other only winged, and jumped up again immediately, and ran off on his long, stiltlike legs across the swamp and reeds. I ran after the fugitive, who was caught up by Bill, and held down till I arrived. I took the bird under my arm, and carried it with some difficulty back to the others. The boys were delighted, and looked forward towards taming it.

Fred, who inspected it carefully, cried :

“The flamingo has web feet like a goose, and legs like a stork ! That must be a great rarity.”

“No, not very,” I replied ; “there are several swamp birds like that.”

“But,” he asked, “are all flamingoes so beautifully pink, with purple wings, like this one ? I thought I saw some in the flight of different colours, or were those other birds ?”

“Very likely, although of the same species,” I answered ; “and, if I am not mistaken, the young flamingoes are grey, when they grow older white, and when they grow to their full size they develop these beautiful colours.”

Meanwhile I commenced selecting canes that had withered, for I knew that the savages make darts out of the points of these. I also cut off two of the longest reeds to measure the height of the trees with. When I explained this to the boys they laughed at me, and said that, even if I tied ten of these miserable reeds one to the other, I should still scarcely reach the lowest branches. But I told them to be patient and wait.

Well loaded up, we returned to our tree, where the flamingo gave great pleasure, although mother remarked that she did not know where we should find food for all our animals. Undismayed, I investigated the wounds of the poor bird, and discovered that both wings were damaged at the joint—one by the shot, the other by Bill. Not being much of a doctor, I decided to cut away both joints with a large pair of scissors, which made the bird bleed badly ; and in order to stop this, I applied a hot coal to the wounds, which acted like a charm. I then anointed them with butter, and, tying a rope to the flamingo’s leg, I attached it to a peg near the brook, and left it there.

While I was thus engaged, the boys tried to measure the tree

with the reeds I had cut ; but they scarcely reached above the roots, and so they commenced laughing at my proposal.

At this I took the shortest of the reeds, and cut it to my own height. I then planted it in the ground at some distance from the tree, until it reached to my eyes. The second reed I planted between the first and the tree, and made it twice the length of the first. I made Fred walk from the centre of the tree—which I had indicated with a piece of white paper—towards me, with the reed and a piece of string, in a straight line, until I could see from the point of my reed, over the top of his, the lowest branches of the tree. Here I made him stop and plant his reed. The string now extended from the centre of the breadth of the tree, past the two reeds, and a little further on, where it was secured by means of a peg. This formed the base of our upright triangle, of which the tree was one of the sides, and the third line of which was invisible and passed from the extreme peg, over the reeds, up in the air to the lowest branch.

The next thing to do was to describe this triangle, or one like it, on the ground ; and this I did as follows :—

Another string was extended from the centre of the tree, and attached to the same nail as the first, with which it was at right angles. The end of this string was also fastened in the ground by a peg. I made notches in the two reeds in the places where they touched the ground ; I then took them out of the ground, and laid them down, so that they rested on the string upon which they had formerly stood. Finally, I laid a third string from one peg to the other, so that it passed the points of the two reeds. And now I had a large rectangular triangle of strings lying measurable on the ground.

“Now, then, my boys, my work is done !” I cried. “The height of the tree to the branches is measured. Who will tell me what it is ?”

“You are making fun of us !” the boys shouted. “Nobody has been up to see.”

But Fred, who had some vague and hazy notion of what had happened, said : “I think the tree is as high as the length of the second string from the trunk.”

“Quite right : you have hit it,” I replied. “But if it is not merely a guess, you must tell me your reason.”

“Well, I feel as though I knew why, but I cannot find the words to express myself,” said Fred.

“Then I suppose I must explain it for you,” I said. “My calculation is based on the geometrical law that, when

three sides of two triangles are equal, the triangles themselves are equal."

"That is all very well," said Ernest, "but here we have only one triangle."

"Yes, so it would seem," I replied; "but I had an imaginary one besides in the air. You see, the first cord is the base of my two triangles: therefore this is equal in both. The tree from which it starts is vertical and at right angles with it. The second slanting line which we have made in the grass is also at right angles with that first cord. Finally, you see the cord which passes across the two reeds and connects the two pegs: that cord is at an acute angle with the peg at the short reed, and indeed at a similar angle to the one at which the cord would have been which should have passed up in the air in my imaginary triangle, over the tops of the reeds, up to the lowest branches. Hence the triangle on the ground has two angles and one side absolutely equal with the imaginary triangle in the air, of which one side is described by the tree; and therefore the cord to the left there, which is attached to the second peg, must be just as long as the trunk of the tree."

"All that is beyond me," said Jack; "but it is lucky, father, that you hit upon the idea."

"My dear boy, if I had not learned all about it when I was your age, I should be in a bad way now. Youth is given us for learning in, and when we are grown up we can apply our knowledge to life."

"For all that," said Jack, "we do not know even now what the height of the tree is."

"But with your assistance," I said, "we can soon ascertain it if you will be so good as to measure the string with a measuring tape."

"How wonderful!" Jack exclaimed. "Let me see: just forty feet—no more nor less! So I am the one who has measured the tree after all! There is more in me than I thought!"

"There is a regular braggart in you," I answered, laughing.

The question now was whether we had eighty feet of strong rope for a ladder. Fred and Ernest measured our supply, and the others wound up the thread on the ground. I meanwhile made a bow out of a piece of bamboo, and cut up a number of darts out of the reeds. These I kept blunt at the tops, and filled them with damp sand, so as to give them weight. To the ends I attached flamingo feathers, so that they might fly straight.

The boys were delighted. "A bow and arrows!" they cried.

"What *are* you going to do with them?"

"Patience, children!" I said. "This is not a toy, but has been prepared for a serious purpose. Mother, have you any red tape?"

Of course she had some in her wonderful bag! She seemed to have thought of, and put, everything into it.



"The boys cheered, and wanted to climb up at once."

I inserted them into the twist of the ropes at intervals of about a foot, while Jack had to drive a nail into each end of the bamboo rungs. Presently I had inserted forty rungs, and my ladder was completed, to the no small astonishment of mother.

Fred now came up, and reported that we had about fifty fathoms of rope.

I tied the red tape to an arrow, and shot it over a branch, so that the tape hung over it. By this means we were able to pull a rope up to the branch.

To prepare a ladder of ropes was my next task. I cut a length of about a hundred feet from my rope, and divided it in two; it was of the thickness of my thumb. Placing the two ropes side by side at a distance of a foot and a half from each other, I made Fred cut the bamboos into lengths of two feet. Ernest had to hand them to me, and

The ladder was attached to the rope which was hanging over the branch, and was presently hoisted into position. The boys cheered, and wanted to climb up at once. But I chose Jack as the best suited to make the first ascent, being both light and nimble. As soon as he had reached the branch, Fred followed cautiously, and made the ladder securely fast.

I now trusted myself to the ladder, and took my pulley with me, which I fastened to a branch immediately over the one to which the ladder was attached. Now all was ready for the morning, and I decided to finish my labours, for by this time the moon was out.

Hardly had I got down when I discovered to my dismay that Jack and Fred were missing. I looked up, and saw them sitting at the very top of the tree, where they were gaily singing. Instead of getting down, they had climbed up higher. I called to them to come and help me arrange a night's lodging for the cattle, and make a fire, by means of which I hoped to keep off the jackals. Frank complained of the heat, and objected to be roasted at a hot fire all night. I had to explain to him that all wild animals were afraid of fire, and that this was our best means of security.

Mother had finished the traces for the donkey and cow, so that I foresaw we should be able to start upon the building of our nest the next day.

We strewed some seeds for the fowls, and gave the goats and sheep some food, so that they might get used to collect round us every night. But I noticed with pleasure that the pigeons flew into the branches of the tree, and that even the fowls ascended the rungs of my ladder to roost upon the branches.

We tied our quadrupeds to the roots of the tree, near our hammocks, and they presently stretched themselves to rest. We did not even forget the flamingo, whom we refreshed with milk, and attached also to a root. He immediately put his head under his right wing, lifted his left leg, and went incontinently to sleep.

Our own turn came next. While mother prepared our supper, we collected faggots in heaps all round the tree; and I intended to light at least two of them before nightfall, and to light the others in the course of the night, for I did not mean to sleep much.

After supper the boys, by way of dessert, pitched into the figs, which they greatly enjoyed. But they were soon yawning in chorus, and so I packed them off into their hammocks, where, however, they did not keep quiet long, complaining loudly of the discomfort of sleeping in bags. I made them lie aslant, with their heads in one

corner and their feet in the opposite corner, and told them that hardy Swiss boys should be ashamed of complaining of beds in which sailors managed to sleep comfortably.

During the first part of the night I was very uneasy, for I had little confidence in our safety, and every rustle of a leaf gave me a turn. Every now and then I got up to keep the fires alight. But towards the morning I slept soundly, and nearly overslept myself.

CHAPTER VII.

A SUNDAY UNDER THE FIG TREE.

AS soon as I awoke I roused the others, and we immediately had breakfast and got ready for work.

After mother had milked the animals and fed them, she went off with Ernest, Jack and Frank towards the sea, taking the cow and donkey with her, in order to bring up the timber lying on the beach.

In the meantime Fred and I ascended the tree, and began to make arrangements for their reception. Everything was favourable. The branches were fairly close together, and the big ones extended almost straight from the trunk. Those which did not suit us we sawed or hewed off; those which stretched out underneath I left, intending them for the floor. I also allowed a few others, six feet above us, to remain, for the support of our hammocks; and, higher still, I selected a densely growing number of branches to serve as a roof to our castle in the air, to be constructed, for the present, of sail-cloth.

All these preparations took time, so that mother had been able to bring two loads of timber. By means of the pulley I began to draw these up piece by piece, and to construct the floor, which I made double, so as to prevent accidents from the slipping of a plank or so. Along the edge of this floor I erected a breastwork of planks, as a protection against toppling over. In this way the morning was soon spent, and nobody had been able to think of cooking a meal, so that we were obliged to put up with a cold lunch, after which we started afresh, until our harbour began to assume pleasant and inviting proportions. We unfastened the sail-cloth and hammocks from the roots below, and pulled them up in rolls by the aid of the pulley. Stretching the sail-cloth over the branches which covered our new dwelling was hot work. As the ends hung down to a considerable distance, I hit upon the idea of nailing them fast to our breastwork, and thus to

construct two walls at the same time. The trunk of the tree formed the third wall, while the fourth side of the dwelling remained open, to admit of our entrance from the ladder, and to afford us a good look-out. Our hammocks were soon slung, and thus towards evening our new abode was ready for occupation.

Cheerfully I descended with Fred, and, finding some planks still remaining, I proceeded to construct a table and a couple of seats between the roots of the tree, which would enable us to eat and work in comfort. I am afraid I bungled sadly over this, for I was very tired; nevertheless I succeeded in making a fairly good job of it. Meanwhile, mother prepared supper, and the boys collected the branches I had sawn off, and arranged them in bundles for firewood.

Fatigued with my labours, I threw myself down and wiped the perspiration from my brow, and said:

“Well, mother, to-day I have worked like a horse, but I mean to have a good rest to-morrow.”

“That you shall, my dear” she replied; “for I have been reckoning it out, and find that to-morrow will be Sunday, and that we have already allowed one Sabbath to pass unnoticed on this coast.”

“You conscientious soul!” I exclaimed: “you seem to have thought of everything. Well, to-morrow shall be kept. I knew we had missed a Sunday, but I think it was pardonable, considering the circumstances. But now that we are settled for the next few months, there will be no excuse for not keeping the Sabbath in our usual way.”

“Well,” she replied, “I am looking forward with pleasure to spending a whole day in contemplating what I value most precious. We will surprise the boys to-morrow, and now we will make preparations for the night. You have constructed the castle in the air splendidly, and I will now venture to spend my first night



Towards evening our new abode was ready for occupation.

in it. I see you have arranged things so well that we shall not only be safe up there, but in much less danger than on the ground, where we might be attacked by wild beasts. Let us call the boys to supper."

The boys were not long in responding to our call, and mother produced from the hearth an earthen pot, of which she made a great mystery. When the cover was removed, we were told that it contained the flamingo which we had shot the day before; but that, as Ernest had warned her of its being an ancient bird, mother had not boiled, but had steamed it.

The culinary forethought of Ernest caused much amusement; but we found it was justified by the result, and devoured the bird with satisfaction.

During supper the surviving flamingo joined us quite confidently with the other fowls. He had grown so tame that we had released him from his peg, whereupon he strutted about as though he were a member of our family and had no intention of leaving us. The monkey also had got over his shyness, and amused us all day long with his tricks, for which the boys invariably rewarded him with some tit-bit or other.

Finally the pig sauntered up: we had lost sight of it during the last couple of days, and it had foraged for itself. It grunted with pleasure on seeing us once more, and received in consequence the remains of the milk which mother had freshly got for us, and of which we had all had our fill. I was at first inclined to reprove mother for her prodigality. But she pointed out that until we were more settled, and especially until we had more utensils, there was no use for all the milk; for as yet we were unable to make either cheese or butter of it, and that it would get sour in a single day, owing to the heat of the climate and the want of a cellar. It was therefore much better to give it to the animals; whereby we saved our other provisions, and accustomed them to collect round us.

"You are quite right," I said. "I shall get some salt shortly, and next time I go to the wreck I must get fresh provisions for the fowls."

"I wish you would put that wreck out of your head," my wife replied. "I am in a state of deadly fear when you are away on that wreck, lest something should happen to you."

"Of course there is always a risk," I answered; "but it would be criminally foolish of us to lose all the provisions which may still be found there on account of that, especially with the sea as calm as it is now."

Having made our fires again for the night for the protection of the animals, we now climbed into our tree. The boys were up in a jiffy. They were followed nervously by mother. I came last, taking care to disengage the ladder from the pegs by which I had fastened it to the ground. It now swung free in the air, and increased the difficulty of my ascent, especially as I had taken Frank on my shoulders, for I did not like to let the little fellow climb up by himself. When I succeeded in reaching the top, I pulled up the ladder after me, to the delight of the boys, who said they felt as though they were in a mediæval castle with the drawbridge raised, safe against all the world.

As we had passed last night so quietly, I did not intend to worry myself about keeping up the fires, and was content to get the guns ready, in case of an emergency. We all now lay down to rest, and slept soundly until the next morning.

"What shall we do to-day?" cried the boys when they woke up, feeling bright and cheerful.

"Nothing," I replied; "not a stroke of work shall be done to-day."

"You are joking, father!" they shouted.

"No, children, I am not joking. To-day is Sunday, and we shall keep it holy."

"Oh! Sunday!" cried Jack gaily. "That is splendid! I will shoot with the bow and arrows, and strut about, and be as lazy as I please."

"Not so fast, my boy," I said. "Sunday is the Lord's day, and it is intended to be kept holy, and for sacred thoughts."

"I thought," said Ernest, "that the way to keep the Sabbath was to go to church, and listen to sermons, and to sing hymns. How can we do these things?"

And little Frank said: "Why, there is no church here. How can we listen to sermons and the organ here?"

"As though father could not preach to us himself!" said Jack, "and as though we could not sing hymns without an organ, nor praise God in the open air! Don't you know that when the soldiers were under canvas at home, they had no church, and no organ either, and yet attended divine service?"

"Yes, my children," I said, "God is everywhere, and wherever He is sincerely appealed to there is divine service. In this sense every place on earth is a church. After all, perhaps beautiful nature and the vaulted blue sky make a nobler temple than any which man can build. I will read you no sermon, however, but will tell you the parable of the great King, and we will see if it will call

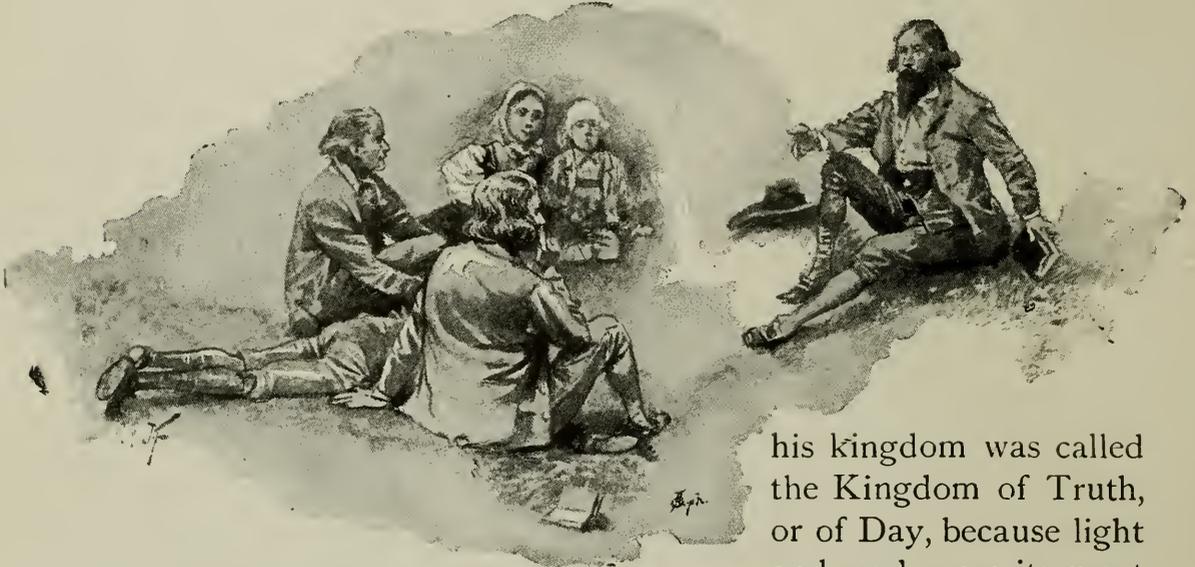
forth pious thoughts and feelings. You will understand that I must talk to you of God in words that your childish minds can comprehend, and not in the eloquent sentences in which grown-up people are addressed."

"A parable! a parable!" they cried; "like the Parable of the Sower in the Bible! Oh, that is capital, father! When will you begin?—at once?"

"All in good time, young people," I said. "First let us perform our usual morning duties, and in the meantime I will think over what I am going to tell you."

My wishes were obeyed; and when all was done, and even the animals had been cared for, we all sat on the soft grass, and I commenced as follows:—

"My children, once upon a time there was a great King, and



"My children, once upon a time there was a great King."

his kingdom was called the Kingdom of Truth, or of Day, because light and work were its great characteristics. On the

most distant borders of his kingdom in the frosty North there lay another kingdom, which was also under the rule of the great King, and which was so large that nobody knew its size. This was called the Kingdom of Vagueness, or of Night, because all was dark and stagnant there.

"The great King had his capital in the most fertile and beautiful part of the Kingdom of Truth, where he held his brilliant court: it was called Heaventown. Thousands of thousands served him, tens of thousands of thousands stood before him—some clothed in garments of snow-white silk—for white was the King's favourite colour—and others in shining armour, with their flashing swords in their hands or reposing in golden scabbards. Each one of them was a hero, swift as an eagle which darts through the air to fulfil the

behests of his King. All were cheerful, willing, watchful and fearless in the service of their King, and united by a brotherly affection which made them the most charming and agreeable of companions. There were also ordinary citizens in this capital; but even they were happy and rich, their ruler showering his benefits upon them, and treating them graciously and kindly, as though they were his own children.

“ Now this great King had, within the borders of his Kingdom of Truth, a large uninhabited island, which he desired to see peopled and cultivated. He intended it for the residence of those who were later to become citizens of this great capital. The island was called Earthland; and he who had passed his probation on this island, and had shown himself worthy, by industry and cultivation of the soil, was to be taken to Heaventown and made partaker of its blessings.

“ With this object the great King fitted out a fleet to fetch the colonists from their former abode—the cold and dark region of Vagueness, or Night; for he wished to give them light and joy, which they had not hitherto possessed.

“ All who could join were cheerful and full of hope, for the island was said to be not only fertile and beautiful, but they were told that they would receive on landing all they needed in order to live their allotted time happily, and, by their industry and obedience to the great King, to receive the freedom of the glorious city of Heaventown.

“ As the colonists embarked, the benevolent King appeared in person, and addressed them as follows:—

“ ‘ I have taken you, my children, out of the Kingdom of Night, and Laziness, and Insensibility, that I may give you happiness by making you live, feel and work. But that happiness will depend largely upon yourselves. If you wish to receive it, remember always that I am your good King and Father, and observe my will faithfully in cultivating the land which I entrust to you. Upon your landing in Earthland, each one of you will receive his allotted land for cultivation. My further commands for your conduct you will find there; and wise men also reside there who will be able to read and expound to you from my documents. And in order that you may yourselves seek and obtain the needful light from these documents, and may thus be able to learn my will, I command that at least each father of a family shall keep a copy of these documents in his house, and diligently study them. Besides, the first day of every week shall be set apart to my service. That service shall consist in the gathering together of all the colonists—old and young, parents and children, men and women, men-servants and maid-servants—in some suitable spot, where my

documents shall be read and explained to them, and in order that serious thought be given to the ends for which colonists are chosen and the means of achieving those ends. Thus every one of you will learn how to make the land entrusted to him fertile, how to keep it clear of weeds and tares, and how to sow and plant on it.

“Upon this day every one may send in his petition to me if he wishes for anything. They will all come before me, and those which I find reasonable and suitable I will grant.

“If your hearts should prompt you to thank me for the benefits I have conferred upon you, this will be grateful to me, and your thanks can then be offered up to me on this day. I will take care that you shall incur no loss through this day of rest; but, on the contrary, you shall derive benefit both in mind and body from it. But your cattle and beasts of burden must also rest on this day.

“He who shall most diligently seek to know my will in Earthland, and shall most honestly endeavour to do it, and he who shall work the hardest and cultivate his land the best, him will I make a citizen of my glorious capital, and he shall be rewarded for his service; but he who is useless and slothful, or hinders others in their work, he shall be condemned for life to the galleys or to work in the mines.

“From time to time I will send frigates to fetch some of you to your future destination, according to your deserts. But no one will be permitted to board these frigates at his own pleasure. He who does this will be severely punished. I shall keep myself minutely informed of all you do in Earthland, and no one will be able to deceive me. A magic mirror in my private chamber represents to me faithfully what occurs on the island, and I shall be guided by it in my treatment of you.’

“All the emigrants were pleased with the speech of the great King, and they put to sea. But soon a strange disease broke out amongst them; and although it was not fatal, all fell into a state of sleepy numbness, which was indeed endurable, but bereft them entirely of their memory, so that when they arrived in Earthland the colonists had all forgotten their former state, the great King, his speech, and similar matters.

“Fortunately the King had provided for this misadventure. As soon as the colonists disembarked, a number of royal servants appeared, who received them kindly, showed them their allotted dwellings, and reported to them the great King’s instructions, at which the hearts of all were rejoiced. After a few days of rest a piece of land was apportioned to each, and tools were given them to cultivate it with. They then received the seeds of useful plants,

so that they could make the land entrusted to them useful ; and for this purpose they received suitable written and oral instructions from the King.

“But what happened? Every man acted according to his own heart. Some planted English gardens—comfortable and pretty, but yielding poor results—instead of the noble trees which the King had ordained ; and they had the insolence to call the miserable things they grew by the names of the most delicious fruits. Others sowed good seed indeed, which took root and shot up ; but as they could not distinguish between it and the weeds and tares, they destroyed the good fruit and left the weeds.

“The majority neglected their fields, either because they had carelessly lost the seeds given them, or because they foolishly allowed the proper time to pass by, or because they were too conceited to obey the instructions of the great King, or for other unworthy reasons.

“Only a few worked diligently according to the instructions they had received, and succeeded, by dint of labour and perseverance, in raising good plants.

“All this arose from the fact that few of them believed what the great King had conveyed to them, and that the majority, through laziness and carelessness, despised his orders and ignored them.

“The fathers of families had indeed nearly all of them copies of the King’s commands ; but they either did not read them, or were of opinion that they might have been suited to a former state of things, but were quite antiquated to-day ; or they thought they detected irreconcilable contradictions in them—yet they would not consult the advice of experts. Others declared the entire documents to be forgeries, and believed themselves justified in ignoring them altogether.

“Here and there there were even a few who said there was no King at all, otherwise he would show himself ; while others said that, even if there was a King, he was not in need of their services, being so great and powerful. Some maintained the King to be too exalted a personage to care about so distant and insignificant an island ; others, again, asserted that the magic mirror was a fable, and that the good King had neither galleys nor mines, but would let them all come and live in Heaventown.

“This being the case, the first day of the week was but indifferently kept. Many did not come to the gatherings because they were too lazy ; others did not think it necessary to go, seeing that they already knew the will of the King and did not care to hear it repeated. Some doubted the promise that they should not suffer by neglecting their business an entire day, and remained at home and

worked as hard as ever. A large number were of opinion that the day was intended for rest and recreation, and that the best way of serving the King was to enjoy oneself. Thus only a small number remained who celebrated the day properly; and even of those who attended the gatherings many were sleepy, thoughtless or absent-minded—very few were attentive and willing to learn.

“Meanwhile the great King carried out his declared intention. From time to time his frigates appeared, accompanied by a terrible ironclad called *The Grave*, on which Admiral Death had hoisted his wonderful flag. For this flag was shot green and black, and inspired the inhabitants of Earthland alternately with hope and despair.

“Sometimes this fleet arrived quite unexpectedly, and was very unwelcome. The admiral then told his marines to collect all those whom he was ordered to take with him. Many a colonist who least wanted to go was thus taken off; others, who were quite ready to depart, and whose land was in the best condition, were left behind. Sometimes force had to be used to get the people to come on board the frigates, and generally those were the least willing to go whose land was in the most neglected state. But resistance was useless: the people were taken, and the admiral, with his fleet, sailed back to the seaport of the royal capital; and the great King, with stern justice, either condemned the arrivals to punishment or welcomed them to his capital, according to their deserts. The excuses that were then made sounded very lame indeed.

“And now, my children, I wish you to ponder over my parable and its meaning.”

Here I stopped speaking. The boys all looked at me thoughtfully, and my wife praised my discourse more than I had expected.

“I have illustrated to you in a parable,” I said, “the relations of God to man, and the behaviour of man towards God. Let us see how much you have understood.”

By means of questions and suggestions adapted to the minds of each, I made the meaning of my fairly obvious story clear and comprehensible.

“We human beings,” I concluded, “are God’s colonists in Earthland. Our probation is not long; then we must obey the summons. Our future destination is heaven and salvation in common with more perfect beings, and in the proximity of our all-loving Father. The land entrusted to us is our soul, and just as we enoble and improve it, or neglect and debase it, so shall our future lot be.”

With these words, followed by a short prayer, I brought our Sunday service to an end.

The boys remained quiet and thoughtful for a time; but I soon saw

that it was hopeless to expect them to keep solemn all day, so I allowed them to enjoy themselves in the way they liked best. Jack asked me to give him my bow and arrows, and tried to point the arrows with porcupine quills. Fred wanted to finish his case, which he was making out of the skin of the tiger-cat, and asked me for advice; while Frank, who was too young to be trusted with a gun, asked me to make him a bow and arrows also.

I therefore gave Jack my bow and arrows, and showed him how to get the sand out of the arrows and fit the quills of the porcupine into them, telling him to fasten them with thread, and, for greater security, give them a coating of glue.

"Yes," said Jack; "if I knew where to find a gluemaker I would buy some."

"Why don't you get one of mother's meat lozenges," said Frank, "and make glue of that?"

"Teach your grandmother to suck eggs!" said Jack contemptuously.

"Well," I interposed, "Frank's idea is not so bad after all. Many inventions have sprung from crude conceptions. Go; fetch a meat lozenge, put it before the fire in a cocoanut shell, and we will see what we can do."

It was now Fred's turn, and I bade him bring me his skin in order to show him how to prepare it, while I squatted on the grass to make a bow for Frank; for I thought it would be good for the boys to practise with bows and arrows, and so save our supply of gunpowder.

Thus engaged, I did not notice that Ernest had slipped away and got out of sight.

"Now, look here, Fred," I said, when he had brought me his tiger-cat skin. "First of all you must turn the skin inside out, and then cut off the four legs at the right length, so that the knives and forks are well covered. Now you must scrape the insides of these pieces carefully, so that no flesh or grease adheres to them, but do not cut or tear them while you are doing it. Finally rub them well with clean sand, wash the pieces, and put them back into the brook until you want them again. The rest of the skin, of which you intend to make covers, treat in the same way; then stretch it out, and, when it is nearly dry, anoint it with salted butter: keep doing this from time to



"I thought it would be good for the boys to practise with bows and arrows."

time, and knead the skin also, so that it keeps soft and pliable. You may then sprinkle some warm ashes over it, in order to draw out the remaining fat, and rub it well. I doubt whether you will obtain a masterpiece, but still it will be useful and better than nothing. Having prepared the skin, cut up four pairs of boards of about the same length as the legs, so that these can, with a little coaxing, be pulled over them. Hollow out these boards with a chisel, so that the knives, spoons and forks will fit in between them; then put the boards together, and pull the damp skins over them, leaving a short length of skin to overlap, which can then be sown together. You must also leave a short, overlapping piece of skin at the top to fasten the covers to. In any case you may make two incisions at the sides, and push a piece of wood through them, for the admission later of your belt. Now let the skin dry over the boards; then sew on the covers, and your case is ready."

At this moment I heard a shot, and saw two birds fall to my feet, while Ernest, peeping out of our nest in the tree, uttered a shout of triumph.

He came rapidly down the ladder to inspect his bag, and was joined by Frank; while Fred and Jack climbed up to see whether they also could not hit something.

I caught sight of the youngsters in time, and cried out: "What are you up to, boys? To-day is Sunday. No shooting to-day. Give the animals a rest. Ernest should have remembered that!"

These words cooled their ardour, and they descended soberly to see what Ernest had bagged.

One of the birds turned out to be a species of thrush, and the other a small pigeon, called an ortolan, considered a great dainty. I now noticed that the figs were just getting ripe, and were attracting birds in great quantities, thus opening out to us a fresh source of food. So I enjoined the boys to shoot as many birds as they could next day, for they could be easily preserved if half-cooked and rolled in butter, and kept for an indefinite time in casks. I also concluded that as the figs were so attractive to the wild birds, they would probably serve to feed our own fowls and pigeons for a time, and this was another source of congratulation.

We now proceeded to pluck the birds Ernest had shot for supper. But Frank gave me no peace until I had made him a quiver for his arrows, which I constructed out of the bark of a branch, stripping it completely off, gluing it together again, fitting a bottom to it, and fastening a piece of string to each of its sides, so that it could be slung over the shoulder.

While we were at our meal, I now suggested that we should give names to the different parts of the country we were in.

"The coast," I said, "has probably already received Christian baptism from some learned gentleman, but let us give names to the various localities and spots, so that we may refer to them without trouble."

The boys shouted their assent in joyful chorus, and Jack proposed our selecting crack-jaw denominations, such as are found on the maps, like Zanzibar and Coromandel.

"No," I said, "that would only be punishing ourselves. Let us rather call the places by some distinctive feature. What shall we call the bay?"

"Oyster Bay!" cried Fred; "because of its many oysters."

"Oh, no!—call it Lobster Bay!" said Jack; "for it was here that I was so badly pinched by a lobster."

"No, my boys," mother objected: "let us call it, out of gratitude for our deliverance, Refuge Bay."

This name pleased us all, and was at once adopted. Thereupon we decided on calling our first place of residence Tentbourne. The island at the entrance of Refuge Bay we called Shark Island, to commemorate Fred's pluck and good aim. Flamingo Swamp was the name given to the swamp where I got the reeds for our arrows; and our present abode we christened poetically Falconeyrie. The promontory from which I had looked for our companions we called the Cape of Disappointed Hope; and the hill upon which we had stood, the Observatory, while the brook was called the Jackal.

Thus we laid the foundation of our new geography.

After our meal we all resumed our previous occupations, and Jack begged me to help him to make a suit of armour for Bill or Turk out of the skin of the porcupine. I made him clean it carefully with sand and ashes, helped him to cut it to a convenient shape and attach ribbons to it, and when it had got thoroughly dried we tied it over the back and under the belly of the patient Turk, to whom was thus imparted a fearful and awe-inspiring appearance.

Bill, its companion, derived little pleasure from this garb; for whenever Turk, who paid little heed to the quills, approached Bill too closely, that poor animal's body was sadly lacerated, causing Bill to howl piteously and to seek in vain for shelter from the importunities of Turk.

Jack made himself a sort of helmet out of the head of the porcupine, which gave him also a fierce appearance.

Meantime Ernest and Frank had been practising with their

bows and arrows ; and thus the evening had set in, and the oppressive heat of the day subsided. I therefore proposed a walk.

“Where shall we go ?” they all cried.

“To Tentbourne, I think,” said Jack ; “for we must get ammunition for to-morrow, to shoot the birds with, and get a goodly supply of food.”

“I am of the same opinion,” said mother, “for my butter is all consumed.”

“Besides,” said Ernest, “we should get a few ducks and geese over ; they would look well in this brook.”

“All right,” I said ; “but we will not return by the coast, but discover a new way. We will follow the course of this brook, and wind along the shady rocks till we reach the Jackal. From thence we shall be able to climb over the rocks to Tentbourne. We will return by way of the bridge and the shore, and shall then have the sun on our backs, if it has not quite set by that time.”

To this all agreed, and we were soon ready to start. Fred had girded on the tail of his tiger-cat, although his cases were not ready. Jack strutted along in his porcupine helmet. We all carried guns and bags, for we did not know what we might encounter on our way. Even Frank took his bow and arrows and his quiver. Mother alone had no weapons, but she took the bottle for butter. Turk went in front in his armour, to which he was still unaccustomed, and which made him very quiet. The monkey insisted on coming with us : he jumped on Fred’s back ; but Fred soon got tired of his antics. “Look here !” he said, “I can’t stand this : I am not a tree. Turk, come here !” But Turk was an inconvenient charger in his formidable armour, and the monkey refused to mount. So Bill had to act as circus horse to the little rider. The monkey caught hold with its four hands, and Bill could not shake it off. The boys laughed at the dog’s futile efforts to get rid of it. At last Fred stroked the dog affectionately, and spoke kindly to it, while slipping a rope round its collar. But Bill looked mournful, and seemed to understand that its fate was irrevocable, although it finally trotted obediently by our side.

“I am glad, Fred, you kept your temper,” I said ; “this way Bill will gradually learn its duty. But look what is following us ! That is very curious.”

It was our flamingo, which had joined our procession. Our way along the brook was most pleasant, for it took us under shady trees and over smooth grass. We therefore proceeded at a leisurely pace. The boys kept skirmishing about right and left. Thus we came to the end of the forest ; and now I called to the boys to keep



"JACK STRUTTED ALONG WITH HIS PORCUPINE HELMET."

together. But they came running up breathlessly, with Ernest in front, holding three bright green balls in his hand.

"Potatoes, father!" he cried.

"What! Where?" I asked, with pleasure. "Let me look at them. I dare not believe my eyes; yet these look like the fruit of these splendid vegetables!"

"Yes," said Fred, "they are potatoes. What a find! Ernest has been lucky indeed."

"Oh!" said Jack, "I could have found them just as well if I had gone the same way."

"Do not under-value this great discovery," said mother. "Even if you had gone right through the potato plants it is doubtful whether you would have recognised them."

"But do potatoes bear fruit at the top as well as at the roots?" asked Fred.

"Why not flowers at the roots, too?" said Ernest. "Don't you know that the fruits of plants are really their seeds? The potatoes are, like turnips, the roots themselves, or a very important part of them, and are called fruit only because we eat them; for they do not properly deserve the name."

We now ran to the spot where Ernest had found them, and saw to our joy, at the confines of the forest, that the ground was completely covered with potato plants. They were more beautiful in our eyes than all the roses of Persia.

Jack shouted: "Oh! these are certainly potatoes, and we shall have some of them directly!" and he dropped on his knees and began to scratch away and dig. The monkey, made emulous by his example, jumped off his steed and did likewise, so that he produced, long before Jack, the most magnificent ripe potatoes, which he smelt and threw on one side, while continuing to dig for more, until he had collected quite a pile. We all set to work also with our hands and hunting knives, and kept filling up our bags with the delectable food.

It was some time before we resumed our journey to Tentbourne. Bill did not resent Fred's placing the monkey upon its back. A few of our party had indeed proposed returning at once to Falconeyrie and cooking the delicious potatoes; but as we had urgent reasons for proceeding, they were not listened to.

"Children," I said, "this is an invaluable discovery."

"Yes," said Fred. "We have every reason to offer up sincere thanks to God for His mercies to us."

We soon arrived at the rocks, from which a brooklet came rushing in a beautiful waterfall, and along which we proceeded to the

Jackal Brook. We had to work our way through tall grass. With the rocks on our left, and the sea to our right, we had a magnificent view. The rocks were particularly picturesque; they looked like a natural conservatory, so beautifully were they covered with plants. The prickly plants were in the majority: the Indian figs, the aloe, the tall cactus, creepers of all kinds, and, what delighted us most, the tufted pine-apple—the queen of fruits.

We all made a rush for this delicacy. The monkey showed us the way. I had to caution the boys not to eat too much, as they might otherwise pay a penalty for their enjoyment.

But I was particularly pleased to find the karatas—a kind of aloe.



"I was particularly pleased to find the karatas."

"This," I said to the boys, "is even a better find than the pine-apple, which it somewhat resembles."

"Is it good to eat?" they asked, their mouths full of succulent fruit.

"You gluttons! Strike a light! Take out your flint and steel, Ernest."

"Yes, but I have no tinder."

"Never mind," I said, taking a withered branch of karatas, and breaking it open. I took some of the spongy marrow of the twig, struck a light with the flint and steel, and lo! here was tinder!

"Now," I said, "I have also good news for mother. The leaves of this plant yield the most beautiful thread for needlework."

With these words I split up a leaf, and pulled out a number of strong, fine threads.

"You see," I said, "the despised karatas may turn out more useful than the succulent pine-apple."

"How fortunate it is," mother replied, "that you should have studied so much at home! Without you, we should have stupidly preferred the pine-apple. But breaking up each leaf is a slow process."

"Oh, that," I rejoined, "can be got over by drying the leaves in the sun or before the fire! Besides, we might try to crush them, like hemp."

"I see that the karatas is much more useful than the pine-apple," said Fred. "But how about those other prickly plants? All gardeners seem to keep them, yet I cannot see any good in them."

"That again is a hasty verdict," I objected. "Look at this Indian fig, for instance. It will grow even in the worst ground, probably because it lives more on the air than the soil. It is also called the racket plant, because its leaves look like rackets. The figs are said to be wholesome and refreshing."

On hearing this, Jack immediately went for them, but pricked his fingers wofully in trying to pick them. I had to come to the rescue, and cut off the fruit with a knife while I held it down with my hat, and then peeled it carefully. Probably on account of its novelty, we found the fruit excellent.

Jack got a fig which he thought looked suspicious, and asked me: "Father, what are all these little animals?"

"What! another discovery!" I exclaimed. "Let me see: why, they are cochineal! Here is another use for this plant."

"But what are cochineal, father?"

"They are leaf-sucking insects, which live entirely on this plant, and obtain from its sap a red colour which makes them invaluable for dyes. In America they are collected on cloths spread under the trees, dried, packed up, and sold."

"Well," said Ernest, "I see plants are like human beings; they must not be judged by appearances."

"Quite right, my boy," I replied, with pleasure. "But our fig tree has still another advantage. A hedge of these plants is a capital protection against wild beasts, and even against human enemies, for it is difficult to penetrate."

"Father," said Ernest, "let us plant a hedge of this kind round our own dwelling."

"Let us rather collect the cochineal, and learn to make dyes of them," said Fred.

"All in good time, my sons," I replied. "But now you see that all plants have their uses."

"How about this thick, prickly cactus?" said Jack: "that bears neither fruit nor insects."

"If you expect me to tell you the use of every plant in the world I shall have to be omniscient. But with regard to that cactus, it seems to be of the kind met with and described by Bruce in Africa, on which elephants and rhinoceroses feed. They tear them up with their powerful tusks, and eat the nourishing marrow inside."

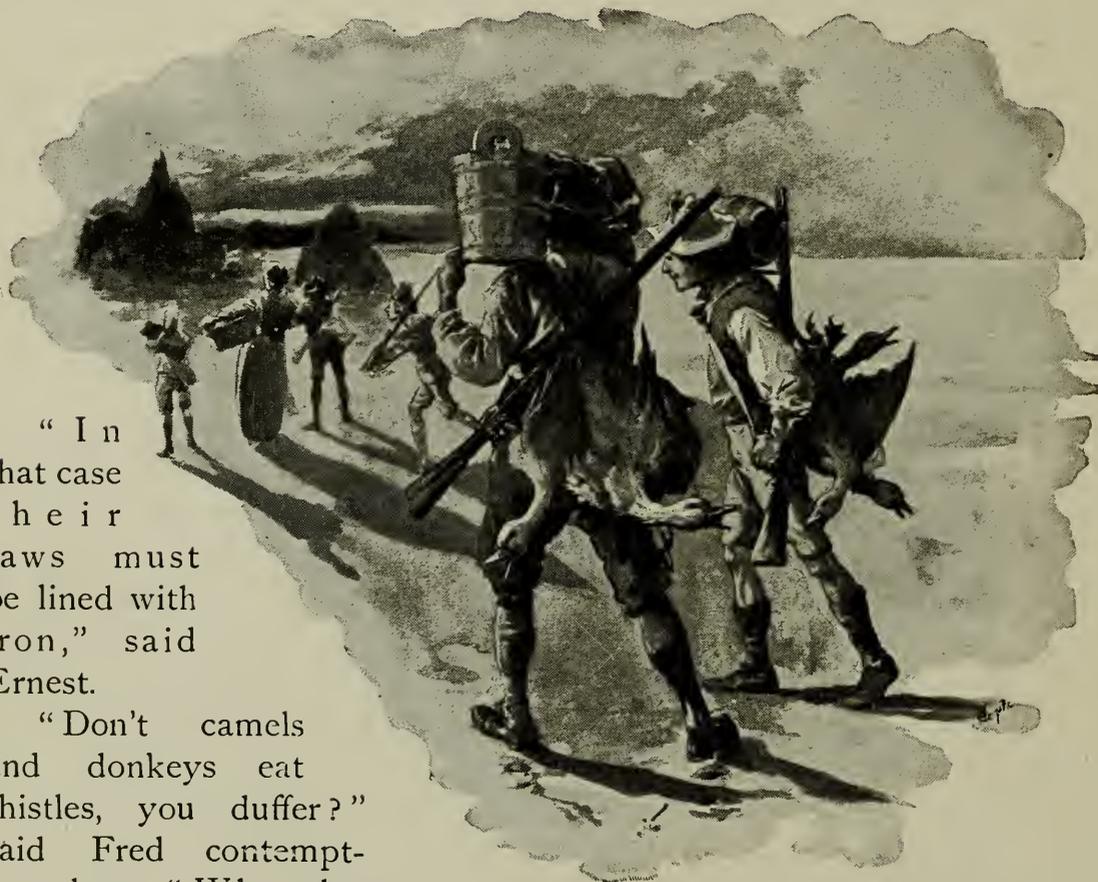
"In that case their jaws must be lined with iron," said Ernest.

"Don't camels and donkeys eat thistles, you duffer?" said Fred contemptuously. "Who knows whether these prickles and thorns do not agreeably tickle the palates of the animals?"

"Your explanation is not bad, my boy," I said; "and if it should not prove to be true, it is at least a good joke."

We now soon got to the Jackal Brook, and crossed it carefully, proceeding to our tent, which we found just as we had left it. Each of us commenced at once attending to the business which had brought him there.

Fred collared all the ammunition he could carry; mother, Frank and myself tackled the butter cask, while Ernest and Jack went off to catch the ducks and geese. This was no easy task, for the ducks and



"We made a comic company, with our jabbering ducks and geese strapped behind us."

geese had learned to get on without us, and had become rather wild, so some strategy had to be used. Ernest had a lump of cheese in his pocket, of which he attached bits to pieces of string. He threw these bits into the water to the birds; and as soon as they had swallowed them, the boys gently drew them to the bank, with suppressed laughter, and presently they had collected quite as many as I wanted. We strapped them to our bags or haversacks, and were thus able to carry them without inconvenience. Turk's armour was taken off, and the bags which we had filled with potatoes, and made heavier by the addition of a good supply of salt, were loaded on his back.

We felt less reluctance in leaving his coat of mail behind us, as we decided to make another visit on the following day in order to get more salt, and, if possible, the butter cask.

I now mustered my party for the return journey; and we made a comic company, with our jabbering ducks and geese strapped behind us. Our laughter consoled us for the weight of our load, of which we did not begin to complain until we reached our aerial castle.

But on our arrival there, mother filled our hearts with joy by putting a pot of potatoes on the fire. She also milked the cow and goat, so as to glorify still more our noble repast.

I now gave the ducks and geese their liberty, taking the precaution, however, of denuding them of the strongest feathers in their wings, to prevent them from flying away.

Finally, we gratefully commenced our grand potato supper, thanking God for His wonderful mercies; and then, thoroughly tired out, went straight to bed.

CHAPTER VIII.

TRANSPORT BY LAND AND SEA.

ON our return journey, by way of the beach, I had noticed among other flotsam and jetsam some pieces of curved timber from the bow of our vessel, and I at once determined to make them into a sledge, by means of which I should be able to transport a quantity of articles from Tentbourne to Falconeyrie. I therefore rose in the early morning of the next day, and took Ernest with me, against whose laziness such an expedition would be a useful antidote ; besides, I considered that Fred ought to remain behind to protect the others.

I roused Ernest at dawn, and we descended from our eyrie without disturbing the others. The donkey came with us, for I should require its services ; besides, I gave it a heavy branch to drag.

As soon as we were well started I asked Ernest whether he did not regret having to get up so early and miss so much of the morning's sport as well.

"Oh, no!" he replied : "I don't mind now I am up ; and as for the sport, I feel pretty sure that the others will leave enough for me, for they will make a good many misses at first."

"What makes you think that, my boy?"

"Because they will probably forget to extract the balls from their guns, and load with shot ; but even if they should think of that, they are safe to shoot from the ground, and then they will find that their guns will not carry far enough. I got into the branches when I shot : that is why I had such luck."

"I dare say you are right," I replied, "and have scored by your coolness. It is always well to reflect. But there are many circumstances in life when quickness of decision are imperative : I wish you would practise a little more of that. In order to have presence of mind in the hour of danger, it is well to reflect in cold blood how one would act in given circumstances. For instance, what would you do if you were brought suddenly face to face with a bear?"

"Well, I think I should run away."

"I think you probably would," I said, laughing; "and at least it is honest of you to admit it. But if you reflect carefully, you will see that the bear would easily overtake you, and grip you from behind. What would you do then—for you know bears run pretty fast?"

"If I found he was running after me, I would shoot the beggar!" said Ernest emphatically.

"That would also be unwise; for you might miss him, or only wound him, and then where would you be?"

"Well, then perhaps it would be better to wait for him till he got his nose close to my gun, and then let him have it."

"Yes; but your gun might not go off, and then you would be in a worse plight than before."

"Oh, no! for then I would give him the butt end of it, or draw my knife on him."

"My poor little fellow, you would not be a match for him!"

"Or I could lie down and pretend to be dead."

"That would not help you either. Frankly, I do not myself know what you could do against a bear. But if you should be attacked by one, I fancy the best thing for you would be to get behind the donkey, and try to shoot the bear with your pistol while he was going for the donkey."

For all that we were very glad to reach the beach without anything of the sort happening. I soon spotted the timbers I wanted, and put them on the branch, which was still covered with twigs and leaves and would serve as a hurdle for the present. Seeing a cask in the sand, I rolled that up and added it to the load: and so we returned slowly; for every now and then, when the road was too difficult, we had to place improvised rollers under the branch in order to lighten the donkey's labours.

As we approached Falconeyrie we could hear the distant crack of the guns, which announced that the pigeon-shooting had begun. As soon as the others saw us, however, they came shouting to our welcome. We immediately opened the cask with an axe, but were disappointed to find it contained nothing but sailors' clothing, and that was completely wetted by the sea water.

I now had to receive the reproaches of mother for leaving her and the others without a word of warning; but my pieces of timber silenced all discontent, and we at once sat down to breakfast, after which I inspected the results of the battue.

The boys had shot about four dozen pigeons and thrushes; but, as Ernest had supposed, they had wasted their first shots, for they had both forgotten to load their guns with shot instead of ball. Besides,

they had made a good many misses ; and so, when they were going to begin afresh, mother came rushing up and interposed, saying that it was wrong to waste so much ammunition, and that the bag already made was ample for our wants.

I approved her thriftiness, and warned the boys against wasting our only means of defence, and at least to husband it until I should be able to get a fresh supply from the wreck. In the meantime I advised them to set traps for the birds by hanging slings of karatas thread, which was of the consistency of horsehair, to the branches, and to endeavour to catch them in that way.

I had at once to show them how these slings should be made ; and when they had quite mastered the art, I allowed Frank and Jack to engage in this occupation. Fred and Ernest had to help me in the construction of my sledge.

At this moment the fowls began to raise a most fearful noise ; the cock crew, and the others cackled and fluttered about, as though a fox had startled them. Mother jumped up to see if one of the hens had laid an egg. Ernest, happening to notice that the monkey was watching the hens intently, saw that, as they dispersed on the sudden apparition of mother in their midst, the monkey made a dart under the roots of the tree. He ran after him, and caught him picking up a new-laid egg, which the animal banged against the ground, and then commenced sucking with much gusto. The monkey seemed to be very fond of this food, for he presently made another dart under another root, and produced a second egg, and bolted with it. Ernest followed closely, and soon returned, carrying four new-laid eggs.

No more severe penalty was inflicted on the monkey than giving him the name of Snip and depriving him of his liberty whenever we thought the hens were going to lay again ; and whenever they did so, he was immediately let loose and made to show us where the eggs had been hidden. Mother collected them, and waited impatiently for brooding time, conjuring up in her mind's eye a regular young nation of fowls for the future.

Meantime Jack had ascended the tree, and had already put two slings in position. He came down with the welcome intelligence that our own pigeons had made preparations for breeding and brooding up in the trees. I therefore prohibited all shooting for the future, to prevent our own birds from being frightened or injured ; and I told the boys to keep an eye on the slings to save our own doves from destruction. Indeed, I would have gladly ordered the slings to be taken down, but as I had myself recommended their use, I did not think it wise to do so.

As it was, the boys were rather sulky about my order to spare

the ammunition, and Frank made the brilliant suggestion that we should sow some gunpowder.

Ernest laughed loud at this, and said: "You silly! Don't you know that gunpowder does not grow?"

"Wise man!" I replied. "How is it obtained then?"

"I know it is prepared artificially, but I don't know how," Ernest answered. "I should say it was made of charcoal and sulphur, because it is black, and smells of sulphur after it has been burnt."

"Add a little saltpetre, and you will have got all the necessary ingredients," I said. "But saltpetre plays the most important part. Combined with charcoal it explodes quickly, and expands the air remarkably, or rather develops a great many gases, which, being previously hidden or latent in it, are set free by the action of the heat, and, expanding with much force, drive all before it."

"Now," said Fred, "I understand how it is that one can shoot with an air-gun as well. For when the air has been greatly compressed, it is clear that on expansion it will develop the same kind of force."

"You will understand this better still," I rejoined, "if you remember that air is a body, just like water, only very much thinner, and therefore elastic. Water is often found in other bodies where its presence is not even noticeable: as, for instance, there are numerous plants which we think very dry, but which, nevertheless, contain a good deal of water. Formerly, people used to think that fire was also a body, like water, and was latent in many materials, from which it was liberated by friction or some other methods."

"I always thought," said Ernest, "that fire was the result of motion: for if it were latent in the wood, it would surely burn it; but if two pieces of wood are rubbed against each other, they do begin to burn, which would seem to prove that fire was generated by motion."

"Speaking broadly, you are right," I replied; "but the process is a little more complicated. The fire of the burning wood is the union of the air, or, to speak more correctly, of the oxygen in the air, with the combustible carbon in the wood. By heating up to a certain degree this union is prepared, and then continues of itself along neighbouring particles of wood, until the whole is consumed."

"But," said Ernest, who had been listening attentively, "in that case the wood is turned into smoke."

"Quite so," I answered: "the wood, united with the oxygen of the air, evaporates in the shape of visible smoke, or invisible carbonic acid gas."

"What, all the wood?" Ernest asked, astonished.

"Yes, all the wood," I said; "or, at least, all the combustibles, so far as they do not contain non-combustible particles, or particles

which cannot unite with the carbon. These remain in the shape of ashes or slack."

"In that case the smoke and ashes contain all the constituent parts of the burnt wood?" Ernest asked, shaking his head in amazement.

"As a matter of fact, that is the case, my son," I answered. "No particle, not even the most minute, is destroyed. The Creator allows nothing to be lost, but permits the separated particles to form new combinations. The particles of carbon fall down on the earth in the shape of rain, and are received for fresh plant life, the union between the oxygen and carbon being again dissolved. The production of fire by rubbing two pieces of wood together has caused much wonder and astonishment, and even superstition. Thus I remember some peasants at home trying to cure a plague among their swine by means of 'wildfire,' which they produced by friction."

"That is very curious," said Fred. "Then it is really true that fire is produced by friction or motion."

By this time I had completed my sledge, which was very easy to construct, and therefore soon finished. I took two hawse-pieces, with the curves protruding in front, connected them with cross-pieces, and my work of art was done; all that was wanted was to fasten the donkey's traces to the projecting timbers.

When I looked up, on completing my work, I noticed that mother had been plucking the birds with the aid of the boys, and was now spitting them on to the Spanish blade of a ship's officer, preparatory to roasting them. She explained that she did not propose that we should eat them all, but that they should be half roasted, pending the arrival of the butter cask from Tentbourne, when they should be preserved.

I therefore undertook the journey to Tentbourne as soon as we had had our dinner, and mother decided to spend the time I was away in having a good clean up, and to wash the clothes and bodies of the boys thoroughly—an example which I and Ernest meant to follow; for I intended leaving Fred behind as a protector.

Before leaving we each received from Fred a handsome case, which was designed to carry knife and fork and spoon, besides a hatchet, and seemed ingeniously contrived. We harnessed the donkey and cow to the sledge, and, armed with bamboos in lieu of whips, took our departure, accompanied by Bill, and leaving Turk behind.

As the sledge would meet fewer obstacles along the beach, we took this route, and were soon over the bridge of the Jackal and at Tentbourne, when we unharnessed our cattle, and allowed them to graze, while we loaded the sledge with the butter cask, the cheese

tub, a barrel of gunpowder, various tools and ammunition, besides Turk's coat of armour.

This kept us so engaged that it was some time before we noticed that our cattle, in pursuit of better pasturage, had crossed the bridge over the Jackal, and had strayed out of sight. I despatched Ernest, with Bill, to find them, whilst I went off to select a suitable spot for bathing.

I walked to the end of Refuge Bay, and discovered that it terminated in a swamp full of magnificent Malacca cane, with precipitous cliffs at the back of it, which completely closed it in. Here I found a spot which seemed specially arranged for bathing; and so I joyfully called for Ernest, and, whilst awaiting his arrival, spent the time in cutting a few canes.

But Ernest did not respond, so I uneasily retraced my steps, to find him stretched as large as life in the shade of our tent, and fast asleep, while the cow and donkey were sauntering about, grazing

"Wake up, young slothful!" I shouted. "What are you about? Why are you not looking after the animals, to see they do not go over the bridge again?"

"That is all right: I have taken care to prevent that! I lifted a few planks off the bridge, and I do not think they could jump the chasm!"

"Well, your laziness seems to have stimulated your inventiveness; but, instead of wasting the day in sleep, you should have thought of something useful to do."

"I beg your pardon: I have been working with my brain."

"Shirking your duty is not brain work, my boy."

"Why, I was thinking how difficult it was to get over the useful things on the wreck."

"And did you discover a means to overcome the difficulty?"

"No," he answered shamefacedly. "I fell asleep over it. But I have got an idea now. Why not construct a raft of barrels, and nail a few planks over it?"

"That is not a bad idea!" I exclaimed; "but as you have been idle all day, you shall now do some work. Take this bag and collect all the salt you can find and put in it; but be careful about keeping the salt clean, so that it may at least be fit for our animals. When you have filled the bag, empty its contents into the donkey's saddle-bag, and keep on until you have filled that. In the meantime I will go and have my bath, after which you may have one also, if you have been industrious."

I took as little time over my bath as possible, so as not to fatigue the boy over his distasteful task. But on my return I looked for him

in vain, and thought he had dropped off to sleep again, when I heard a voice calling :

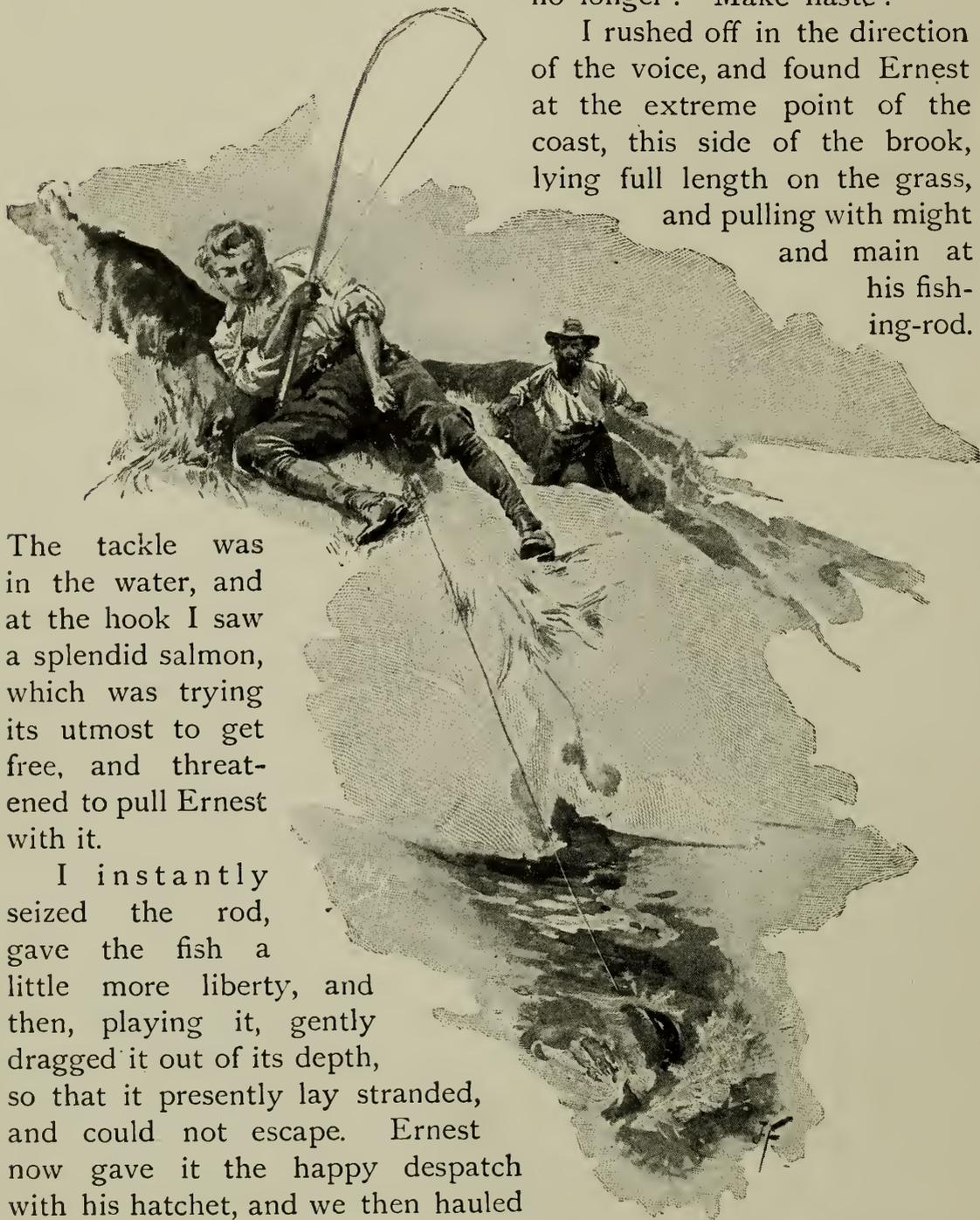
“ Father, father ! A fish ! an enormous fish ! I can hold on no longer ! Make haste ! ”

I rushed off in the direction of the voice, and found Ernest at the extreme point of the coast, this side of the brook, lying full length on the grass, and pulling with might and main at his fishing-rod.

The tackle was in the water, and at the hook I saw a splendid salmon, which was trying its utmost to get free, and threatened to pull Ernest with it.

I instantly seized the rod, gave the fish a little more liberty, and then, playing it, gently dragged it out of its depth, so that it presently lay stranded, and could not escape. Ernest now gave it the happy despatch with his hatchet, and we then hauled it in. I should say it weighed about fifteen pounds.

“ This time,” I said to Ernest, “ you have not only worked with your head, but with your hands and feet and your whole body. This will give us food for many days, and you have behaved nobly besides. But how did you manage to get so big a fellow ? ”



“ Father, father ! A fish ! an enormous fish ! ”

“I knew there were lots of fish here : that is why I brought my fishing-rod and tackle with me. While I was looking for salt, I came across some little crawfish, upon which the larger sea fish feed, so I thought I would bait my hook with one, and see what I could catch. So I came along here, bringing a few crawfish with me, and presently caught a lot of small fish—they are lying in a heap over there. I saw some of the bigger fish swimming after the smaller ones and swallowing them, so I thought I would bait my hook with one of those. But my hook was too small, and the fishing-rod too weak ; so I cut off one of these thick canes, and fastened a larger hook to it, and baited it with one of the little fish, and presently, sure enough, I got this fellow on my hook. But if you had not come when you did I should have found myself in the water, instead of getting the fish on land.”

We now inspected the fish carefully, and I convinced myself that, while the smaller ones were herrings and trout, the big one was a salmon, and that they were all good eating. So while Ernest went off and had his bath, I ripped them open and cleaned them out, and rubbed salt into them, so as to keep them fresh.

As soon as Ernest came back, we repaired our bridge and returned to Falconeyrie, somewhat late, where we were received with joyous greetings. Much as the others were surprised at our splendid fish, we were still more astonished at their most remarkable turn out. One wore a sailor's white shirt, much too long for him, in which he tripped and stumbled about most ridiculously ; the other had on a pair of trousers which were fastened under his arm-pits ; and a third was attired in a jacket which hung down to his heels and gave him the appearance of a walking sack.

When our laughter had subsided, I asked mother to explain to me the reason for this masquerading, and learned that the children had only just had their bath, and that their clothes, which she had washed meanwhile, were still hanging out to dry.

We were all very jolly except Fred, who looked morose. I could see that he envied his brother the glory of having caught so splendid a salmon.

“Next time,” he said coaxingly, “let me come too, father ! There is nothing to be feared here. We have managed to catch a few wood-pigeons and thrushes in our slings, and that is all. It is awfully slow !”

“Well, my boy, as the protector of your mother and brothers, you have had your duty to do ; perhaps that is not quite so exciting as coming with us. But, never mind ; next time I will take you also.”

We brought the day to a close with a distribution of salt among

the animals, who enjoyed it immensely ; and after a hasty supper, we speedily went to rest, for we were all tired out.

Next morning I ordered Fred to make all necessary preparations for a trip to the wreck, and called Ernest and Jack to give them their allotted tasks for the day ; but they could not be found. Mother said they had gone to get potatoes. I explained to her that I thought it was dangerous for them to run about alone ; although I was reassured to learn that they had taken Turk with them.

Without further anxiety, I now started with Fred, leaving Bill as a protection to mother.

Just as we had crossed the bridge over the Jackal, we were startled by a shout of triumph, and surprised to be confronted by Ernest and Jack, who had concealed themselves in its vicinity. I was annoyed with them for thus secretly escaping from home, but their wild delight disarmed my anger. Nevertheless I stoutly refused to take them to the wreck, for they would have been very much in the way ; besides, their prolonged absence would have alarmed mother. So I sent them back with the message that we might possibly be detained until the following day, an eventuality which I had not had the courage to hint at before. I told them to turn their flight to advantage by collecting salt, but enjoined them to return to mother before noon ; and, in order to ensure their punctuality, made Fred give them his silver watch—a sacrifice he accomplished all the more readily as I held out a prospect of our finding a gold one for him on the wreck.

We proceeded to the wreck by our usual route, and were soon there.

My first care, after boarding her and making fast our craft, was to look for suitable material for the construction of a raft—as I intended to carry out Ernest's idea, especially as our catamaran was too flimsy and had too little carrying capacity to enable me to use it for the conveyance of any considerable amount of cargo. We soon discovered a sufficient number of water-butts, which we emptied, shut down, pitched overboard to the number of twelve, and arranged in a square, and fastened together by means of pegs, ropes and planks. We laid a number of boards over them, and protected the sides by a sort of wall of planks. Thus we produced a raft which was able to carry three times as much as our own boat.

This took the whole day, with a short interval for cold lunch. We therefore determined to spend the night on board ; and, having taken due precautions in the event of a storm, laid ourselves to rest in the captain's cabin on comfortable spring mattresses, which afforded a pleasant change after our customary hammocks.

Next morning we commenced loading our raft.

First we plundered the cabin which we had formerly occupied ourselves, and then we returned to the captain's cabin, where we even took off the locks and bolts of the doors and portholes. A couple of chests which had belonged to the officers were a welcome find. But the chests of the ship's carpenter and of the armourer were perhaps more welcome still. Those which we could transport at once to the raft with levers and rollers, we let down first. The drawers we divested of the articles which made them too heavy, and carried them to the raft piecemeal, after we had lowered the chests. One of the captain's chests was packed with valuables: gold and silver watches, snuff-boxes, buckles, shirt-buttons, chains, rings, etc., probably presents. We also found a money chest, and had nearly thought of plundering that, when our attention was attracted by a number of forks and spoons of plain metal,—more useful than the silver ones of the captain's,—and a few dozen of young trees of all manner of European fruit, which had been intended for transplanting. I recognised pears, apples, almonds, oranges, peaches, chestnuts, grapes, etc. We next discovered a number of iron rods, and quantities of lead; a couple of grindstones; cart and barrow wheels; a complete smithy; pick-axes and spades; ploughshares, chains, iron and copper wire; bags of maize, peas, oats, etc.; even a small hand-mill: in a word, an almost inexhaustible store of articles of use for the establishment and maintenance of a European settlement. We even found a saw-mill taken to pieces and the parts duly numbered.

We had to make a selection, for it was impossible to take all this with us.

"Let us leave the money behind," said Fred; "that is of no use to us."

"I shall be glad if you always refuse to bow the knee to the mammon of unrighteousness," I said. "We will also disdain the valuables, and will content ourselves with useful articles only, among which I include gunpowder, iron, lead, corn, the fruit trees, and the tools. Of these we will take as much as we can, and if we find space we can add a few useless articles besides. But you shall, in any case, have a gold watch, which I promised you."

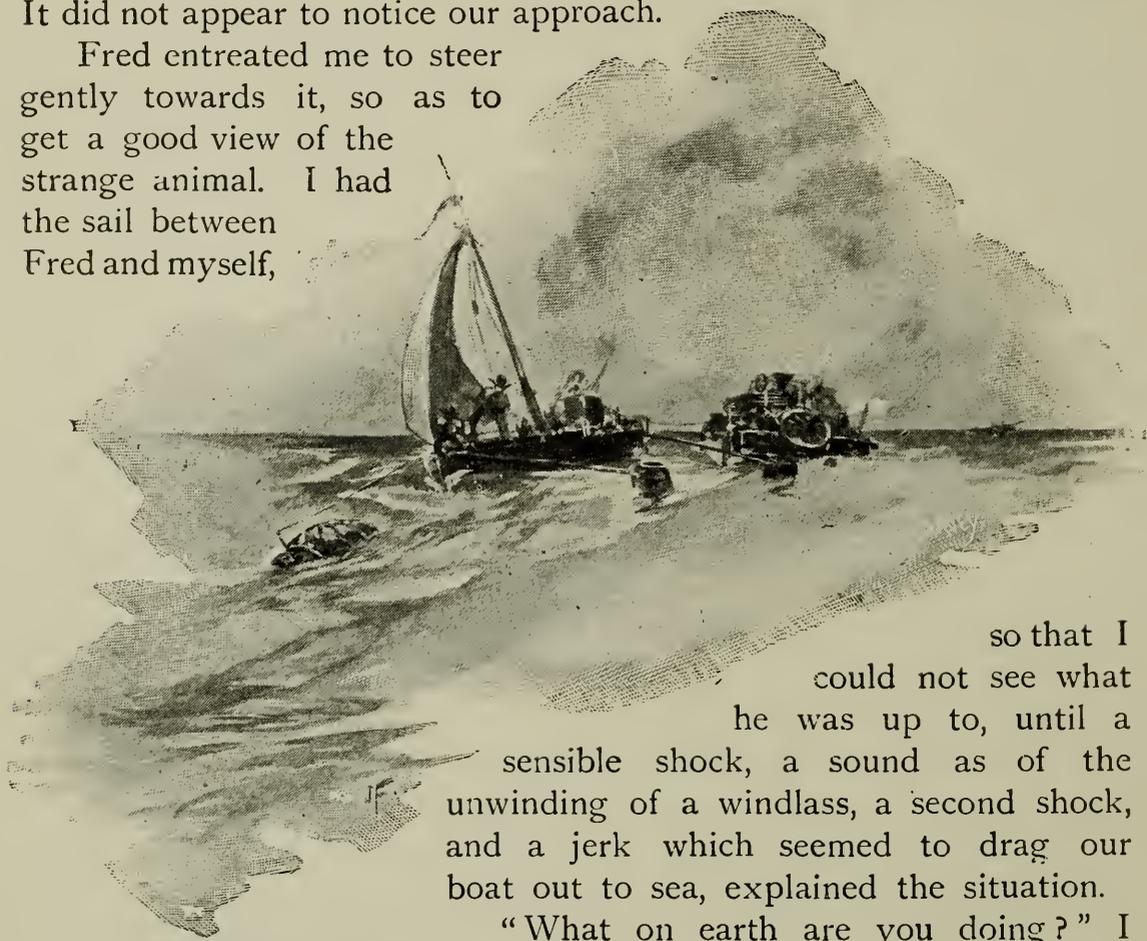
We therefore loaded our raft with useful articles, among which we included a new fishing-net and the ship's compass, besides a few harpoons, and a couple of windlasses, with rope, used in whaling. One of these Fred asked me to fasten to our boat, so that he might be ready with a harpoon for all eventualities. This seemed an innocent request, and I complied with it.

We had not finished our work of loading before the afternoon.

We now secured the raft by one of its four corners to our boat by means of a rope, and thus we towed it slowly towards shore, and not without anxiety.

The wind was favourable, and helped us along, while the sea remained smooth and calm. We proceeded a good distance without encountering any obstacles, when Fred suddenly descried a large body floating in the water, and asked me to make it out with my spy-glass. I discovered a large turtle fast asleep, and comfortably sunning itself, after the manner of its kind, on the surface of the water. It did not appear to notice our approach.

Fred entreated me to steer gently towards it, so as to get a good view of the strange animal. I had the sail between Fred and myself,



so that I could not see what he was up to, until a sensible shock, a sound as of the unwinding of a windlass, a second shock, and a jerk which seemed to drag our boat out to sea, explained the situation.

“What on earth are you doing?” I shouted. “Do you want to ruin us entirely?”

“Got him! got him! cried the boy.”

“Got him! got him!” cried the boy, delighted.

He had harpooned the turtle, and that animal, in its flight, was dragging the boat with it.

I lowered the sail, and was on the point of rushing forward and cutting the rope with a hatchet, when Fred implored me to wait, and assured me we were in no danger.

Thus we proceeded, tugged by the turtle, out to sea. But as the wind grew stronger, I put up the sail again and steered for shore. The turtle, finding the wind too strong for it, turned back, dragged us

forcibly across the current which led to Refuge Bay, and made straight for Falconeyrie, where at least there were no rocks, although, as the tide was running out, we were in danger of being stranded. Indeed, very soon we felt a shock, and were grounded within a gunshot of the shore. I jumped into the shallow water in order to reward our guide without loss of time. Tired out with his efforts, the monster was snorting on the sand, and so I chopped off his head with my hatchet: but even after that he kicked so fiercely with his feet, that I cut those off also; and then he quieted down, and bled to death.

Fred now gave a shout of triumph, and fired off a salute, which so excited the curiosity of the others that they all came running up to see what had happened. He himself jumped on shore, with the head of the turtle stuck on his gun, and was instantly overwhelmed with questions.

After a mild reproof from mother for leaving her once more alone at night with the little ones, the adventure with the turtle was recited; and we all gave thanks to God for its happy termination, for we might easily have been banged against the rocks. What astonished us all was that the turtle should have been strong enough to take us and our heavily laden raft in tow. But Fred, by means of whose strength and sureness, the harpoon had plunged so firmly into the animal, came in for his share of praise.

I asked mother to go back to Falconeyrie with the boys, and bring the sledge, and the animals to pull it, for the transport of our cargo. As the tide was still going out, and boat and raft were practically on dry land by this time, I improvised a couple of anchors, by means of two heavy blocks of lead, which I rolled overboard, and to which I attached the boat and raft by ropes.

The sledge having arrived in the meantime, we loaded it first with the turtle and a few lighter articles: for the turtle weighed probably about three hundredweight, and was very heavy. We had to accompany the sledge in force, in order to unload it at Falconeyrie. On the way the boys inquired whether I had brought the chest of gold and all the jewellery, for Fred had already told them of the wonders of the wreck.

"Fancy!" said mother; "Frank has made a great discovery: he routed out a swarm of bees in the trunk of a tree with a stick. Of course, they stung him frightfully; but still, he has made a great discovery."

When we arrived we found the unloading of the turtle no easy task, especially as I insisted it should be put on its back, so that we might cut it away from its shell. But as mother pronounced this

to be impossible, I took an axe, and, severing the breast shell from the edge, I cut off a piece of meat, with the shell, and told mother to cook it as it was, using the shell as a frying-pan, adding only a little salt.

"At least," said mother, "let me cut off this nasty green stuff."

"Indeed, you shan't!" I replied: "that is the fat, and will make our dish tender and palatable. The rest of the meat will have to be salted. The head, paws and inside you had better give to the dogs."

"Dear father," said Jack, "won't you let me have the shell?"

"I like that!" said Fred: "I think I am the one who has a right to it."

"I wanted to ask for it also," said Ernest. "I would make a splendid shield of it, for protection against the savages."

"What nonsense!" I cried. "Why, you could not carry it; and if we were attacked by savages, you would put it on your back and run away. What good would that do us?"

"I wanted to make a boat of it," pleaded Jack.

"And I a hut," said Frank: "it would make a capital roof."

"That is all very fine, but I wish you would think of something useful. Well, now, Fred, you are the one who is entitled to it—what would you do with it?" I asked.

"I thought of making a trough of it near our brooklet," he answered, "so that we could get clean water for drinking and washing."

"That is for the common good," I said: "that idea shall be carried out as soon as we can get some clay to fasten it on to a suitable base."

"Oh, I have clay!" said Jack. "I have a regular lump under yonder root."

"I am glad of that," I answered. "Where did you get it?"

"He brought a lot this morning from the precipice," mother explained. "He discovered a layer of clay there, and got himself in a terrible mess in consequence."

"Well, mother, if I had not slipped and fallen on the clay," said Jack, "and made myself dirty all over, I would never have discovered it."

"In any case there was no occasion to boast of it," said mother; "it was all an accident, and you pretended you had made a discovery."

"As soon as the trough is ready," said Ernest, "I will put some of those roots in which I picked up. I do not know whether they

are turnips or what they are. The pig has been pitching into them like a brick ; still, I did not like to taste them myself."

"That was quite right, my boy," I rejoined ; "for pigs will eat many things that are unfit for human food. But let us look at these roots. Where did you find them ?"

"I surprised the pig tearing up the earth under a small tree, and eating something it found ; so I drove it away, and found this bunch of roots."

"This seems to be as good a find as the potatoes. For these roots appear to me to be nothing less than manioc, of which tapioca is made, and, in the West Indies, a kind of bread called cassava. But it must be specially prepared for the purpose ; in its raw state it is simply poison. I think, however, I shall be able to prepare it properly if you will show me where you found it."

By this time we had unloaded our sledge, and so I immediately started off with the boys in order to bring up a fresh consignment before nightfall, while mother remained behind with Frank to prepare us a glorious supper out of the breast of the turtle.

On our way to the beach, Fred asked me whether our turtle was one of those valuable animals of which the shell was used in the preparation and mounting of jewellery. I had to explain to him the difference between a turtle and a tortoise, and how, while the first was good eating, the second possessed a valuable shell. I told him how tortoise shells were prepared by exposure to the fire, the action of which separated the beautiful transparent material on the top from the rest of the shell, and how this was polished for use.

This time we brought away from the raft as much as the sledge could carry, including four wheels and the hand-mill, which the probable discovery of manioc had made doubly valuable.

Mother welcomed us cheerfully, and said to me :

"You have had an arduous day's work ; now you shall have cooling refreshment. The boys have fished up a sherry cask from the shore, and I have put it here to cool. Come and see."

I followed her, and found a cask partly buried in the ground and partly covered with branches.

"I hope the boys have made no mistake," she added.

As the only way of broaching the cask was by the bung, I took a long reed, and got a couple of the most refreshing draughts I had ever tasted. It was capital Canary sherry, and I felt its grateful influence in every part of my body. The boys entreated me to let them also have a sip ; and as I did not like to prohibit them from tasting what I had myself enjoyed before their eyes, I made them take it in turns to have a pull. But presently they grew so greedy and

quarrelsome that I had to take them away by force and rebuke them for their animalism, which, I pointed out, might besides lead them to drunkenness. I accompanied my words with a few blows, which brought the boys to their senses; and I profited by this opportunity to hoist some mattresses into our nest, by means of which we should spend a more restful night.

Almost before daybreak next morning I slipped noiselessly down from our eyrie, in order to get off betimes to the beach and look after our craft. Below, I found the animals already awake and active. The two dogs jumped round me joyfully; the cock crew and flapped its wings, and a couple of goats greeted me also; but the donkey, of whose services I was most in need, was wrapped in slumber, and manifested little desire to accompany me.

However, I managed to wake it and get it harnessed to my sledge. The cow I left behind me, as it had not yet been milked, and, accompanied by the dogs, I trotted off to the shore. Great was my joy to find my vessels intact; and although the tide had raised them during the night, my improvised anchors had yet sufficed to keep them from drifting away.

I managed to get on board, and loaded up my sledge with due consideration for the donkey, with which I now quickly returned, in anticipation of breakfast. But what was my surprise to find my belongings still fast asleep. It took me much time and trouble to wake them; and mother attributed her sleepiness to the comforts of the mattresses, while Ernest assured me: "It was so jolly to be woke up, and then to go off gently to sleep again! I wish I could be woke up like that every day, so as to enjoy that delicious second nap."

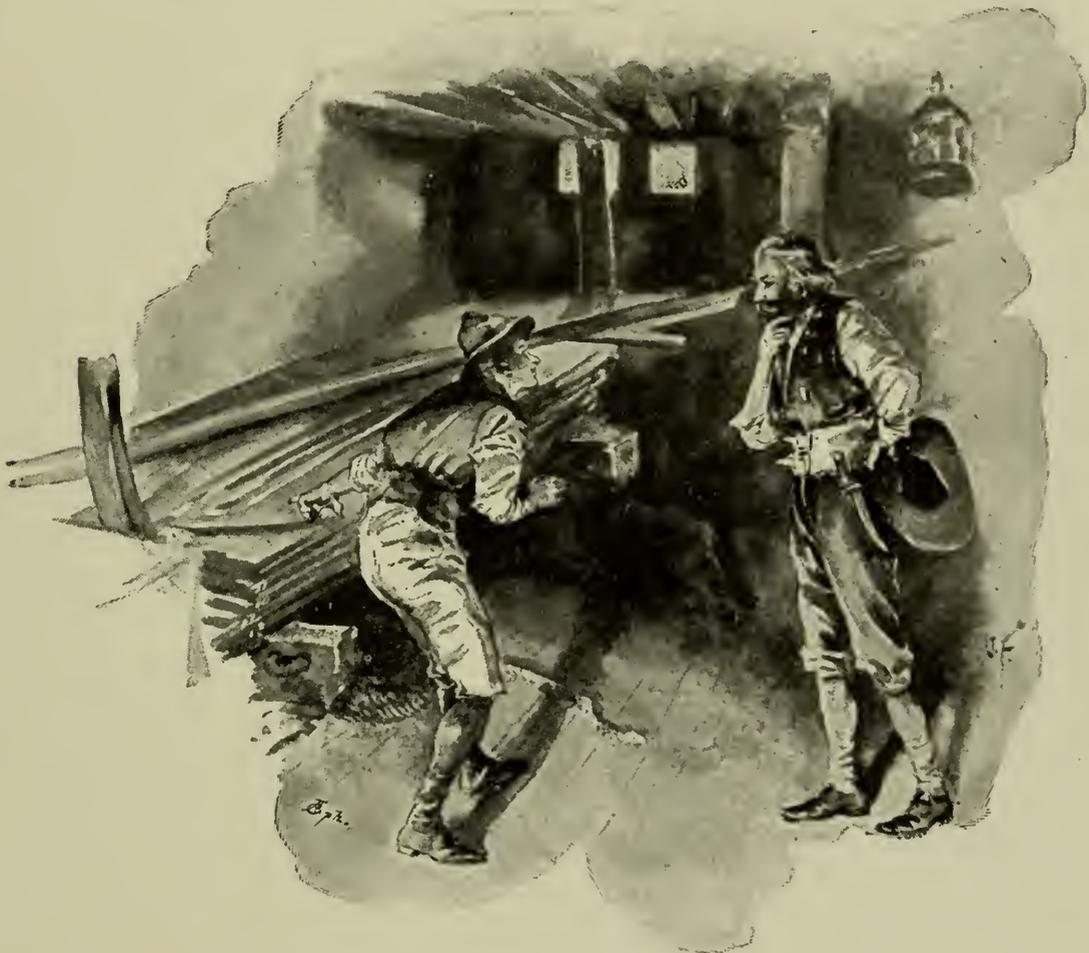
I rebuked him severely for his luxuriousness, and we proceeded to prayers and breakfast, after which we started again for the shore.

In two more journeys we succeeded in bringing our remaining treasures to Falconeyrie. But presently the returning tide had floated our craft; and so, having landed everything, I sent the boys home, while I remained with Fred in order to take our craft round to our old landing place. But as Jack kept sneaking about and wanted very much to come with us, I allowed him to get on board.

Very soon we were afloat; but instead of returning to Refuge Bay, I was tempted by the splendid weather to make another trip to the wreck, in order to see whether there was not something more to save. Owing to some difficulty in getting into the current, it was too late for us to attempt anything serious when we arrived; so we ran over the wreck to see what trifles we could find which could be transported with little trouble. Jack soon turned up, making a

fearful rattling noise, and wheeling a barrow, which, he said, would be invaluable for the conveyance of potatoes to Falconeyrie. But Fred brought me the welcome news that he had discovered a pinnace, with all its requisites and fittings, in the hold, and a couple of small cannon. For convenience of stowage, the pinnace had been taken to pieces, and on examination I found that we had not the time to put it together and launch it.

I therefore contented myself with a few useful articles—such as



"A pinnace, with all its requisites and fittings."

a large copper kettle, a couple of sheets of iron, several new tobacco rasps, two whetstones, a barrel of gunpowder and a barrel of flints, and, of course, Jack's wheelbarrow, of which I found two more, besides a few belts and straps.

Having loaded these on our craft, we started off home before the shore wind, which generally blew in the evening, had set in.

As we were making for shore, we saw a number of little figures standing in a row on the water's edge, and attired in white tunics.

their arms hanging listlessly down by their sides, or occasionally extended affectionately towards us, as though welcoming us.

I laughed, and said: "I wonder whether we are in the land of the pigmies, who have at last discovered us?"

"They are certainly Liliputians," said Jack.

"As though the story about the Liliputians was true!" cried Fred indignantly.

"In that case they are pigmies," said Jack.

"But even the stories of those little people are fabulous," I replied. "Don't you remember they made war on the cranes, and wore helmets of nut and egg shells? Those were sailors' yarns. They probably mistook monkeys for human beings, and wove all these stories round them."

"I think these pigmies are much of the same sort!" Fred exclaimed: "for I see they have beaks; and their arms are not arms at all, but short wings."

"You are quite right, my boy," I said; "they are nothing more nor less than penguins, with which Ernest supplied our kitchen once before. They are capital swimmers, but cannot fly, and are helpless on shore. There is very little sport in catching them."

We were slowly approaching the shore, and getting into very shallow water, when Jack suddenly jumped out of the boat and waded on land; and before the penguins had grasped the situation, knocked down half a dozen of them with a stick. The others quickly dived into the water, and were gone.

Fred was mightily displeased with Jack for having frightened away his game and prevented him from having a shot at them; but I chaffed him mercilessly for wanting to waste powder and shot when Jack had demonstrated that a stick was quite sufficient. Nevertheless, I gave Master Jack a severe scolding for jumping off the boat like that, as he might easily have got drowned—and all for the sake of a few birds which were scarcely eatable.

While I thus spoke a few of the birds rose to their feet and gravely waddled away. But this did not suit us after all! We seized the remainder by the throat, tied their legs together, and placed them on their sides upon the sand, compelling them to wait until we were ready to take them.

Hereupon we commenced landing our cargo. But the setting sun convinced us of the hopelessness of our task; and so we loaded our wheelbarrows, so as to be able to bring home at least some of our plunder that night, taking the tobacco rasps and sheets of iron with us, as well as the penguins.

As we drew near to Falconeyrie, I was pleased to hear how our

trusty watchdogs loudly announced our approach ; but as soon as they discovered who we were, they were also the first to give us a friendly welcome. Their greeting was so hearty that they upset poor little Jack, who, as it was, had some difficulty in maintaining his balance, owing to the weight of the wheelbarrow. The youngster responded to their affectionate ovations with his fist, which sent mother and the others, who had come up, into fits of laughter.

The wheelbarrows and their contents gave, deservedly, great satisfaction ; although there was some shrugging of shoulders at the sight of the tobacco rasps and the sheet iron, which rather amused me. The penguins I had carefully tied to the side of a goose or a duck, in order to accustom them to us and prevent them from getting away.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PINNACE.

MOTHER now showed me a goodly provision of potatoes, which she had collected in my absence, as well as a quantity of roots, which she took for manioc ; and thus elicited my praise for her industry.

“ Yes, father,” said Frank ; “ what will you say when you find we have got melons and all sorts of things growing up? Mother has been sowing seeds wherever we dug up a stand of potatoes.”

“ You chatterbox !” cried mother ; “ why did you betray me? I was going to prepare a surprise for father.”

“ That was a splendid idea !” I said. “ But, tell me, mother, where did you get the seeds from ?”

“ Oh ! I got them out of my magic bag,” mother replied. “ While you were indulging your love of plunder on the wreck, I thought I would make provision for the future.”

“ You are always down on me for visiting the wreck,” I answered ; “ but you will be a little less severe when I tell you that I have found a pinnacle there, and that it will probably be of great service to us.”

“ I see,” she said, “ you are going to be off again. Well, if you must be always on the move, I quite agree that it is much better for you to have a seaworthy boat than that horrid tub arrangement. But what did you want with a tobacco rasper? I hope you have no intention of feeding our noses when the food for the mouth gives out ?”

“ Do not be alarmed, dear mother,” I answered. “ I have no intention of introducing the disgusting habit of snuff-taking into this settlement. But, for all that, please regard these rasps with veneration. By their means I intend to obtain for you good, fresh bread.”

“ Of course you must know best ; but what tobacco rasps have to do with fresh bread is beyond my comprehension,” said mother,

looking bewildered. "Besides, we have no oven, and lots of other things are wanting."

"The iron plates will help to make an oven; but, of course, we shan't be able to make pretty, round loaves, but shall have to content ourselves with flat cakes. Let us make an experiment at once with some of Ernest's roots. The sun has not yet gone down, and perhaps I may be able to get some delicious cakes ready before nightfall. Let me have a canvas bag."

Mother instantly commenced sewing me a substantial bag of sail-cloth. But she had so little faith in my ability to perform my promise, that she took the opportunity of filling the kettle I had brought with potatoes and putting it on the fire. Meantime, I spread a large piece of sail-cloth on the ground, collected my youngsters round me, and gave each of them a rasp and a heap of manioc, which mother had previously washed. At the word of command, we all commenced rasping away at the manioc, until we had a fair amount of what looked like sawdust before us, which certainly did not seem very inviting.

I now explained that manioc was the principal food supply of many natives of America, who prepared an excellent kind of bread from it, which many Europeans prefer to our corn bread.

"Manioc," I said, "is a plant of which there are many kinds: one grows very quickly, and its roots ripen soon; another takes a little longer; and a third is not said to have properly developed roots until the second year of its growth. The two first kinds are poisonous, when eaten raw; but the third is good even in a raw state. But the two other kinds are preferred, because they ripen so much sooner."

"I don't much like the idea of eating poisonous bread," said Jack.

"Well, I think," I rejoined, "that these roots are of the third sort, because they are shrubby; but, to make quite sure, we will press the juice out of our sawdust here. For the juice, you see, contains the poison, and when that has been squeezed out, we shall be quite safe. But we will then make an experiment on Snip; and if he survives it, we shall know that we are all right."

For this purpose I put the manioc scrapings into the bag which I had asked mother to prepare, and tied it up tight, so that the juice began to ooze out of it. But this did not suffice: a press had to be made. So I cut down the branch of a tree, and cleaned it carefully; then I constructed a bed of planks under one of the lower roots of our tree, and placed the bag upon it. This I covered over with a fresh layer of boards; and across these I put the branch, an end of which fitted under a root, and the other, which projected for some distance, I weighed down with various heavy articles, such as lumps of lead, etc.,

which I tied to it. By these means I succeeded in bringing great pressure to bear upon the bag, until the juice was entirely squeezed out, and trickled to the ground.

"That is very easy and simple," said Fred.

"Yes, it is," I replied: "it is the most primitive form of lever known; but its use is very great."

"I thought," said Ernest, "that a lever could be used only for lifting heavy weights—as, for instance, by navvies, for lifting large quarry stones—not for squeezing?"

"My dear boy," I replied, "don't you see that the point on which the lever rests is the point of pressure? The point under the root of the tree would be really the point of leverage if the root were not so strong as to afford a resistance to the lever. In consequence, the force is concentrated on the point of pressure, and thus squeezes out our manioc juice for us. The savages accomplish this by other means: they plait a basket of hemp, and stuff this full of manioc; then they suspend it to a very strong branch, and attach heavy weights to the end of it; these weights pull the hemp basket almost straight, and in doing so, squeeze all the juice out of the manioc."

"And is the juice wasted?" asked our thrifty mother.

"Oh, no!" I answered. "The savages boil it a little, so as to get rid of the poison, mix it with pepper and possibly crawfish spawn, and obtain a delectable drink. Europeans let it stand, and wash the sediment in clean water, and then dry it in the sun; from this they obtain a kind of starch for the laundry. Potato starch is got in a similar way."

"But must not the manioc be all baked at once, or will it spoil if it is kept?" asked mother. "In that case we shall have to devote the whole of to-morrow to baking."

"No: as soon as the flour is dry we can put it in casks, and it will keep for years. But do not be alarmed! Although you see such a lot, you will find it diminish in baking—for a great quantity will melt in the heat."

"Let us bake a cake at once," said Fred eagerly.

"Well," I replied, "don't you think we had better wait till to-morrow, and content ourselves to-day with a test cake for the fowls and the monkey?"

We undid the bag, and took out a few handfuls of flour, taking care to close the bag again, and increase the pressure on it, so that any juice that might still remain should be squeezed out by to-morrow. We then took one of our circular and slightly curved iron plates, and placed it over a couple of stones, under which we kindled a fire. As soon as the iron was hot, we lumped some flour on

to it with a wooden ladle, and flattened the flour out. As soon as the flour had got yellow underneath, we turned it round—and thus we baked our first cake.

“That smells good,” said Ernest. “What a pity we may not taste it yet!”

“Frank and I would not mind trying,” said Jack.

“That is quite likely,” I said angrily; “for you two are the most thoughtless. Although I do not think it would do you any harm, nevertheless, it would be better to wait till to-morrow. Besides, we won’t give it to all the chickens—only to two; and then we will make that egg-thief, Snip, render us a service.”

As soon as the cake had cooled, it was broken up and offered to the various subjects for experiment, who swallowed the pieces eagerly, to the envy of the boys.

“What is this bread called in America?” they asked me now.

I explained to them that it was called cassava, which the savages prepared by scraping the manioc on a board with sharp stones and shells.

“And now, mother,” I said, “you must start baking early to-morrow morning; for if our animals are not stunned, or do not suffer from gripes overnight, we shall be able to gorge ourselves fearlessly with cassava in the morning.”

“Can they only be stunned or get gripes?” asked Fred: “can’t they be affected in some other way?”

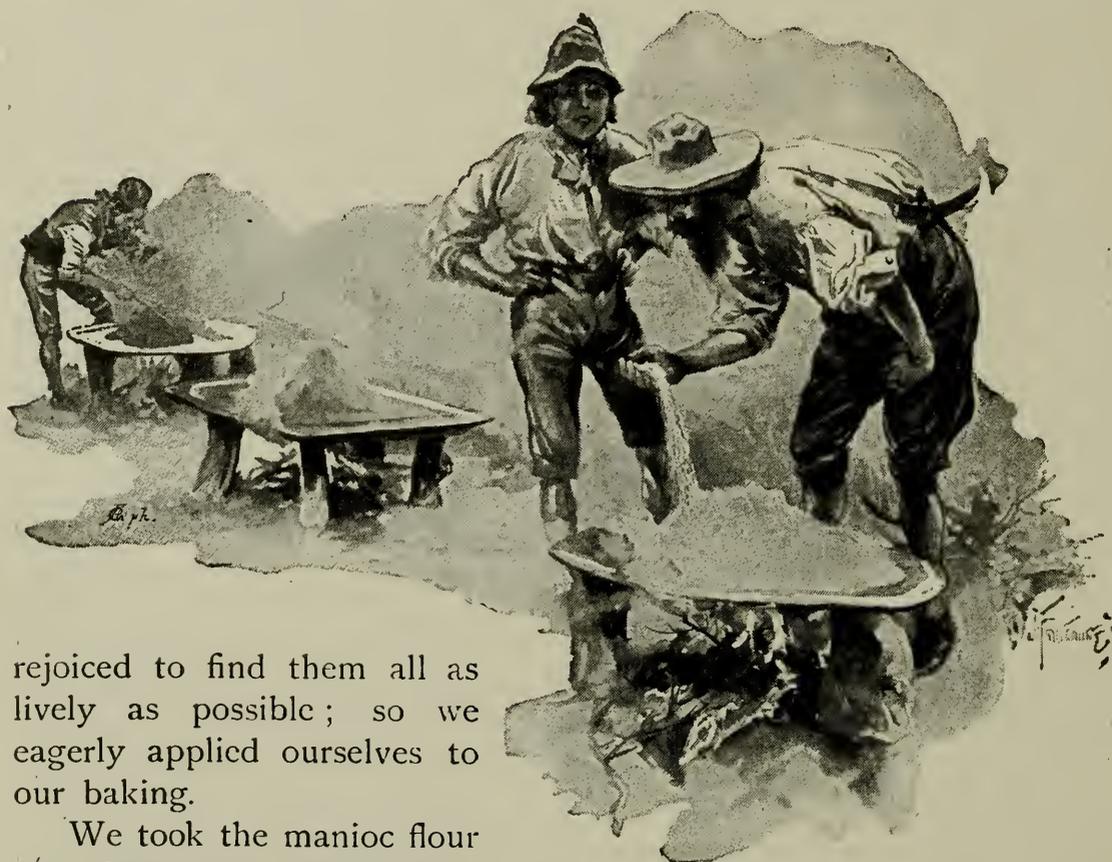
“No; that is the usual way poison acts,” I replied. “Some poisons are sharp and corrosive, and cause gripes, like arsenic or sublimate; others stun, or cause a general deadening of the nerves, or produce an unnatural reaction of the nerves, like opium. If relief is not offered at once, the human machine is brought to a standstill, or in disorder, until death ensues. Some milder forms of poison act more slowly, and produce a gradual disturbance of health, followed by dissolution: in these cases the poison is called a slow poison. Sharp poisons require fatty antidotes—such as oil, buttermilk or barley-water—in order to dull their sharpness; those poisons which stun require emetics or acids, in order to empty the stomach at once, to shake up the nerves, and thus to produce a reaction.

“Let me take this opportunity of warning you against a specially poisonous kind of apple, which grows in America, and which we shall probably come across here sooner or later. These apples grow on trees which are found usually near water or swamps, and they are very attractive, being red and yellow. They are said to contain the strongest of poisons, although there are

fishes and crabs which thrive on them; and they also become poisonous and unfit to eat. Be on your guard, therefore, against this dangerous fruit: it is known as the manchineel. But enough of poisons. Let us taste some of mother's homely potatoes and roast penguin."

We found the penguins no better than before, but eatable, nevertheless; and the potatoes were glorious. Thereupon we retired for the night, quite fagged out.

Next morning we went off to inspect our chickens and the monkey, to see how the cassava had agreed with them, and were



Drying the cassava.

rejoiced to find them all as lively as possible; so we eagerly applied ourselves to our baking.

We took the manioc flour out of the press, and kindled a gigantic fire, so as to have lots of coals. But we took advantage of it to cook some more potatoes, so as not to waste it. As soon as we had enough coals, each of the boys was apportioned an oven of his own; each received an iron plate and a quantity of flour in a cocoanut shell, so that each could bake his own bread, and thus save time.

The boys were arranged in a semicircle round me; and on the whole we did not do so badly, although a few of the cakes got burnt.

Nevertheless, with a basin of milk for each of us and the cakes, we made a right royal breakfast, notwithstanding that the boys had

been untidy in their method of baking, and had kept picking at the bread while it was being prepared.

I was pleased to find that our captured penguins did not refuse the crumbs we offered them; the example of their companions, the geese and ducks, was contagious.

And now I was seized with an irresistible impulse to start in force for the wreck, and, with the combined aid of the boys, to get the pinnace into a state of efficiency. But mother did not see matters in the same light, and it took me much time before I succeeded in talking her over. At last she consented to let all the boys, with the exception of little Frank, accompany me, on condition that we solemnly promised to return the same day.

The boys, as usual whenever there was anything new in the air, were all agog to come—especially Ernest. We were all armed, and took a sufficient quantity of cassava and potatoes with us for provisions. We met with no adventures on our journey to Refuge Bay, where we buckled on our life-belts, and embarked in our rickety boat of tubs, taking the raft in tow.

As soon as we arrived at the wreck, we loaded our craft, so that we might not return empty-handed, even though we should be overtaken by the evening. Thereupon we commenced our inspection of the pinnace. There were two almost insuperable difficulties to contend with—one arising from the place in which she was stowed, the other from her inordinate size. She was stowed under the officers' cabin, and was separated by several partitions from the spot amidships where we usually boarded the wreck. There was not sufficient room to put her together in the place where she was stowed, and yet her separate parts were too heavy for us to remove.

So I sat down and put on my considering cap, and had a good think; while the boys explored every corner of the wreck, and dragged all they could lay their hands on to the raft.

I noticed, through a chink in the partition which admitted the light, that the separate parts of the pinnace had been packed so cleverly, and were so plainly numbered, that I could have easily put them together then and there if I had had time to make room by breaking down the partitions. I determined to risk it; but it was slow work.

Evening overtook us without our having made any satisfactory progress, and so we had to think of our return.

On landing at Refuge Bay, we had the pleasure to find mother and Frank awaiting us: they had determined to take up their old abode at Tentbourne until the wreck was completely dismantled,

so that our journeys might be shorter and they might not lose sight of us.

This kindness touched me deeply, and I could not sufficiently thank mother; all the more as I knew how little she relished this abode. I was therefore glad to be able to reward her unselfishness with a handsome cargo. To her great delight I landed two casks of butter, three of flour, and some packages of corn and rice, besides a number of useful articles, and brought them to our storehouse.

Thus we spent more than a week, until the pinnacle was completely put together. Every morning we regularly set out, and returned at night. We got so used to this daily trip that we left mother without any concern; and she, on the other hand, took heart of grace, and went by herself from time to time to Falconeyrie to feed the fowls and to fetch potatoes. At night, when we were again united, we had much to tell each other, and were refreshed by what mother had provided for us.

At last the pinnacle was got ready, and the next thing was to launch her. She looked beautiful. She had a small deck aft, and was rigged like a brigantine. She promised to be a splendid sailer; for she was lightly constructed, and would not sit low in the water. We had stopped up all interstices most carefully with tow, and had caulked her—that is, pitched and tarred her. We mounted a couple of one-pound guns on the quarter-deck, which we had secured by means of chains in the usual manner.

Nevertheless she still sat high and dry in the hold. Great difficulties beset the task of making a sufficiently large hole in the wreck's side to admit of launching her. It had been comparatively easy to remove the partitions; but the main-deck sloped straight into the sea, and we had neither strength nor time to break this away, for there was always the danger of another storm bursting upon us and destroying the wreck, the pinnacle and all. I therefore formed a bold and dangerous resolve. For I had found a strong iron mortar, such as is used in kitchens, which I thought would be of service to me. I prepared a heavy oaken board, upon which I fastened iron hooks. With a gouge I made a groove in the board. The boys had now to get me some lunt to make a match of, and of this I cut off enough to lay a train which would take two hours to burn. This I fitted into the groove, and I filled the mortar with gunpowder, placing the board with the match over it, and locking the handles firmly in the hooks. I then pitched the top of the mortar where the board covered it, and finally made the whole fast with chains, which I bound round and

over and across it. Thus I had made a petard which promised to be efficacious. I suspended this terrible engine in the hold, where the pinnace was stored, and near the side of the wreck, so that the pinnace might not be affected by the recoil of the mortar, which would fly over it—if I had any luck, that is to say.

I now set fire to my train, which passed through the groove to the centre of the mortar, and then I coolly got into my tub-boat. I had sent the boys off before. Although they had pluckily helped me in the construction of my petard, they were quite ignorant of its probable effect, and thought it would not be put in use for some time. I did not enlighten them, for my experiment might end in failure, and I did not see the necessity of accusing myself prematurely.

As soon as we arrived at Tentbourne, I let go the raft, so that the tub-boat should be free to return immediately on our hearing the explosion. The raft was hauled well up to the beach, and here we proceeded to unload it.

While we were in the midst of this occupation, we suddenly heard a loud report out at sea, which made my wife and the boys jump with fright.

“What is that, father?” they cried. “That must have been a cannon shot! Perhaps it was the captain with our lost ship’s company.”

“Or perhaps it is a strange vessel in danger. Let us go out to assist it,” said Fred.

“I thought the sound came from the wreck,” said mother. “Perhaps a portion of it has been blown into the air, through your being so careless with the gunpowder”

“Well,” I replied calmly, “the best thing to do is to go off and see what has happened. Who is game to go?”

For an answer the boys jumped into the boat, while I followed them, having previously reassured mother.

We got out of the bay sooner than ever, for the boys were eager and rowed with a will. When we were in the open sea, I was glad to find that the wreck did not present an altered appearance, and that no suspicious smoke was issuing from it. With a light heart we rowed round the wreck: for I had applied my petard to the other side, and here I saw that dreadful havoc had been wrought; for the entire side of the vessel was destroyed, and countless spars floated in the water, while the hold, in which the pinnace was stored, was exposed to view. But the pinnace appeared to be uninjured; and so I began to cheer like a madman, to the consternation of the boys, who were quite aghast at the ruins before them.

“At last she is mine!” I shouted: “the glorious pinnacle! Now we will soon get her launched.”

We climbed on to the wreck, and a nearer inspection confirmed my first impression: the pinnacle was indeed uninjured.

I now had leisure to explain to the boys what a petard was, and how it should be made; and then I began to consider the best means of launching the pinnacle. I could see that she could be easily slipped overboard by means of windlasses and rollers, especially as I had taken the precaution to rest her keel on rollers; so that there was no difficulty in the way. Before I commenced my operations, I fastened a good stout rope to her stern, and made the other end of the rope fast to the wreck, so that when once launched, the pinnacle might not slip out to sea and get lost. We now set to, and soon made the pinnacle move, until she plunged, not without violence, into the water, although the rope held her fast. We then easily drew her round the wreck to the spot where we generally boarded it from the raft, and where we had put up a spar with a pulley attached to it for purposes of loading. By means of this primitive crane I intended to lower the mast and sails. This was soon accomplished, and I rigged up my pinnacle as well as my slight knowledge of seamanship permitted.

But now the martial spirit was aroused in my boys, and they became restless. A vessel with two guns, and loaded with muskets and pistols, seemed quite invincible to them, and they bragged most amusingly of attacking and repelling entire fleets of savages. I, on the contrary, assured them that we should have every reason for congratulation if our fighting strength and personal courage were never put to the test.

The complete equipment of our vessel occupied several days; but as we managed to keep her concealed from view, we were justified in hoping to be able to astonish mother and Frank with her magnificent appearance.

When we were at last ready to start, I could not refuse the boys the pleasure of firing mother a salute. The guns were loaded, and a boy stood at each, armed with a burning match. The third boy stood near the mast to give the word of command and to keep an eye on the tackle. I myself took charge of the rudder, and thus we started, cheering wildly.

The wind was in our favour, and blew so powerfully that we flew over the surface of the sea like a bird. Our catamaran flew with us, for we had taken her in tow.

As we approached the entrance of Refuge Bay, we reefed the mainsail, so as to have the vessel better under control and to



“AT LAST SHE IS MINE!” I SHOUTED: “THE GLORIOUS PINNACE!”

avoid the danger of being driven on to the rocks. Our speed was therefore materially slackened, and we were able to turn our minds to the business of the salute and getting the anchor ready.

“Number one gun—fire! Number two gun—fire!” shouted Fred with enthusiasm.

Jack and Ernest stood to their guns and intrepidly applied the match. The guns thundered, the rocky shore replied with long and majestic echoes. Fred fired off a couple of pistol shots, and then we all set up a deafening cheer.

We could see mother and Frank making signs of welcome from the shore.

We were adroit enough to steer our pinnace in among the rocks, where they seemed to form a sort of natural quay, and jumped on shore.

Mother came running breathlessly up to us, crying :

“Oh, you horrid wretches! You have no idea what joy and pain you have caused me! I could not imagine where that splendid ship was coming from, and who might be on board. I hid behind the rocks, and when I heard you fire I trembled in every joint. If I had not luckily recognised your voices, I would have run away ever so far! But now you really have a charming boat! Putting out to sea in that is a very different matter. I should not mind coming with you myself. It will be a source of amusement and benefit to us.”

She enthusiastically boarded the little vessel, and praised our smartness and industry.

“But do not suppose,” she said, “that Frank and I have been idle during your absence. We have been hard at work also. Come along, and we will show you what we have done.”

We followed mother with curiosity to the source of the Jackal Brook, and were astonished to see before us a kitchen garden in a very satisfactory state of progress.

“See,” she said, “the fruits of my work! This is a potato field, that a manioc plantation, over there are lettuce and salad. I have left room for sugar-cane. If you could make me a small irrigation canal with bamboos from the waterfall, I shall have plenty of nourishment for my plantation. But this is not all. Over there, on the lowest ledges of the rock, I have transplanted a few pine-apples, with their earth, and I have sown melons in between. Here is a space for beans, and there another for cabbages. Round every plantation I have sown maize, so that we may get some shade for the plants and protect them from being burnt by the sun.”

I was lost in amazement, and profuse in my praises. Mother

now remarked that during our journeys to the wreck I had neglected her fruit trees at Falconeyriè ; they had got quite dried up in the open air, and if she had not occasionally sprinkled them with water, and covered them with branches, they would have all been spoilt.

“ Some,” she said, “ I have buried lengthwise in the cool ground : I would have done this with all if I had not been so busy with my kitchen garden.”

“ You have done the best that can be done in such cases,” I said ; “ but I must go off to Falconeyrie myself, for I value those fruit trees very much.”

“ That is just what I meant,” she replied. “ We should all go back to our castle in the air, for there is much to do. The best part of the contents of the wreck has been landed ; but it is mostly lying about in the sun exposed, and may all get spoilt. Besides, I have got tired of this frying-pan of a Tentbourne !”

I agreed with her entirely, although I pointed out the necessity of first unloading our last cargo. This we did, and added it to our previous plunder, and covered all over with sail-cloth, which we fastened with pegs to the ground. The pinnace was left at anchor, although we made her nose fast to a pole which we drove into the ground. And now we retraced our steps to Falconeyrie, taking all we could with us, so that our animals, as well as ourselves, were well loaded up.

CHAPTER X.

EXCURSIONS AND ALARUMS.

THE day after our return was a Sunday, which we spent in the usual manner. I took care that, after our devotions, the boys should be allowed to indulge in the perfectly legitimate and childish enjoyment of the Sabbath. Nothing was further from my object than to bring up a family of snuffing hypocrites. I wished them to look up cheerfully to their Creator, and serve Him without sorrowful mumblings.

I therefore, in order to employ them usefully, resumed those physical exercises which had taken the form of archery on a previous Sunday; for I was anxious to develop the physical strength and agility of the boys, so that they might be able to face the dangers of the island with self-confidence and pluck.

Besides archery, running, and jumping, I made them climb this time as well—especially on a loose rope, which swung free in the air, and had large knots in it at intervals of about a foot. Gradually we were able to make the intervals greater, and finally to do away with the knots altogether.

While the boys were practising their climbing, I got hold of a cord about a fathom long, and attached a ball of lead to each end.

“What is that going to be?” the boys cried anxiously.

“This,” I replied, “is a Patagonian lasso, called bola by the natives—though, instead of lead, they use stones. They can throw one of these stones at any object they want to kill; and, retaining the other in their hand, they can recover the first and repeat the blow. They can also sling it adroitly round the necks of the animals they wish to catch alive by imparting a rotatory motion to it, and thus sending it circling through the air until it settles either on the necks or the legs of the animals they wish to lasso, and keeps rotating there so as to bring them to a standstill. Of course, this requires great skill.”

I illustrated my meaning by throwing my lasso at the trunk of a tree. By good fortune it was a successful throw, and the lasso whirled round the tree in the most orthodox fashion, to the great delight of the boys. They now begged me to make a lasso for each of them, and immediately proceeded to practise with these. Fred was the one who attained to the highest degree of excellence, owing to his natural adroitness and also to his superior strength and age.

On the morning after this well-spent Sunday, I noticed early, from my nest in the trees, that the sea was much agitated and that the wind was blowing with remarkable violence. I therefore congratulated myself not a little on being comfortably housed at Falconeyrie, and determined to spend the day here instead of going on board the wreck.

The first thing to do was to look after the fruit trees, whose condition showed me that they were in imminent danger of withering; and the next, to make a pilgrimage to the wood where we had found the gourds, in order to get some more.

Much as we burned to undertake this journey, we were compelled to postpone it until the next day; for the planting of the trees took up all our time, until late. Besides, we found that, as we intended a march in force, we should require to make lengthy preparations.

With sunrise the next day we began to get ready for our departure. The donkey played a most important part, for on it would devolve the duty of bringing back the gourds. It was harnessed to the sledge, which for the present received our provisions for the day, a bottle of sherry, and some ammunition. Turk, in its coat of armour, preceded us as usual. The boys marched behind it, armed for the chase. Mother and I followed; and the rear was brought up by Bill, somewhat depressed, with Snip on its back. I carried a double-barrelled fowling-piece—one barrel loaded with coarse slugs for game, the other with ball for protection.

Thus we went on our way joyfully, avoided Flamingo Swamp, and speedily arrived in the beautiful region beyond, which mother and the other boys had not seen before, and which they feasted their eyes on.

Fred, eager for sport, bolted with Turk, and got lost to view in the tall grass. Presently Turk started an enormous bird, at which Fred had a good shot; but, although it was hit, the bird was not dead, and made good its escape, thanks to the strength and agility of its legs. Turk was after it like mad, and Fred followed, shouting with all his might. Bill could not stand this; so it unceremoniously threw the monkey rider, and ran for the bird, taking it in flank, and thus intercepting it. Bill succeeded in getting hold of it, and Fred

came up to assist. But now a very different battle ensued from that with the weak-legged flamingo. This fellow was big and strong, and could kick most usefully. Even Turk was floored with a kick, and refused to tackle this formidable bird ; so that Fred kept jumping about, at a loss to know how to attack it.

There was nothing for it but to wait for me to come up, which took some time, owing to my heavy equipment and the length of the grass. On my arrival I was delighted to find the bird was a splendid hen bustard, which was already partially overpowered. In order to get it alive, I seized a favourable moment, and threw my handkerchief over its head, and secured it so that the bird could not see. I then



"I seized a favourable moment, and threw my handkerchief over its head."

tied its legs with cords, and made Bill relax its grip of the bird's wing. I tied its pinions together by passing a cord round its body. Thus the powerful bird was trussed, and ready to be carried away. I intended to add it to our farmyard.

We brought it back to the others, who were awaiting us on the beach. Ernest and Jack immediately jumped, and cried :

"That is a fine fellow !"

"Is that a bustard ?" asked Ernest.

Fred ridiculed the idea.

"Yes, my boy," I said. "Ernest is right : it is a bustard."

"Perhaps it is the very same bird," said Jack, "which was allowed to escape so clumsily that time !"

"I should be sorry for that," said mother; "for in that case we have robbed a flock of young ones of their protector. Perhaps it would be better to give the bird its liberty."

"Don't say that, dear wife," I replied. "If it is dangerously wounded, the bird will die in any case, but we shall lose a good dish. If, on the other hand, it recovers, we shall obtain a splendid brooder, which may even attract its mate, and supply us with invaluable contributions to the table. As for the young ones, you need not be concerned about them; for during the three weeks or more that they have been about, they have learnt to shift for themselves."

Meanwhile, I had attached the bustard to the sledge, and so we continued our journey towards the Monkey Forest, of which Fred recounted his tragi-comic experience. Ernest was so taken with the beauty of the cocoanut trees that he planted himself before one of the palms, and raised his eyes to its summit in wonder. I was standing behind him, and watching with satisfaction his poetical transports, when he breathed a deep sigh, and said:

"How dreadfully high the cocoanuts are!"

"Yes," I said, laughing; "and yet they smile at you so invitingly! Would not you like them to drop into your mouth?"

"Indeed I shouldn't," he said, with some energy; "they would break my teeth."

He had scarcely spoken before an enormous nut fell to his feet, which caused him to turn pale and jump on one side. It was instantly followed by another.

"Why," said the boy, "this is like a fairy tale! You can scarcely express a wish before it is fulfilled!"

"Indeed," I replied, "but it is possible that the fairy is a monkey, whose object is not so much to provide our table with good things as to drive us away."

Ernest picked up the nuts, and we found them to be quite unripe, and not even withered, so that I could not understand how it was they had fallen to the ground. Fred, mother, and the others now joined us; and we surrounded the tree and watched it, when presently two more excellent nuts tumbled down.

"That is a very polite fairy," said Ernest. "At first only two nuts were thrown to us, because there were only two of us here; but now that our party has increased, the number has been added to."

"Yes," said Jack, looking up; "it is very polite. All we want is one for Frank and me."

"Oh, oh!" cried Fred. "I have discovered it, father! It is a

horrible animal, flat and round, as big as a hat ; it has two terrible sheers, and it is coming down the tree."

At this intelligence Frank immediately slipped behind his mother. Ernest looked round for a place of refuge, while Jack waved the butt-end of his gun, and we all looked intently at the tree, and anxiously watched the strange beast as it slowly crawled down. As soon as it got within reach, Jack aimed a blow at it with his gun, but missed it. The brute immediately sprang to the ground, and marched upon us with its enormous sheers stretched out.

Jack went for him bravely, but with such ardour that he kept missing him, especially as his antagonist nimbly avoided every blow. Finally, remembering probably how unpleasantly nippers can seize the calves, and tired of his fruitless efforts, he turned tail and ran. His brothers burst into a roar of laughter. Incensed at this, he suddenly stopped, laid down his gun and knapsack, took off his jacket, held it at arms' length in both hands, and ran at the animal. As soon as he got near it, and in a twinkling, he threw his jacket over its body, dropped down on the bundle, and began hitting it with all his might, shouting :

"You beastly dragon! I will teach you manners, you brute!"

I was so convulsed with laughter that I could scarcely run to Jack's assistance ; but at last I seized my hatchet and belaboured the bundle with a will, until I thought the brute had had enough. I now extricated it, and found it dead, as I had expected.

"What a hideous, nasty animal!" said Jack. "If it had not looked so disgusting I would not have got so excited. But I was not afraid. What is it?"

"It is a crab," I replied, "and I think a cocoa crab ; and as it seems to live on cocoanuts, it must know how to crack them with its sheers, and must be a very cunning customer, therefore a formidable opponent for a boy like you. You have shown great pluck, and, what is better still, presence of mind, and the idea of the jacket was capital. You shall be dubbed a crab knight."

I placed the crab and the cocoanuts on the sledge.

As we penetrated farther into the forest, we found it increasingly difficult to proceed, and we had continually to cut a way for the donkey and its sledge with our hatchets through the bushes and shrubs. We were soon surprised by another discovery, which gave us much pleasure, and promised to refresh us in the oppressive heat. While Ernest was cutting down one of the densely growing lianas which impeded our progress, he noticed a few drops of clear water bubbling out of the stem ; these he showed us, and we tasted them.

"Look, children!" I exclaimed, "what a blessing of God we have

come across! How refreshing is this sap to man, travelling for days in these tropical forests without finding any water to relieve his thirst in the heat!"

The boys lost no time in addressing themselves to the lianas; and as I had taught them how to suck sugar-cane, they were able speedily to slake their thirst, and even to give the animals a drink.

We had to continue our weary way through the jungle for some time before we again got into the open and espied the gourd wood, when we soon reached the pleasant spot on which I had rested before.

Everybody was filled with admiration at the beautiful trees and the curious fruit, which had grown marvellously. I looked round at once for various forms and sizes of gourds. Soon we had collected a goodly quantity, and we commenced sawing and cutting to our hearts' content. First of all I made a splendid egg-basket by cutting the upper half of a gourd into a curved arch, and leaving this on while I hollowed out the lower half. Then I provided for a number of milk and cream jugs, with lids, made of the tops of the gourds. Water bottles came next; and, finally, plates and pots—even bee baskets, and pigeon and chicken hutches, made of large gourds. The pigeon baskets I intended to fasten to the branches of trees; and the hutches, which were partly intended for the ducks and geese as well, I purposed to range near the little brook and under the roots of Falconeyrie, like little villages.

Of course we were not uniformly successful in our work, but on the whole we managed pretty well. And now I permitted Fred and Jack to prepare a fireplace for the cooking of the crab. But sweet water was wanting, and so I had to accompany them in their search for a spring. Ernest came with us, for he had been most unsuccessful in our pottery work, and longed for an opportunity for distinction; so he ran on in front of us. Suddenly he rejoined us with a terrified countenance, crying:

"A boar, a boar! Come, father, come! It gave me such a turn! It suddenly rose up by my side out of the jungle, and then disappeared. I could hear it rustling."

"Hulloa!" cried the boys; "let us get on its track! A splendid quarry!"

I called to the dogs, who joined us at a gallop, and now we started. Ernest had to be our guide, and led us to the spot where the animal had grunted at him. But we found nothing beyond some scratched earth and a few potatoes, which the bristly native had probably been digging up. Jack and Ernest remained behind

to collect these potatoes, while Fred and I pushed on, our guns cocked, the dogs leading.

They very soon overtook the fugitive; and we heard their loud barking, followed by a terrific grunting, which kept proceeding from the same spot, which we approached in battle array, and with all caution. Soon we discovered a formidable pig, which was being held by the ears by our two dogs, and was grunting for pity and succour rather than in defiance. As we got nearer we were disgusted to find that, instead of a wild boar, we had been stalking our own truant sow. Hearing roars of laughter, instead of shots and the din of battle, Ernest and Jack joined us quite courageously, and had to put up with a lot of chaff from Fred. But they completely justified themselves by producing a number of apples which they had found strewed on the ground, and which were growing on the neighbouring bushes. By way of experiment they were offered to the pig, to whom we had restored its liberty, and were consumed by it with much greed. Fred had expressed concern lest they should turn out to be manchineeel fruit; but this reassured us, especially as, instead of having stones, they had seeds inside them. So I counselled the boys to try the monkey next, and see what he would have to say to them.

Meanwhile we were still without water, so we pushed on with vigour. Jack was in advance this time, and was going in the direction of the rocks; but he had scarcely reached the more open thickets, which permitted him to see them, when he stood rooted to the spot, and cried:

“Oh, father, father! a crocodile!”

“What nonsense!” I cried angrily. “Here—on a burning cliff, with no water anywhere—a crocodile! That would be a strange thing!”

All expectation we crept up to the spot where the monster had been sighted; but I immediately recognised that, instead of a crocodile, we had one of those enormous lizards before us which are called iguanas, and are particularly esteemed as a great delicacy in the West Indies. The boys were much reassured when they heard this, and Fred was on the point of firing, but I stopped him in time.

“You are always too hasty,” I said. “You might easily miss or only wound him, and then he would escape us. Let us profit by our luck in finding him asleep, and try to catch him alive.”

With these words I cut off a fairly stout stick from one of the bushes, to the end of which I fastened a sling; armed with this in my right hand, and a sharp pointed switch in my left, I approached



him cautiously, the boys watching me breathlessly. As soon as I got close enough I began to whistle gently a soothing tune, at which the sleeper slowly awakened, and seemed to be transported. He lifted his head to see where the sound came from. Fearful of startling the animal, I crept up to him as noiselessly as I could, until I got near enough to stroke and tickle him with my switch, while I continued whistling the most melodious tunes I could think of.

The poor creature enjoyed this so much that he



“Oh, father, father! a crocodile!”

stretched himself out, then rolled himself over, and did not appear

to know what to do with himself for pleasure. I now seized my opportunity, and, slipping my sling over his neck, pulled him with a sudden jerk off the ledge of rock on which he was lying to my feet, and planted my switch on his body with my left, in order to transfix and kill him. He began to slash about with his tail so furiously that I could do nothing for some time but dodge his blows. But now the boys jumped to my assistance to settle him with the butt-ends of their guns; but the animal gave a tremendous sweep with his tail, and knocked poor little Jack clean off his feet, and sent him rolling over to some distance. This incensed the boys, who were just going to vent their rage on the beast when I commanded them to stop, for I did not want to put the animal to unnecessary pain. I watched a favourable moment, and plunged the switch deep into his nostril: a few drops of blood spurted out, and his life was extinct.

This well-known method of killing these animals in the West Indies elicited rounds of applause, and the boys regarded me as something little short of a snake charmer and dragon slayer.

But the handsome booty was no inconsiderable burden; for it was quite against my principles to leave a useful piece of game to rot, or to kill an animal wantonly. I had to shoulder it as best I could, and carry the heavy weight on my back, thus offering an amusing spectacle. The boys carried the tail, and I looked like some ancient king in his robes, or a necromancer in his enchanter's cloak, whose pages or dwarfs were carrying his train.

We had proceeded some distance on our return journey when we heard the plaintive cries of mother and Frank, who had grown uneasy at our protracted absence, especially as we had given no signs of life by firing our guns. As soon as we replied with loud and joyous cheers, the cries of those we had left behind changed to shouts of hearty greeting, and once again we were all united; and mother soon forgave us our apparent neglect and our failure to find water when she heard how we had been led on from one adventure to another.

We forgot all our troubles as we unburdened ourselves of our iguana, the potatoes and the apples, so that we were oblivious of hunger and thirst. After Snip had eyed the apples covetously, and commenced stealthily eating them with relish, the appetite of the boys reawakened; and as the bustard, which we had tied to a tree by its legs, also gobbled up a few of them, I permitted the boys to try them as well, and we found them excellent, and I concluded them to be the well-known fruit of the West Indian guava.

But this stimulated rather than satisfied our hunger; and as we had no time to prepare our iguana at once, we were compelled to

content ourselves with the cold collation which we had brought from Falconeyrie. By way of dessert, we had a few partially baked potatoes, which had been put into the fire that mother had maintained during our absence.

We had scarcely finished our meal before mother jumped up to make preparations for our return home, as the evening was upon us. This being the case, I thought it best to leave the sledge, which we had loaded with gourds, behind us, and give the donkey nothing more to carry than its usual saddle-bags, filled with the driest of the gourds, besides the iguana and Frank. The bustard I determined to drive on in front of me, carefully secured by a rope.

Through the guava thickets and a magnificent grove of oak trees, alternating with fig trees, we reached Falconeyrie before nightfall; so that we had still time to unload, and to feed our animals, besides providing a supper for ourselves, the feature of which was a joint of iguana, well roasted, and served up with potatoes and acorns. As the evenings were growing cool, the roaring fire which Frank kindled was grateful.

Of course we went to fetch our gourds on the following day, for which purpose Fred and I started off, accompanied by the donkey, leaving the others with mother; for I intended to make an excursion along the cliffs, and did not want to be hampered by the other weaker and more timid boys.

As we passed under the evergreen oaks we found our sow feasting on the acorns. We had been unable to bring it with us the day before, for it was an obstinate brute, and not easy to drive. We were nevertheless pleased to notice that yesterday's hunt had done the animal good, and apparently tamed it somewhat, for it did not run away on our approach.

We went along so noiselessly, collecting acorns and fruit as we went, that the birds, who were all having their breakfast, took no notice of us, and Fred was able to bag a jay and a couple of parrots. The jay I put down as a Virginian blue-jay, for it was hooded; and of the parrots one was a splendid red bird, the other, smaller, was of the common kind, with green and yellow plumage.

Fred was loading his gun to have another shot, when we heard a curious noise like that of a muffled drum. Fred got ready at once, for we thought it was the martial music of a tribe of savages; and so we concealed ourselves in the thickets, and thus proceeded cautiously. Presently we came upon a clearing, where we saw seated upon the prostrate trunk of a rotten tree, a beautiful bird of the size of an ordinary barn cock, with a magnificent ruff round his neck, who was posing in the most extraordinary antics. Now

he would rapidly twirl round in a circle ; now turn his head and eyes about in a fearsome manner ; now he would agitate his ruff and gurgle strange sounds, and now he would spread out his tail like a fan, and flap his wings so quickly that they looked like a misty atmosphere round him. It was this flapping which had produced the sound of muffled drums, for the feathers of his wings seemed to knock against a hollow part of the tree.

Round this comical bird, and admiring his gestures, were a number of similar feathered beasts, only minus the ruff ; and I was most anxious to see what was going to happen, when suddenly the hasty Fred behind me let fly with his gun, put an end to the little comedy, and rolled the poor little actor over in the sand, while the others flew off in dismay.

“ That is really too annoying ! ” I said to Fred. “ What do you mean ? Is no animal safe that comes within shot of your gun ? Can you take no pleasure in the beautiful, but must you always destroy ? ”

The boy's pleasure at his lucky hit was now completely cooled ; but as the poor bird was dead, there was nothing for it but to inspect it.

We packed it on our donkey and continued our journey until we arrived at the spot where we had left the gourds, and found all as we had left it. As the morning was still young I started on an excursion among the cliffs at once, for I wanted to see whether there was a gap in these through which it would be possible to penetrate into the interior of the land on which we had settled.

We frequently encountered brooks similar to the one near Falconeyrie, which offered us refreshment. When we had passed the guava wood, we had to make our way laboriously through manioc and potato thickets. Then we got among bushes which looked strange to us, and on the branches of which clustered curious berries, which looked as though they were covered with wax, and stuck to our fingers as we picked them. I now remembered that there grew in America a kind of wax-bearing bush, which was called *Myrica cerifera*, and so this discovery gave me considerable pleasure.

Fred wanted to know what these berries were good for, and I explained to him that by boiling them in water a wax was obtained which, if inferior to beeswax, was at least applicable to similar purposes, and emitted an agreeable perfume besides.

At this intelligence, Fred proceeded to collect as many berries as he could conveniently stow into one of the donkey's saddle-bags. Having filled this up, we continued our way, when we presently made

a fresh discovery : for we came upon the remarkable nest of a peculiar kind of small bird—not unlike our yellowhammer, though brown in colour—which lives in colonies, and has a common nest. The nest was neatly interwoven with a branch of a tree, and full of inhabitants, and was situated near the trunk. It seemed to have a sort of roof of plaited reeds and blades of grass—a protection against sun and rain. Along the unequal sides there were numbers of little loopholes—doors and windows to the separate compartments. Here and there smaller branches projected, as resting-places and points of observation for the inhabitants. The general effect was not unlike that of an enormous bath sponge. There seemed to be quite a hundred birds, of

which very few appeared to be males.

As we were admiring this remarkable colony, we noticed a species of small paroquets, who were having a row with the colonists, scolding them, and trying to prevent them from entering their nests ; they even gave us some of their abuse. Fred, anxious to examine the nest more closely, and to catch, if possible, a couple of birds, divested himself of his impedimenta, and climbed up into the tree, where he began plunging his hand into the loopholes in the nest. He found several compartments empty ; but



"Succeeded in seizing the little fellow by the body."

presently he hit upon one that was inhabited, for he drew back his hand precipitately, the occupant having attacked it violently with its beak. Nothing daunted, he returned to the charge, and this time succeeded in seizing the little fellow by the body, and bringing him out squeaking terribly. He quickly shoved him into his pocket, which he buttoned up, and then descended : for at the alarum of their companion, numbers of other birds popped out and surrounded the boy with so threatening an air that he prepared to beat a hasty retreat.

When we examined the little captive, we discovered it to be a small green sparrow-paroquet. Fred was delighted ; put

it back again into his pocket, and promised himself to teach it to talk.

As we pushed on I said :

“ You see, there are sociable builders in every division of the animal kingdom. I wonder whether there are amphibious animals of the same social tastes. Bees, wasps, coral polyps and ants belong to this category.”

“ As for those,” said Fred, “ I have myself often noticed how ants work, keep house, defend themselves, and educate their young in common.”

“ Have you ever remarked,” I asked, “ how they carry their eggs into the sun, and drag them about until they are hatched ? ”

“ Well now,” Fred replied, “ I am not so stupid as to believe that what are called ant eggs are really, strictly speaking, eggs at all. I know they are really concealed ant worms, called larvæ, which have spun cocoons for themselves after they have come out of smaller genuine eggs. When they are completely ripened by the sun they are transformed into regular ants, and begin life like the others.”

“ That is quite correct, my boy,” I said ; “ but if the industry of our ants at home has interested you, how much more astonished would you be at that of foreign ants ! Some of these build houses or nests six feet high, and broad in proportion, and so strong and solid that neither sun nor rain can penetrate them. They have streets, passages, vaults and breeding chambers in them ; and they are so well built that a deserted one can be easily used as a baking oven. The ant itself is an ugly and noxious vermin : ugly because it stinks and perpetually sweats out a sticky slime ; and noxious because it destroys, devours or gnaws everything it encounters. But it seldom attacks anything openly ; for, like a thief, it makes mines and secret passages, from which it can direct its operations without being observed. Wherever these insects have established themselves, they are practically inexterminable, so that they become a veritable plague. Hitherto fire and hot water have been found the best means of destroying them. A number of other insects, birds, and even quadrupeds oppose their increase. Of these, the ant-bear—a large ant-eater—is the most deadly. He has powerful claws in his fore feet in order to scratch up the vaulted nests and subterraneous dwellings, besides a long sticky tongue, which he can insert into all the openings and passages, and to which the ants adhere, whom he thus complacently swallows. This is so easy and agreeable an occupation for the ant-eater that two of them will suffice to denude a nest of ants in a very short time. There are

also said to be savages who eat ants, so that these insects are not noxious food."

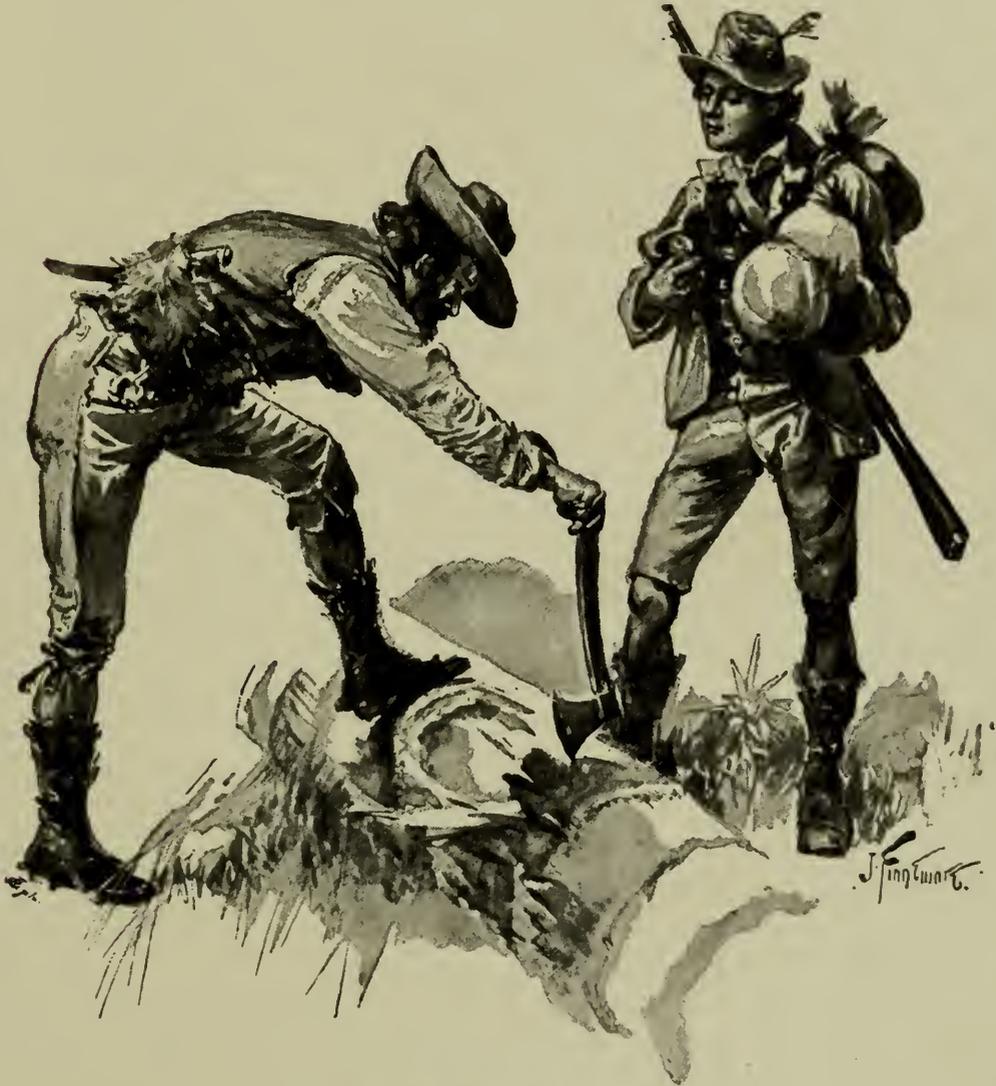
We now approached another grove of quite a different sort ; it was composed of a peculiar kind of wild fig trees, whose fruit was round, juicy, palatable, and full of small seeds. As we got nearer to the trees, however, we noticed a kind of gum which seemed to be sweating out of them, and which had been slightly hardened by the sun and the action of the air. This attracted Fred, for the similarity of this gum to the sap of cherry trees—which he had often collected at home and made gum of—made him wish to collect a quantity for the same purpose. But when he tried to dissolve some of it by spitting on it, he found it remained hard and intractable, and he was just on the point of throwing it away when it accidentally softened through the warmth of his hand ; and on his taking it between both hands, he pulled it out to some length—whereupon it elastically collapsed again of itself. This astonished the boy.

"Father, father !" he cried, "this sap is real indiarubber !"

"Well !" I exclaimed, "that would be a lucky find ! India-rubber is a milky juice which flows out of the bark of trees, especially the rubber tree. At home we get it through France or Portugal, because it is found principally in South America. It is most frequently supplied in the shape of little black bottles for the savages who collect it pour a thick coating of it while it is still liquid over small earthen bottles ; these are hung up in smoke, and are dried, receiving a dark colour. The peculiar lines and patterns it usually has are now cut or pressed into it. The earthen bottle inside is then broken up, and the pieces thrown out at the neck ; and thus a flexible vessel remains, which is portable, light and unbreakable, and can be used for all sorts of things. If we tackle this business properly, we shall be able to make boots and shoes of the rubber."

We had now arrived at the border of the cocoanut grove, and recognised the large bay, and to our left the Cape of Disappointed Hope, which had once before been the terminus of our journey. Here I for the first time noticed a small palm, which I took to be the sago plant, for I saw that a stem which had been broken by the wind contained a quantity of marrow of the substance of flour, and upon tasting it I at once identified it as sago. I also found a number of fat wood-worms, who had grown big on this fare, and were approaching the chrysalis stage. As I knew that a kind of worm lived on the sago plant in the West Indies, and was there regarded as a great delicacy, I determined to kindle a fire at

once and make an experiment with them; so I skewered half a dozen of them to a piece of wood, covered them with salt, and toasted them at the fire. A splendid dripping fell from their bodies into the flames, and as they got roasted, they emitted so delightful a perfume that all my dainty repugnance for eating worms was dissipated, and I placed one of them, like a pat of



"I at once identified it as sago."

butter, on a potato, and swallowed it. It was so good that I repeated the action, and persuaded Fred to join me.

After this remarkable meal, of which roasted potatoes formed the staple, we continued our march till we came to a dense bamboo jungle, into which we did not care to penetrate; so we turned off to the left till we came to the sugar-cane, of which we cut down a goodly supply and loaded it on our donkey's back. We were soon back in the gourd wood, and found the sledge with

its load intact. We now relieved the donkey's back, and put the sugar-cane on the sledge, which the donkey had to drag patiently home.

We reached Falconeyrie without adventure, and a detailed recital of our journey gave much pleasure, although the boys were much more delighted with the green parrot. After a good supper we went off to rest.

CHAPTER XI.

A PERILOUS ENCOUNTER.

ON the following morning mother and the boys welcomed me with the cry, "Let us make candles!" So I had to set to work on an experiment with the wax berries. Of course I knew it would have been well if we had provided ourselves with a little tallow to mix with the wax; but as we had nothing of the sort, I determined to do the best I could with the berries alone. We boiled down as many of them as we could get into our largest kettle, and obtained a large quantity of fine fragrant green wax, which we poured off into a special vessel while it was still in a liquid state. In the meantime we had prepared a number of wicks from a piece of old sail-cloth, and these we dipped repeatedly into the mass of wax, pulled out and cooled in the air. As soon as they were sufficiently covered with wax to represent substantial candles, they were suspended in a cool spot, so that they might harden. It is true that these candles were not very smooth or well rounded; but on the approach of darkness they burnt so well and brightly that we were able by their light to undress and go to bed most comfortably in our eyrie. The success of our chandling put us all in the best of humours, and gave us courage to try another experiment, which mother had been impatiently looking forward to, and that was butter making, for we had a very large store of cream.

I therefore filled a large bottle-shaped gourd with cream, secured the cover tightly so that the cream could not escape, and put the gourd on a large piece of sail-cloth, the four corners of which had been suspended by pegs, so that a kind of bag was formed in the middle. Each of the four boys had to gently agitate one of the four corners of the cloth, so that a rocking motion was imparted to it. This was very easy work, and proceeded with songs and laughter;

and finally, when we took down the gourd, we found to our delight that the experiment had proved eminently successful.

But another task I had set myself was much more difficult of accomplishment. I had noticed that our sledge was a heavy and inconvenient mode of conveyance, and had therefore determined to construct a cart with the aid of the wheels which I had saved from the wreck. I thought I knew enough about the shapes and kinds of carts at home to be able to make one, but as soon as I got my tools together I must confess I had not the faintest idea what to do next. However, after many blunders, I managed to fudge up a two-wheeled cart of sorts, which subsequently was of the very greatest service to us.

In the meantime the others planted fruit trees in suitable ground. Our vines we planted under the roots of our eyrie, so that in time, they might grow into beautiful arbours; while the chestnut, nut and cherry trees we placed near the bridge over the Jackal, so as to form an avenue.

But we gave most care to the spot round Tentbourne. The noble trees which love the sun—the pomegranate, lemon, orange, pistachio, mulberry, olive, almond and similar trees—were arranged in order, nor were the various kinds of stone and seed fruit forgotten.

As we intended Tentbourne for a place of refuge against an attack of wild beasts and savages—for it was here that we kept our supply of arms and ammunition—we were careful to protect it by surrounding it with a hedge of cactus. The neighbourhood of the bridge was also fortified, and the two guns from the pinnacle were placed in position to command it.

In this way we spent six weeks, keeping the Sabbath faithfully, and enjoying it as a day of rest and recreation; and now we felt at leisure to return once more to the wreck and see what remained to be saved, especially to try to get some clothing and, if possible, some more cannon.

I therefore took the first opportunity of putting out to sea with my three eldest boys, and we found everything in more or less good condition, though the wind had played considerable havoc with the wreck, and its dissolution seemed imminent. We contented ourselves with a battery of four-pounders, as we were unable to move the heavier guns from their carriages, and even these had to be shipped in detail. We therefore paid several visits to the wreck, and on each return journey loaded the pinnacle and the tub-boat with as many doors, windows and similar articles as we could. Finally, when we had got all the useful cargo out of it, I determined to blow up the

wreck, in the hope that wind and tide would gradually wash her timbers ashore for our future use. We therefore rolled a barrel of gunpowder, which we had purposely left on board, into the hold, and inserted a stick into it, to which we attached a long match, which we lighted at the other end, and then sailed away. As I did not expect the explosion before nightfall, we had supper on a small promontory, where we could have a full view of the wreck. Soon after darkness had set in, a majestic peal of thunder and a splendid column of fire announced the destruction of the wreck. With it the last link with home seemed to be broken. We returned silently to our tents; and instead of rejoicings, on which the boys had counted, I think I



"A majestic peal of thunder and a splendid column of fire announced the destruction of the wreck."

heard a few sobs, for we felt as though we had lost a good and faithful old friend.

A night's rest sufficiently dissipated our melancholy, and we started off in the morning to look for wreckage. The wreck itself had disappeared, and the beach was covered with timber, while the sea was full of spars, among which I recognised some tubs, to which I had attached copper kettles with a view to sugar making, and which I had completely lost sight of. As soon as we succeeded in fishing up these tubs with their kettles, we used them for the present as covers to our buried powder barrels. Great was our surprise to discover that the ducks and geese had been breeding in

the neighbourhood and to startle a whole brood of ducklings and goslings.

This discovery awakened a strong desire to return to Falconeyrie to see how things were getting on there ; so we broke up on the following day, and started on our return journey.

We found that the fruit trees were scarcely strong enough to grow by themselves, and so we resolved to take the first opportunity of going to the Cape of Disappointed Hope in order to cut down a sufficient number of bamboo poles to serve as supports. Besides, our candle supply had come to an end, and we wanted to get some eggs from the ruffed fowl for one of our hens to hatch.

On a certain fine morning, therefore, we once more formed in marching order, and left Falconeyrie in force. This time I took the cart instead of the sledge with us, and placed a couple of boards in it for the accommodation of the weaker members of our party. Our provisions, including a bottle of wine and a few vessels of water, as well as our ammunition, we put partly in the cart and partly carried ourselves. For the purpose of climbing the cocoanut trees, in the event of our meeting with no hospitable reception from monkeys or crabs, I devised a special appliance. I had constructed arm and leg pieces of the shark's skin, with which I intended to provide the boys to facilitate their ascent.

I led my family through the potato and manioc fields and guava bushes to the nest of the bird colony, past the wax berries and the indiarubber trees, for they were all anxious to see these marvels.

We did not neglect to collect considerable provisions on our way. Two large bags were filled with wax, and carefully concealed, so that we could fetch them on our return. When we got to the rubber trees we made a number of incisions in them, and put gourds under them to catch the sap ; these we left to their fate. And then we came to the cocoanut grove ; here we kept to the left, and continued our course towards the sugar-cane, keeping the bamboo bushes in sight. We managed so well that we got out of the wood just midway between the two, while the beautiful bay lay stretched before our view, with the Cape of Disappointed Hope. The prospect was so charming that we determined to make this spot the centre from which to conduct our excursions. Indeed, we would have liked to have transplanted our dwelling-place here, but the security of Falconeyrie was too great an advantage to be lightly discarded.

Our two animals were unyoked and allowed to pasture in the long succulent grass which grew under the shade of magnificent palms. We ourselves prepared a sketchy meal, and then addressed

ourselves to the more serious business of cutting and binding bamboo and sugar cane, of which we got a quantity of large bundles in readiness. These we loaded on our cart for transport home. This labour soon awakened the appetite of the boys, which had been lulled rather than appeased by our light repast; and although they got some satisfaction from sucking the sugar-cane, they nevertheless longed for something more substantial. As mother refused to permit any more inroads on the provisions, which were to be reserved for supper, it was proposed to attack the coconuts. We looked in vain for any fallen fruit, and the attempts of Fred and Jack to climb the trees were equally futile. I therefore had recourse to the arm and leg pieces I had brought, and equipped the boys with them. But we had small success. The boys did indeed manage to climb a few feet; but their strength soon failed, and they had to slide down, till they finally stood panting and angry in front of the trees, and apostrophised them as follows:

"What a beastly arrangement, with its smooth surface!"

"If we could only rest on the way!" cried Fred.

"Stop!" I cried: "I have it. You shall get to the top, and comfortably, too. Fred, get me a rope. Now, come along!"

I tied a piece of rope to his feet, but so as not to hamper him in walking; then I put a strong rope round his waist and round the tree, so as to give him plenty of room to lean back.

"Now," I said, "you may start. Climb like an Indian!"

"That's all very fine," said Fred, in dismay; "but how can I grasp the tree, with my feet tied together like this?"



"He managed to get to the top."

“Look here : put your feet apart, close to the tree ; now take the loose rope and slip it up as high as you can, until it rests upon one of the notches of the trunk ; hold tight, and walk up slowly, pressing the soles of your feet against the trunk. If they were not tied together you could not press them. Then lift yourself by means of the rope to another notch, hold tight, and walk your feet up again ; lean hard against the rope round your waist,—thus you are resting with your feet and leaning back with your body. Now try !”

Fred followed my directions, and walked slowly up the tree, while his brothers stood looking at him with their mouths wide open.

“This is splendid !” cried Jack. “May I go too, father ? Will you please—please make me an Indian thing also ?”

In a few minutes the little fellow was equipped like his brother, and followed him. I was pleased to see that, although he proceeded more slowly, he managed to get to the top as well. Here the two boys commenced chopping away at the cocoanuts with the hatchets they had taken with them in their belts, and sent them flying down in such profusion that it took us all our time to dodge them.

They came down as successfully as they had gone up, and we were all delighted with the result of our great gymnastic feat. Ernest was the only one who seemed somewhat depressed. The others chaffed him over his laziness ; but he took no notice of their gibes, and continued to survey the palms most attentively. At last he got up and asked for half of a cocoanut shell ; then he addressed the company with mock solemnity.

“It is true,” he said, “ladies and gentlemen, that I am not much of a climber, but as climbing seems to confer so much dignity I will do my best endeavours.”

I applauded him, and equipped him with the shark’s skin arm and leg pieces, and fitted him out with ropes. Instantly he went for a palm, and he reached the top much more speedily than I had expected. But this feat was greeted with roars of laughter, for the others had noticed that this palm had no fruit on it whatever. This did not disconcert Ernest, however, who coolly mounted the crown, took out his hatchet, and began to lop off the tops of the branches, scattering a perfect hail of leaves round him.

Mother was indignant.

“The naughty boy !” she cried ; “he could find no fruit, so he is venting his rage on the unoffending tree !”

“I beg your pardon !” cried Ernest, from the top ; “this is a splendid cabbage tree, and I won’t come down at all if you don’t find it worth a dozen cocoanut trees !”

"The boy is right!" I cried. "These cabbages are much valued by Europeans and Indians; and so it turns out that our wise Ernest is deserving of all praise, while it is his foolish brothers who should be laughed at, not he."

In the meantime Ernest showed no disposition to descend; he was sitting very comfortably on the top, and we were quite unable to see what he was up to. At last he came down. As soon as he had reached the ground he produced a bottle which he had secreted about his person, took his cocoanut shell, and came up to me, proudly saying:

"Here, father, is a drink which I hope you will not refuse. It is palm wine, and, I believe, tastes capitally"; and with these words he emptied the contents of his bottle in the shell.

I took the cup and drank to his health. The drink was indeed excellent, and I gave the remainder to mother; for I was sure that if I allowed the others to taste it first, there would not be a drop left for her.

"Do you know, father," said Fred, some time later, "what helped us in our climb? It was the fact that the palm tree sloped a little. If it had been quite straight we should never have been able to get to the top."

"That is certainly true, my boy," I replied.

"But why is it that all these trees slope? Not one of them is straight."

"The reason I am afraid I cannot tell you. But it is nevertheless a fact that no palm tree is straight, and there is even an Indian proverb to the effect that a straight palm is as rare as a white crow."

"Look here, father," said Fred: "here is a cocoanut whose bark is so hard that I cannot penetrate it. That used not to be the case. What is the reason of it?"

"Oh!" I said, "that is a cocoanut which is in a very unripe condition. But we will once more profit by the example of the Indians. It is fortunate that I have so good a memory. They use, I recollect, a cocoanut spear. Get me a piece of wood. That's it! Now then! I will plant the stick in this stump, and sharpen its point—like that. Now give me the nut."

I took it with both hands, and knocked it hard against the stick, and thus easily broke through the bark.

All had a try at this new method, mother included.

As the sun was beginning to set, and we had arranged to spend the night in this pleasant spot, we determined to construct an arbour of branches and leaves, in order to protect ourselves from the dew and the night winds.

While we were thus engaged, we were astonished at the sudden liveliness of our donkey, who had hitherto comported itself with great repose and dignity, but who now commenced a most horrible hee-hawing, and jumped about in a very curious manner. Before we had time to ascertain whether this agitation presaged good or evil, the animal incontinently bolted. Unfortunately our dogs had slunk off to explore the sugar-canes, so that the donkey disappeared amidst the bamboos before we could call them up. We followed its track for some distance, and then all trace of it disappeared, so that we had to return without it.

I was much distressed at this occurrence. In the first place, I regretted the loss of the donkey, who was indispensable to us; and, secondly, I was fearful lest its flight should be ascribable to the presence of some wild beast. I therefore had an enormous fire kindled, besides constructing a number of torches by binding sugar-canes in bundles with liana. The sugar made them burn more slowly and gave them a brilliant light. I placed about a dozen of these torches, four and five feet high, right and left of the entrance to our arbour, the fire being just in front of it. Mother cooked our supper at this fire, which warmed us capitally in the cold night. We lay down in our clothes, with our guns close to us, and slept on some moss which the boys had gathered for the purpose. I tried to keep awake, but was tired out.

Next morning at breakfast we made our plans for the day. I had hoped in vain that the night and the warning fire near our arbour would have attracted our donkey and brought it back, and I set out to look for it with the dogs, leaving mother behind, and promising to return by nightfall; while she, with the boys, collected sugar-cane, palm wine, and cocoanuts, in order that we might return to Falconeyrie on the following day. I made Fred remain with his mother for protection, but took Jack with me.

Well armed and provisioned, we entered the bamboo jungle, and, with the aid of the dogs, followed toilsomely the track of the donkey. At length we came to a large plain and to the beach of the great bay. Here we lighted upon the mouth of a fairly big river, which flowed through a lofty mountain ridge.

Thinking the donkey had probably kept to the land instead of fording this river, we scaled the rocks, in the hope of making some notable discovery. We soon came upon a brook which gushed forth out of the rocks and fed the river, but was so swift and deep that it took us some time to find a suitable place for fording. However, we succeeded in getting across. Here we again discovered traces of the donkey's hoofs in the sand. But to our surprise we found this track

running through a multitude of similar though fainter hoof-prints, and concluded that our donkey must have got into a herd of wild hoofed animals. We followed the track with intense interest.

Extended before us was a smiling plateau covered with grass and groves, and presenting a picture of restful peace.

In the distance we thought we could distinguish a couple of herds, which alternately resembled cows and horses, but were certainly some unknown breed of wild animals, for I had never seen the like before.

As we had again lost the trace of our donkey, I determined to get up to the nearest of these herds as quietly as possible, so as not to attract attention, and to see whether we could not find it. We cautiously approached the one nearest to us, which was grazing on the banks of the river, through some undergrowth of reeds which protected us from their sight. But the ground soon became swampy, and the reeds were so dense that we had to make a slight circuit. The reeds exceeded anything we had hitherto met, and were so fine and big that I was convinced they were either the real bamboo, called *arundo bambos*, or the American giant cane, *arundo gigantea*; for they were as thick as a man's ankle, and some of them were thirty and forty feet high, and would have made splendid masts for small craft.

As we turned the corner of this veritable cane forest we came suddenly upon, and within about forty yards of, a herd of wild buffaloes, who, although small in number, were of a terrible appearance, and would have sufficed to have destroyed us on the spot. I was so frightened that I entirely forgot all about my gun, and stood rooted to the spot. Fortunately the dogs had lagged behind, and the monsters seemed so little accustomed to the sight of man that they did not disturb themselves in the least, although one or two rose to their feet and stared at us in amazement. This probably saved our lives, for it gave us time to retire and get our guns ready. I had no desire to try conclusions with these formidable beasts, and was only concerned for securing a safe retreat, when Turk and Bill overtook us, and were immediately spotted by the buffaloes, upon whom they produced a most disagreeable impression. The buffaloes commenced a tremendous roaring and stamping and tearing up of the ground with their horns, and I feared lest in their attack upon the dogs, whom they probably took for jackals or wolves, they would vent their rage on us as well. But the dogs showed no signs of fear. On the contrary, they went for the buffaloes themselves, and seized a

calf, which was rather nearer to them than the others, by the ears, and pulled it towards us. This was no joke! As we did not wish to desert our good friends and companions, we had to do battle, which seemed to me to be little short of foolhardiness. There was just the chance that the sound of our guns and the sight of the smoke might frighten them; so we let fly. The buffaloes instantly turned tail, and stampeded away till they were out of sight. All but a cow, probably the mother of the calf, who had been slightly wounded, and was so mad with pain that it made a dead set at the dogs. Fortunately another shot laid it low; whereupon I came up and gave it its quietus with a pistol.

Once more we breathed freely, for we felt we had been delivered out of the jaws of death. But we still had our work cut out for us; for the calf, which the dogs had held on to, was most unruly, and kicked out terrifically. Fearing the dogs might sustain a severe injury, I rushed to their assistance. Fortunately it occurred to Jack to make use of his Indian lasso, which he swung with such effect round the legs of the calf that it fell down and got entangled. We lost no time in tying up its legs with rope, and then freed its ears from the grip of our dogs. The young buffalo was now in our power, and Jack was beside himself with joy at the thought of bringing it to his mother and brothers. But this was no easy task; for, although it lay helpless at our feet, its eyes shone with so wild a light that we had every reason to be cautious. I cudgelled my brain until I remembered a rather cruel but sure method employed in Italy. I secured the rope with which we had tied up its legs to a tree, and made the dogs again catch hold of its ears; I then slit open its nostrils, and pulled a cord through them, which I intended to use as a leading string. My plan was quite successful, and the animal seemed, after bleeding profusely, to be rendered entirely docile by the pain which the cord occasioned it whenever it jerked its head.

We now had to disembowel the cow, for which purpose we did not possess the necessary implements. I therefore contented myself with cutting out the tongue and a few substantial pieces of meat, which we salted well and spread out to dry in the sun. The rest we gave to the dogs, who attacked the carcass voraciously. Soon, however, a number of vultures and birds of prey, which had collected from all parts, disputed their booty with them. Among these I was able to recognise only the king vulture and the calao—also called the bird-rhinoceros, on account of the peculiar excrescence on its beak. We could easily have possessed ourselves of a few of



"I GAVE IT HIS QUIETUS WITH A PISTOL."

these birds, and it was difficult to restrain Jack from shooting them ; but as they were not fit for food we contented ourselves with making sure of our own prey, and while we made a meal off the food which we had brought with us from home, we amused ourselves by watching the battle between the birds and our dogs.

Meanwhile we cut down a few reeds which grew about for the purpose of making candlesticks of them, and began to retrace our steps. Our buffalo had to come with us whether it wished to or not. It made several attempts to defy us ; but a pull from the cord at its tortured nose brought it quickly to its senses. Besides, the dogs kept worrying it. Nevertheless, we felt that the taming of this wild beast would take much trouble.

We went along gaily when we reached the narrow pass, when a jackal fled before us. It had not time to reach its hole before it was overtaken and seized by our dogs and torn to pieces. As it was a female, we assumed that there might be young ones in the cavern, and Jack was going to creep in without more ado ; but as the male might have been inside, I preliminarily discharged a pistol into it. As this produced no stir, I allowed Jack to go in, who was followed by the dogs. In a moment they routed up a litter of young ones ; so that we had some difficulty in saving one of them, which was not more than ten or twelve days old, and could as yet scarcely open its eyes. It was no bigger than a kitten, but had a pretty yellow coat ; and Jack begged to be allowed to take it home, which I gladly permitted, partly as a reward for his courage, and partly in the hope of taming it and training it for the chase.

I now made another discovery. While the boy had been chasing the jackal I had secured the buffalo to a tree, and this I recognised to be a creeping dwarf palm, whose sharp, thorny leaves were eminently suited for a hedge ; and so I determined to dig up a few of these trees and to transplant them to Tentbourne, where they would be a valuable addition to my fortifications.

Towards evening we rejoined the others and were joyfully received. Our buffalo and jackal were much admired, and there was no end to the questions we were asked. Jack recounted our adventures, and did not neglect the opportunity for exaggeration, and the hour of supper arrived before I had had time to learn what the others had done. I was now informed that they had not been idle either ; that they had journeyed to the Cape of Disappointed Hope, and had collected wood for the night, made torches, and had even cut down a sago palm.

But while they had ascended the hill of the cape, a troop of

monkeys had slipped into the harbour, had drunk up all the palm wine, thrown the potatoes about, stolen our cocoanuts, and had played such havoc with the structure of the harbour that the repairs had occupied more than an hour.

Fred had caught a splendidly plumed young eagle, whom he had captured from a cleft in a rock during the absence of the parents. I identified the bird as a Malabar eagle. In hope of being able to train him to hawk, I welcomed this addition to our family. Fred had hooded him, and tied his legs, for he was very wild and fierce.

After supper we kindled a fire, and smoked the buffalo meat by it, suspending it from prongs. We made the same preparations for the night as before, but provided for the continuous smoking of the beef by laying green twigs in the fire. The calf, which had enjoyed its ration of potatoes and milk, we tied up near our cow, for which we were pleased to see it show much affection. The dogs took up their posts of observation, and so we went to sleep and did not wake up before sunrise.

Immediately after breakfast I was for going home, but I could see that the others had different plans.

“Remember, my dear!” said mother, “that we have cut down that palm, and we do not want to waste it. We thought it was a sago palm; but we have not examined it yet, and should not like it to rot away. Besides, the trunk, when the sap has been taken out, if divided, will yield two splendid gutters for conducting the water from the Jackal Brook to my new plantation.”

I was compelled to approve this 'idea, and so we immediately set to work. But as we required water, we despatched Ernest to get some. After much trouble we succeeded in placing the trunk on a couple of rollers, upon which support we were better able to work at it. The crown had already been sawn off, and so we started to split it up, which was easy, considering the softness of the wood. Having divided the trunk in half, we squeezed up the marrow so as to place it all into one of the halves which we had put on the ground. This was all the more easy as some of the marrow near the rind, which had got hard and gritty, was thrown away. We left a layer of marrow at each end, so that we obtained a kind of trough, in which we were able to knead the sago. But we fastened our tobacco rasp, which the thoughtful Ernest had brought with him, to one end of this trough, so that we could pass the sago through it.

The boys all cheered: for I made them, and mother as well, roll up their sleeves; and as soon as I had emptied the first two deliveries of water into the trunk, I ordered them to start kneading. The entire mass was soon sufficiently manipulated; and now we gently pressed

the dough against the rasp, the flowery substance passing through, while the gritty portions remained behind. The boys were ready with their gourds, and caught up the droppings and brought them to mother, who had stretched a piece of sail-cloth in the burning sun, and spread out the dough. Thus we once more obtained good food in sufficient quantity, and would possibly have got more if we had not been so quick about it. But the prospect of being able to repeat this operation whenever we wished to, and our eagerness to take our troughs home, made us hurry over our work. As it was, we were not able to do more than pack our goods and chattels on our cart before nightfall, and were compelled to pass another night in the harbour. It was as uneventful as the others, and in the morning we were ready to return to Falconeyrie.

The attempt to yoke the buffalo calf by the side of the cow, in the place of the donkey, proved a failure. We were glad to get the obstinate creature to accompany us, and for this purpose we had recourse to the cord in its nose and the dogs.

Of course we had to return by the way we came, so as to be able to collect the wax berries and the gourds of indiarubber. We got along without adventures; but when we came to the guava bushes we heard such a terrific noise that we got very much alarmed, and we thought that there was at least a tiger or a panther about, for the dogs were howling piteously. Jack lay down flat among the bushes to see what it was, when he suddenly exclaimed:

“How stupid! It is only our sow! It is always making fools of us!”

At this moment the animal in the bushes confirmed Jack's report by grunting unmistakably. We jumped, laughing, into the thicket, and found our sow comfortably established, surrounded by a litter of seven little pigs, who made noise enough for seventy. This spectacle was a most agreeable surprise; and the sow seemed to feel the dignity of its position, and grunted us a friendly welcome, and marshalled her young with pride. After a short consultation we decided that we would return and carry off two of the young porkers to rear them at Falconeyrie, but to leave the mother and the others to their fate, unless they should at any time molest our plantations, when we would kill them.

CHAPTER XII.

WE INCREASE AND MULTIPLY

WE found everything in excellent order at Falconeyrie, and were received with demonstrations of pleasure by our two- and four-footed chums; for we fed them all with what we thought they would like best, and immediately assigned our new arrivals their proper places in this menagerie. The buffalo calf and the young jackal had, of course, to be well secured, and the same fate awaited the Malabar eagle. Fred good-naturedly gave him a place beside the green parrot, upon a root of a tree, and tied him to it with a long cord, so that he might have a little scope, taking off the hood, by means of which he had been kept quiet. But the little bird immediately displayed the wildness of his nature, and looked so fierce that all our fowls bolted. The poor parrot alone, who was too close to him, could not get away, and was instantly torn to pieces before we had time to interfere. Fred was in such a rage that he was going to kill the murderer at once, had not Ernest interposed.

"Give him to me," said Ernest. "I will teach him morals, and make him as tame and gentle as a dove."

"Hulloa!" shouted Fred. "No; he is mine, and I am not going to give him away in a hurry. But if you know so much about it, why don't you tell me how to tame him? I think it is very selfish of you not to."

"Gently, my boy!" I cried. "You are like the dog in the manger. Ernest asked you to give him the animal which you were going to kill, and now you think him covetous because he keeps his knowledge to himself."

"Look here!" said Fred, ashamed of himself; "you are quite right. I will give you my monkey, Ernest, if you will teach me to tame the eagle—for I won't part with him!"

"All right," Ernest calmly rejoined. "I am not a hero; and when you and your eagle have done deeds of knight-errantry I will write them down."

"There will be plenty of time for that. But how shall I tame him?" asked Fred impatiently.

"Well, I am not very certain about it," said Ernest. "I should try the dodge the Caribbeans use for taming parrots: blow tobacco smoke into his beak till he is dazed—that will tame him."

Fred laughed scornfully; while Ernest went to an officer's chest and fetched out a pipe and tobacco. Fred had to tie up and hood his bird again; and then Ernest went close up to him, pulled off the hood, and commenced blowing tremendous clouds of tobacco at him. This had the desired effect: the bird became quite dazed, and allowed himself to be hooded without any fuss. Covered with confusion, Fred handed over the monkey. The effect of the tobacco was remarkable; and the bird grew tamer from day to day.

Early next morning we started on the work of erecting supports for our fruit trees. So we set out, with a goodly supply of bamboos and a crowbar on our cart, and left mother and Frank behind us, with the injunction to get ready a good dinner for our return. We did not take the buffalo, but gave it some salt, of which it ate gratefully. The cow sufficed for our needs.

We began our work at a short distance from Falconeyrie, where the avenue commenced, and where we had planted walnut, chestnut and cherry trees in symmetrical rows. Some of these had, however, been already woefully bent by the wind.

Being the strongest, I took the crowbar and bored holes for the bamboo poles. The boys selected the poles and pointed the ends, and then we tied them to the trees by means of a creeper which I took to be the *mibi*.

"Are these wild trees?" asked Fred.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Jack. "As though trees could be tamed like animals! I suppose you will train them to bring their fruit to the cellar!"

"You clever boy!" said Fred. "As though all animals were tamed alike!"



"The poor parrot . . . was instantly torn to pieces."

"Well, that would not be so bad!" Ernest exclaimed.

"You are all very learned people," I said; "still, Fred is not so far out. Every creature must be tamed in its own way. Even man, who is practically born a savage, must be trained. Animals are tamed with hunger and thirst, and sometimes with blows. But trees are made tame by grafting and inoculation, although there are many which bear good fruit of themselves when growing on good ground. In Europe, however, nearly all fruit trees have to be artificially trained."

"What is grafting, father?" Fred asked.

"Grafting," I replied, "is a process by means of which branches of a better quality are introduced into a wild or coarser tree. Inoculation consists of the introduction of an eye, or of an undeveloped bud of a good tree, into the rind of a common tree. In each case a graft or eye must grow into the tree, be nourished by it, grow and bear fruit of a better kind than the tree would otherwise produce. Sometimes this operation is successful, but sometimes it has to be repeated over and over again. Much depends upon the species of tree, for all cannot be treated uniformly; just as it is impossible to make an artist, a scholar or a general of every human being. To graft apples or peaches on fig or plum or mulberry trees would be waste of time. Like must be engrafted on like."

"That is all plain enough," said Ernest. "But where did the graftings and eyes come from in the first place?"

"Good fruit trees," I explained, "are indigenous to certain localities, and produce excellent fruit naturally. But few are of European origin; they have been imported, and are kept up to the mark by the exertions of gardeners. I can tell you the origins of some of them, although not of all; indeed, authorities are divided on this subject, for ancient records are often very contradictory and obscure. The grape, for instance, which flourishes neither in cold nor in tropical climes, seems to have come originally from Armenia, where Noah is said to have planted it, and from whence it found its way to Egypt, and Greece, and Europe. The mythical stories of the processions of Bacchus may be based on the spread of vine culture among the ancients. Italy probably got her wine from Greece, and it is credible that the Romans introduced it in Gaul, Spain (Iberia), and Germany.

"Chestnuts," I continued, "which the ancients called Sardesian acorns, are said to emanate from Sardis, the capital of Lydia, a province of Asia Minor, from whence the Greeks and, later, the Romans introduced them in Europe. With regard to the walnut trees, which we got from Italy, the Romans called it 'glans Jovis,' or

Jupiter's acorn, that came originally from Persia. The hazel nut, again, is said to come from Pontus, a district in Asia Minor."

"But how about the cherries, father?" cried Jack. "I have seen them grow wild at home, so they must be native."

"Indeed they are not, my boy: they obtain their name from Cerasus, a town in the very same district of Pontus in Asia Minor. I believe the place is now called Chirisonda. The Roman general, Lucullus, is said to have imported them first into Europe after his victory over King Mithridates seventy years before the birth of our Saviour."

Having completed our avenue of trees, and cleared away the stems so as to make a smooth footpath, we crossed the bridge over the Jackal, and started to work on the southern fruit trees: the lemon, orange, pistachio, mulberry and similar trees. While we were at work the boys pondered over what I had told them, and at last Fred said, pointing to the southern trees:

"What a wonderful country that must have been where all these splendid fruits originally came from!"

"Of course," I replied, "as far as fruit was concerned you might admire the country; but in other respects it had its great drawbacks, for nearly all these fruits flourish either in the tropics or in regions quite close to them. With regard to the oranges and lemons and pomegranates, the two first are said to come from Media and Assyria, the last from Phœnicia. The pistachios are also, I believe, indigenous to these hot countries, and occur in the southern parts of Italy, France and Spain. Olives originate from Armenia and Palestine. Figs were brought from Lydia and the Island of Chios in the days of Cato, who wrote a small treatise on agriculture. Strangely enough, peaches and almonds are of one and the same family, and both come from Persia. They both have the same Latin name, *mala Persica*. The latter seemed to have been new to Pliny, though the Greeks were familiar with them in the days of Aristotle. The plums of which you are all so proud are nothing more than ennobled sloes. Wherever they are neglected they invariably degenerate into sloes again, although the finer kinds may possibly have been brought over from Syria. Pears are an ancient fruit: they were known to the Greeks as Peloponnesian apples; and there were also Syrian and Alexandrian species known to the Romans, although there are some who maintain that the Syrian variety were really bergamot. The Romans had many kinds of pears. Even the better kinds of apples came from the East; and it is from Asia that we have got the mulberry tree."

In this sort of conversation we completed our task; and when we

returned to Falconeyrie we were as hungry as wolves, and enjoyed our dinner.

Our next preoccupation was a question which had exercised mother and myself for some time. We found the rope ladder an extremely laborious method of ascent, and even regarded it as a dangerous one for our boys, who used to climb up and down it like cats.

"Mother," I said, after some reflection, "did you not tell me that you discovered a swarm of bees in the hollow of our tree? All that is needed is to ascertain how far the hollow descends towards the roots and how large it is."



"The bees . . . came out in a fury."

This remark seemed to inflame the boys' activity. They proceeded to climb like squirrels round the hollow in the trunk of our tree, and began to thump and to hammer, in order to find out by the sound how far it extended. But their rashness was severely punished, for the bees resented the intrusion, came out in a fury, and began to sting them all over, driving them off in all directions. Mother stopped them, and cooled their wounds with earth. Jack, who had been the boldest, had suffered most. Ernest, on the other hand, had escaped with a single sting, for he had been the last to ascend.

It took an hour for the boys to recover themselves ; but they were in such a rage with the heroic bees that I had to commence instant operations against this valiant swarm. I got tobacco, pipes, chisel, hammer and clay ready, and prepared a number of beehives out of a few gourds, in which I made holes. I placed these on the branch of a tree, nailing down a board for them to stand on, and providing them with a roof of thatched straw, as a protection against the sun and rain.

This took more time than I had anticipated ; and so I had to

postpone my attack until the following morning, when I covered up the opening in the tree carefully with clay, leaving just room enough for the insertion of a pipe, out of which I puffed away till I thought the bees must have all been suffocated. In fact, they made an awful row, buzzing and humming about; but by degrees they subsided, until I thought it was time to withdraw my pipe. Jack had accompanied me. With hatchet and chisel we made an aperture in the tree about three feet by two, continuing our smoking operations meanwhile from time to time, so as not to give the bees a chance of recovering. When we let daylight into the hollow of the tree, we were astonished at the beautiful domestic arrangements of the bees. There was so great a supply of wax and honey that we were quite bewildered, and shouted for dishes and basins to receive all this wealth. We cut out the honeycombs, and as soon as I had room I took the unconscious bees and clapped them into the gourds, which were to be their hives for the future, previously lining these with a few streaks of honey. I now had leisure to bring down the honeycombs. I had a barrel carefully cleaned and filled with our plunder, leaving plenty for dinner. The barrel was carefully rolled into a corner, and covered up with sail-cloth, boards and branches, so that the bees upon their awakening might not discover it. I now climbed up once more, placed the gourd beehives upon the board I had prepared for them, covered them with their roof of straw, and then came down again and pitched into the honey, in which occupation I was manfully assisted by my entire family, until I was compelled forcibly to restrain myself and them for fear of consequences.

I succeeded in frightening the boys by telling them that by this time the bees had probably recovered, and that they would immediately proceed to make a desperate attack on the robbers of their honey if they discovered but a drop of it. This hint was enough, and the boys prepared to hide away the remains. I was, however, seized with the idea that the bees would without doubt return to their old dwelling-place if something was not done to prevent it. I therefore took a handful of tobacco, and a board covered with clay, and once more ascended to the opening in the tree. Then I secured the board from the inside, and lighted the tobacco at different points, by which means I hoped to keep the bees from going back.

My precautions were effective; for although the bees tried to approach their old abode in swarms, they were invariably repulsed by the smoke, and so they gradually accustomed themselves to their new gourd hives.

We now lay down to rest; for we determined to postpone the exploration of the hollow to the next day, and intended to spend

the night in cleaning the honey and separating it from the wax while the bees were asleep.

As soon as the darkness set in, therefore, we got up and began our work. The combs were taken out of the barrel, placed in a kettle with a little water, and put over a slow fire, so as to gently melt into a liquid mass. This was strained through a bag, poured back into the barrel, and left to cool. By the morning the wax had risen to the surface in the shape of a large disc, and could be easily taken off, leaving the pure honey at the bottom. The barrel was now carefully closed up, and buried in the ground next to our wine cask.

Hereupon, and before the sun's warning rays had wakened the bees, we inspected the tree. I inserted a long pole in the aperture I had made to see how far the hollow of the tree extended upwards, and by tying a stone to a long cord we ascertained its depth. I discovered to my surprise that the tree was hollow as far up as the branches where we had our lodging, and as far down as the ground, so that the trunk had lost nearly all its heart. It was therefore not difficult to construct a winding stair inside it, which would present all essential features of comfort and safety.

A door of large proportions was constructed on the side facing the sea, so as to admit of our fitting the door of the captain's cabin to it, in order to secure the entrance against animals. We then began to divest the inside of the tree of all refuse, and to smooth the sides. This done to a height we could conveniently reach, we introduced a sapling about a foot in diameter to build our winding staircase round. We cut grooves in this sapling, as well as in the sides of the big tree, to admit of the placing of boards at a distance of half a foot from each other for steps, until we thus reached the top of the sapling. The aperture which we had made to get the bees out by, now served as a splendid window for the admission of light. At a regular distance we now made a second and presently a third window. An exit was now made at the top near our dwelling. A second sapling was then introduced and fastened on the top of the first, and the grooves and steps continued until our staircase reached the top, and was thus completed, for the present at least, although it did not satisfy our artistic sense.

The completion of this staircase occupied about a fortnight, but was frequently interrupted by other matters.

A few days after the commencement of the undertaking, Bill presented us with a litter of six puppies, which gave us much pleasure; but as I had some compunction about bringing up so large a litter, I retained only a male and female, and made Bill the jackal's foster-mother, a plan which succeeded perfectly.

A few days later our two goats threw a couple of kids each, and the sheep four lambs, so that we saw our flock increasing. But in order to prevent any useful animal following the shameful example of the donkey and escaping from us, I attached a bell, of which I had found a number in one of the ship's chests, to each of them. Thus we could hope to trace the flight of a truant, or at least get on its track more easily.

I devoted the largest share of my attention to the buffalo calf, whose wound healed up completely, so that I was able to insert a piece of wood in its nostrils, which protruded at each side after the manner of a bit, so as to be able to guide it.

After many futile efforts, we at last succeeded in yoking it to our cart—of course, only when the cow bore it company. The immovable composure of this animal acted soothingly upon the fierce excitability of the buffalo. But the carrying of loads and of human freight was a much more difficult matter, and took some training.

At first a large sailcloth horse-cover was put over its back and securely fastened with a strong belt made of buffalo hide. We did not push our experiment further until the animal had got used to it and ceased sniffing at it suspiciously. Gradually a light load was added, and a fortnight later we hung the saddle-bags on it.

It was more difficult to get it to let us ride it; but I considered this so important that I spared no pains to achieve that triumph. I began with the monkey. Snip was light, and could hold on so firmly that all the plunging and buck jumping in the world could not unseat him. Jack, being the most active of the boys, was the next to get on, and the buffalo was finally vanquished by his cat-like agility. The others encountered less difficulty, and finally the buffalo wisely gave in.

Fred spent a good deal of his time with his eagle, whom he fed every day by shooting a number of small birds for him, which he placed on a board sometimes between the horns of the buffalo or of a goat, or on the back of the bustard or flamingo, so as to accustom him to pounce upon these animals after the manner of hawks. By degrees the bird got used to the boy's voice, and obeyed him, especially when he whistled. We were afraid of hawking with him as yet, lest his soaring nature should get the better of him, and we should lose him altogether.

Ernest was also infected by this mania for training, and vented it on the monkey. It was amusing to see the phlegmatic boy jumping about with his active companion. His principal object was to save himself trouble, and so he was most exercised in teaching the monkey to carry loads for him. For this purpose he constructed a

basket, which he attached, by means of a couple of straps, to the monkey's back. But the animal took a violent dislike to the apparatus, jumped about like mad, and tried to bite the straps in two. This availed him nothing, however; and in time, by means of blows and food, he was gradually taught to carry respectable loads.

Jack also addressed himself to the training of his jackal, to whom he gave the name of Hunter. He easily taught it to retrieve, but the arts of pointing and setting could not be imparted, notwithstanding all his efforts.

These occupations generally took up about a couple of hours of the day, and were an excellent relaxation. In the evening we usually made a circle round mother, and did various things she suggested. Thus we devoted a certain time to the improvement of our candle manufacture, when Jack produced his candle moulds. These remarkable things did not, however, seem to answer our purpose, for we could not extract the candles out of these moulds without damaging them. I therefore split the moulds vertically in two, cleaned out the inside, and then tied the two halves together again, previously greasing them with a little butter to prevent the wax from adhering to them, and shutting them down so tight that the liquid wax could not escape.

Our chief difficulty was the wick, for mother would not consent to our tearing up our cotton handkerchiefs into strips for this purpose. So we made experiments with two less wasteful methods. I cut tapers of a highly combustible kind of wood, which I took to be the South American lightwood, to introduce into my candles. Mother, on the other hand, made wicks of the fibres of the karatas.

Solemnly we now commenced our chandling operations. The wax from the berries and the beeswax was now mixed in equal proportions in a portly kettle, under which was kindled a slow fire. The moulds were put in cold water to keep cool. The liquid wax was then ladled into them, and very soon we obtained handsome candles.

As night had overtaken us we immediately lighted a couple by way of test, and placed them on the table in order to see which of the two kinds of wick would prove the more satisfactory, when we discovered that the wood gave too much charcoal, and the fibres of the karatas did not give a sufficient light. So we made up our minds to keep a look-out for cotton.

My next industrial pursuit was the manufacture of boots from the indiarubber. I filled a pair of old stockings with coarse sand, covered them with a layer of clay, and put them out to dry, first in the shade and then in the sun. I then cut a pair of soles out of

buffalo hide, which I had carefully hammered, and attached them to the stockings. With a brush of goat's hair I now laid on the indiarubber as equally as possible, repeating the layers until I thought a sufficient thickness had been obtained. Then they were hung up to dry. As soon as they had got hard, they were taken down, the sand was knocked out, the stockings withdrawn, the clay broken up and shaken out, and I had before me a capital pair of boots, soft, smooth and watertight.

Next we made a good water butt. We constructed a raised bed of clay alongside the brook, and placed our turtle shell upon it in lieu of a water trough. We then made a dam a little higher up of stones, pegs and clay, so that the water, conducted by an open conduit, which was formed of the sago tree, could fall into the trough beneath.

A couple of crosspieces were fitted under this conduit for the support of gourds to catch the water, and a hollow piece of bamboo was planted into the hole in the turtle shell which Fred had made with his harpoon, so that the surplus water could always run off. Of course this was far from being an ideal arrangement, for the fact of the conduit being open entailed our getting the water unpleasantly warmed by the sun; still, it was clean and unpolluted.

One morning, soon after we had got up and were just putting the finishing touches to our staircase, we were startled by the sound of the horrible roaring of some monster of the forest. Our dogs grew



"We seized our guns and pistols, and took up a position in our eyrie."

restless, and we were ourselves not a little alarmed. We seized our guns and pistols, and took up a position in our eyrie in the tree.

Presently the roaring ceased, and, growing impatient and anxious, I boldly descended the tree, fitted my faithful hounds with their spiked collars for protection, and collected the beasts and flocks; then I reascended the tree.

We stood in breathless expectation until the roaring was resumed, and this time quite close to us. Fred listened attentively, and then burst into a roar of laughter, shouting:

“A donkey! a donkey!”

It was most annoying, after having been so frightened and taking such precautions, to have nothing more formidable to fear than our silly old donkey, who was returning, and singing us its song of joy.

We were soon able to see it between the trees, although it did not seem to be in a hurry, for every now and then it leisurely stopped to graze and look behind it. To our great delight, however, we soon discovered that it was being followed by a splendid quagga, after whom my soul instantly lusted.

So Fred and I got down from the tree as quickly as we could, enjoining the others to keep perfectly quiet.

I then made a sling to the end of a rope with a running knot, and attached the other end to the root of a tree. I also provided myself with a piece of bamboo, which I split at one end and secured at the other with pack thread, so as to prevent its splitting entirely in two. This I destined for the animal's nose. I made Fred conceal himself behind a tree, with the sling in his hand, to await a favourable opportunity. The quagga, however, caught sight of him, and was evidently much surprised to see a human being, probably for the first time in its life. As Fred did not move, however, the animal continued to graze. Fred now thought to inspire the quagga with confidence by showing that animal on what excellent terms he was with the donkey, and therefore handed our long-eared truant a handful of oats mixed with salt, which the donkey immediately gobbled up. The stranger was much struck with this proceeding, sniffed the air, and finally, overcome by curiosity, came close up to Fred, who did not lose a moment in throwing the sling adroitly over the animal's head.

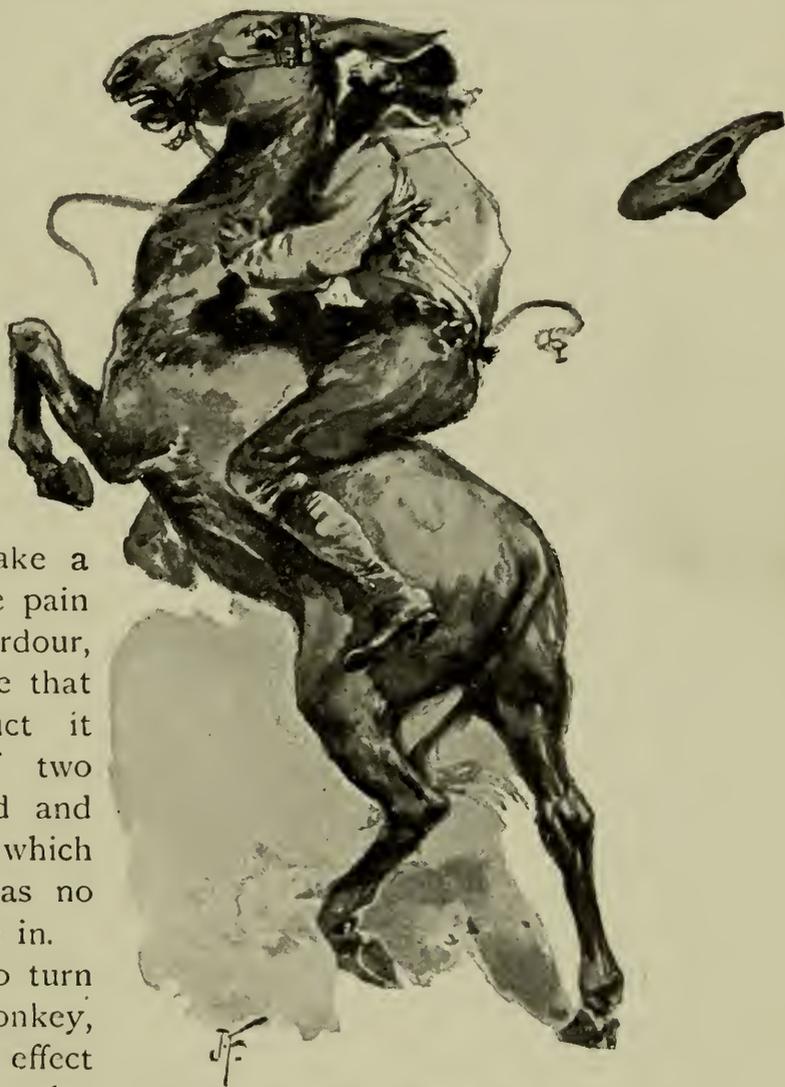
Of course this frightened the poor beast, who tried at once to escape, and plunged about wildly, thereby only tightening the sling and nearly choking itself, until it finally fell down, with its tongue protruding, in a state of semi-strangulation.

I now jumped out of the bushes, where I had remained concealed, and loosened the rope round the animal's neck, and threw the donkey's old halter over its head. Next I pinched its nose in the bamboo, and tied his tongue down under his jaw, just as blacksmiths treat a restless steed. The sling I now took off, and I fastened two ropes to the halter, which I attached to the roots of trees on each side of the quagga. And now I allowed the animal to come to, in order to see how it would behave.

Meanwhile all the members of my family had got down from the tree to inspect our splendid captive, who was of a much more elegant build than a donkey, and had almost the dignity of a horse. Soon the tortured beast jumped to its feet, and seemed inclined to make a dash for liberty; but the pain in its nose cooled its ardour, and it became so docile that I was able to conduct it between the walls of two roots, when I tightened and shortened the ropes which held it, so that there was no room left for it to move in.

Now we had time to turn our attention to the donkey, and to endeavour to effect its recapture. It was also secured by a halter, its fore feet were tied together, and it was put near the quagga in order to accustom the latter to us. For we noticed that the difference of sex between the two—the donkey being a female—was probably the cause of their companionship, and we thought this would help to get the quagga used to us.

Our first care was to tame the new arrival, and train it for driving and riding. Of course this took time and trouble, but finally we succeeded completely. What most contributed to this result



"Our first care was to tame the new arrival."

was that I on one occasion, when he was particularly intractable, bit its ears with all my might.

This trick, I informed my wife, I had learned from horse trainers. There are in America half savage Europeans who trade with the savages of the north for skins, which they exchange for European merchandise. These skins are carried on the backs of horses which are caught wild in the south. These horses are extremely intractable, and are only trained by being bitten in the ear.

In the course of a few weeks our animal was so far trained that it could be ridden with comparative safety, although its fore feet had still to be kept tied together, so that it could not bolt. In default of a good bit, I used a piece of curved iron, which I made into a snaffle.

While we were thus training our quagga, our poultry multiplied, and we had as many as forty chickens.

As the rainy season was approaching, we had now to think of constructing quarters for our cattle and fowls. So we made a cover over the roots of our tree with bamboo, which we plaited with cane, and we filled the interstices with moss and clay, and covered the whole with a coating of tar—thus producing a roof on which we were able to walk, and which we fitted with a balustrade, thus turning it into a verandah. Underneath we made all sorts of separate premises: some for the storage of food and milk, some for stabling our cattle, and a place where we could keep dry forage.

Our next care was to provide our storehouse with all manner of provisions against the winter, and we made daily excursions to get useful articles for this purpose.

One evening as we were returning from our potato fields, and our potatoes, lying in sacks in our cart, were being transported by the cow, the buffalo and the donkey, I got the idea of sending mother and the younger boys home, and going with Fred and Ernest into the oak forest in order to collect a few acorns. Ernest was accompanied by his monkey, and Fred was mounted on the quagga.

We intended to fill a few sacks with acorns, and put them on the back of the quagga; so that this animal, which had refused to be harnessed to the cart, might also render some useful service.

When we arrived at the forest, the quagga, whom we had named Lightfoot, was tied to a stump, and we started on our work. But we were interrupted by the monkey, who suddenly jumped into the bushes, from whence presently we heard the most piercing bird cries and the rustling blows of wings, which indicated a fight between the monkey and some bird.

I told Ernest, who was close by, to ascertain what was the matter. The boy soon came back radiant, and said :

“Father! a hen’s nest with eggs! The monkey is fighting with the hen. Fred can catch her while I am holding the monkey.”

Fred immediately jumped into the bushes, and soon came back with a beautiful specimen of the female of the Canadian ruffed cock, which he had wantonly shot some time before.

I was delighted over this find, and we immediately tied the legs and wings of the bird with thread. Ernest had meanwhile remained behind and driven the monkey away. Presently he returned, carrying the eggs carefully in his hat, while his belt was decorated with sharp pointed leaves, which I took to be those of the sword lily. The eggs had lain covered by these leaves, and would never have been found at all if the hen, in her valorous defence, had not disturbed them.

Having filled our sacks with acorns and slung them over the back of the quagga, which Fred gallantly mounted, we returned to Falconeyrie, Ernest carrying the eggs and I the hen.

Mother was delighted, and showed so much wisdom in her treatment of the hen that this bird hatched the entire brood and became quite tame.

A few days later Fred discovered the leaves of the sword lilies, which had been given to Frank, lying faded on the ground, and hit upon the idea of plaiting a whip out of them, in which he succeeded perfectly. I watched the operation intently, and was astonished to see how supple these leaves were. The leaves were composed, I noticed, of strong fibres, and on a closer inspection proved, instead of sword lilies as I had supposed, to belong to the New Zealand flax plant, which would be of the greatest value to us in our circumstances. I imparted my discovery to mother, who was beside herself, and cried :

“What a splendid find! Now we can make stockings, and shirts, and clothes, and all sorts of things!”

I laughed at her transports, but admired the spirit of the thrifty housewife which they revealed.

While I was calming her enthusiasm—for it seemed to be a far cry from these leaves to linen—Fred and Ernest sneaked off, one mounting Lightfoot and the other the buffalo, and galloped away to the forest as fast as they could.

In about a quarter of an hour the hardy equestrians returned at a round trot. They had provided themselves, like foraging hussars, with enormous bundles of the flax plant, which were hung at each side of

them, and which they threw with a cheer at our feet. I ordered the boys to put themselves at once at the disposal of their mother, and make all arrangements for preparing and especially roasting the flax.

“What, roasting!” cried Fred. “Shall we make a fire?”

“No, my boys. Flax is roasted without fire,” I replied. “It is nothing else than the exposure of the flax to wind and weather, in order that a certain degree of decay may set in, after which it is easier to separate the wooden substance from the fibrous matter.”

“But do not the fibres decay as well?” asked Fred.

“That is possible if the roasting is too long continued,” I explained; “otherwise there is little danger, for the fibres resist the action of decay and damp longer than the other parts of the plant. These can even be put into water without suffering deterioration; and it is doubtful whether it is not preferable to immerse the plant in water than to expose it to the air, as is usual.”

Mother observed that, considering the heat of our climate, it would be advisable to do the roasting in water rather than on the dry ground. She then proposed that we should go to Flamingo Swamp, and spread out the flax there.

This was agreed to; and on the following morning the donkey was harnessed to the cart, upon which we loaded the flax, placing Snip and Master Frank upon it, and, armed with rakes and spades, we proceeded to the spot mother had selected. Here we divided the bundles into heaps, placed them in the water, put stones on them, and left them to their fate, until mother should decree that they had been sufficiently soaked and were ready for roasting in the sun.

During this work we had many opportunities of admiring the ingenuity with which the flamingoes built their nests. A blunted cone was found in each of these nests protruding a little over the surface of the water, where it had a slight cavity, in which the egg rested comfortably, so that the flamingoes could keep their legs in the water while they were hatching. These cones were of clay or earth, and made so solidly that the water could not dissolve them, at least until the eggs were hatched.

After about a fortnight, mother was of opinion that the flax had been sufficiently roasted, and we started off again to bring it out of its bath into the light of day. It was immediately spread out in the neighbouring grass under the rays of the sun, where it dried completely in the course of a day, so that we were able to take it back that night in our cart. We now had time to construct hackles, carding combs, spindles, bobbins, etc.; but the rainy season was

coming on, and we had to make preparations for it, especially as we did not know how long it might last. Showers fell from time to time; the weather, which had been uniformly warm and bright, became muggy and changeable; the sky was frequently clouded, and stormy winds began to blow.

We took particular care to get a sufficient supply of potatoes and manioc roots; for we liked this food the best, and found it the easiest to keep. But we did not omit to collect large quantities of cocoanuts and sweet acorns. At the same time we sowed the ground which we had denuded of potatoes with various kinds of



"We had to descend from our pleasant eyrie in the branches and take up our abode . . . under our bamboo roof."

European wheat, for we had no means of ploughing or tilling the land. This was certainly the best time for sowing, as the rain would soften the ground, which had been burnt up by the sun. So we transplanted a few cocoanut saplings to Tentbourne, and made a sugar plantation as well.

Notwithstanding our exemplary industry, the rainy season broke over us all too soon. Frank asked me, with tears in his eyes, whether this was the deluge.

We had to descend from our pleasant eyrie in the branches and take up our abode on the ground among the roots under our bamboo roof, for the wind and rain made life in the branches

impossible. Everything which the rain could spoil had to be taken down. Our lower premises were now so crammed with all kinds of articles and animals that we had scarcely room to turn. Besides, the smell of the neighbouring cattle, the noise they made, and the smoke occasioned by our fire were nearly unbearable. Nevertheless we managed by degrees to overcome most of these disadvantages. We huddled the animals together, put as many articles as we could spare in our staircase, and thus got a little more room for ourselves. We did without cooking as much as possible, and avoided the discomfort of the smoke at the expense of our palates. Besides, we had very little dry wood, and so we were very grateful that the weather was not cold as well.

Another awkward circumstance was that we had not provided sufficient forage for our cattle, and did not like feeding them on potatoes and acorns, our store of which would soon have looked very foolish; so we were compelled to drive our cattle out in the wet to forage for themselves. But we selected the native animals for this purpose, who were better able to stand the climate, and kept the forage we had stored for the European denizens of our farmyard.

But bringing these animals back daily in the wet was an unpleasant task, which Fred and I took it in turns to do, getting wet to the skin every time and stiff with cold. This led mother to devise a waterproof cloak for our protection.

She took a large sailor's shirt, which had a hood to it, out of a chest, and dipped it in indiarubber, of which a supply had remained from our boot-making enterprise; and thus she obtained for us a kind of mail coat, which the rain could not penetrate, and which was most useful.

The real utility of the indiarubber boots was now appreciated, for in dry weather they had had the effect of giving us a cold in our feet.

On the whole we tried to make the best of things and to turn our forced inaction to account. I determined, for my amusement, to write down my experiences in this strange land, as a memorial which would serve to amuse and instruct us in the future. In this I was assisted by mother and the children.

Perhaps the most useful occupation was the construction of a carding comb and two hackles, of which one was made coarse and the other fine. I took two long nails which were perfectly round and sharp; these I drove, in close proximity to each other, through a tin plate, which had an edge all round of about an inch and a half, which was bent round the nails, and thus formed a sort of box. I now melted some lead, and poured this into the cavity right up to

the top of the tin plate edge; the nails, which protruded a good four inches beyond, were now firmly bedded in lead. Finally I soldered a couple of eyes to the tin plate, so as to be able to screw it on to a bed of any kind; and so an extremely durable instrument was got ready, which mother put into the fire as a test, and laid by, waiting with impatience for the time when we could resume our work in the open air.

CHAPTER XIII.

A HOME IN THE ROCKS.

WORDS cannot describe our pleasure when, after many weeks of rain, the sky began to clear up, the sun to show itself, and the weather to grow milder. With shouts of joy we emerged from our musty hiding-place and disported ourselves in the fresh air and on the green grass. Nature seemed to have risen from the grave. Every living creature drew in the delicious spring air with happiness. We forgot all our troubles and pains, and looked forward to the work and undertakings of summer as though they were child's play.

Our tree plantations were in the best possible condition. The seeds we had sown were growing luxuriantly. The trees were decorated with branches and leaves. The ground was covered with many coloured flowers and succulent herbs. The air was loaded with perfumes from countless buds; and the jubilant songs of gaily plumaged birds, who came out of their retreats to mingle in the new life of renascent nature, completed the picture of smiling spring.

With fresh courage we attacked the task before us, commencing with the refitting and furnishing of our eyrie, and after a very few days we were again able to take up our abode there.

Mother's great preoccupation was the beloved flax; and, while the boys drove the cattle into the fresh green fields, I brought the damp flax out into the open, and helped her to erect a stand as a temporary roaster, upon which it could dry rapidly. The boys had to beat the flax with cudgels on a table, so as to detach the skin. Mother was the breaker and I the hackler, and thus we presently produced most excellent material.

"Now make me a spindle, my dear," my wife said, "so that I may at once set to work and spin."

Even this I succeeded in doing; and now my dear wife devoted her energies to the work with such ardour that she did not seem to care about the fresh air, or those expeditions of which we had

been so long deprived. She was glad to get rid of us, and to remain at home undisturbed with little Frank, so as to go on uninterruptedly with her work.

We, on the other hand, immediately undertook a journey to Tentbourne, to see what repairs were needed there. We were distressed to find that this place had suffered incomparably more damage than Falconeyrie. The storm and the rain had combined to break down the tent, and had so wetted some of our provisions that many were completely ruined, and many others could be saved only by putting them out to dry at once.

Fortunately the pinnace was comparatively uninjured; but our tub catamaran was so weather-beaten, and looked so rickety, that I dared not hope to be ever able to use it again.

Our powder in particular had suffered much damage, for I had left three barrels in the tent, and not in the storehouse under the cliffs. Two of these barrels had been completely spoilt by the rain, and their contents had to be thrown away as useless. This irreparable loss made me all the more eager to find winter quarters where such misadventures could not occur, and where we could store all our household treasures without fear of getting them wet.

Still, I did not venture to hope that we should be able to carry out Fred's gigantic plan of making a cave in the rock. That, I thought, would take at least three years' work. Nevertheless, my longing for safe and watertight winter quarters gave me no peace until I had at least tried what the rocks were like, and whether it was possible to excavate a cellar for our powder, if for nothing else.

For this purpose I started one day from Falconeyrie with Fred and Jack, armed with pickaxes, crowbars and similar implements, with a view to seeing what impression we could make on the rocks. I selected a part of the cliffs which seemed better situated than Tentbourne. Here the rocks rose to a great height, and were perfectly perpendicular, whilst commanding a good view of the bay and of the Jackal Brook. At this spot I outlined a cavity in the rock with a piece of charcoal, and now we began to work at it with a will.

During the first day we made but little progress; so we began to lose heart. But the next morning my hopes revived on discovering that as we got on with our work the hardness of the stone seemed to decrease, until it became so soft that we were able to shovel it out quite easily, after a very few strokes from the pickaxe.

We had penetrated to the extent of several feet. Jack, as the

smallest, was in advance, hitting away with his crowbar in the extreme corner of the cave, when he suddenly exclaimed :

“Father! I have got through!”

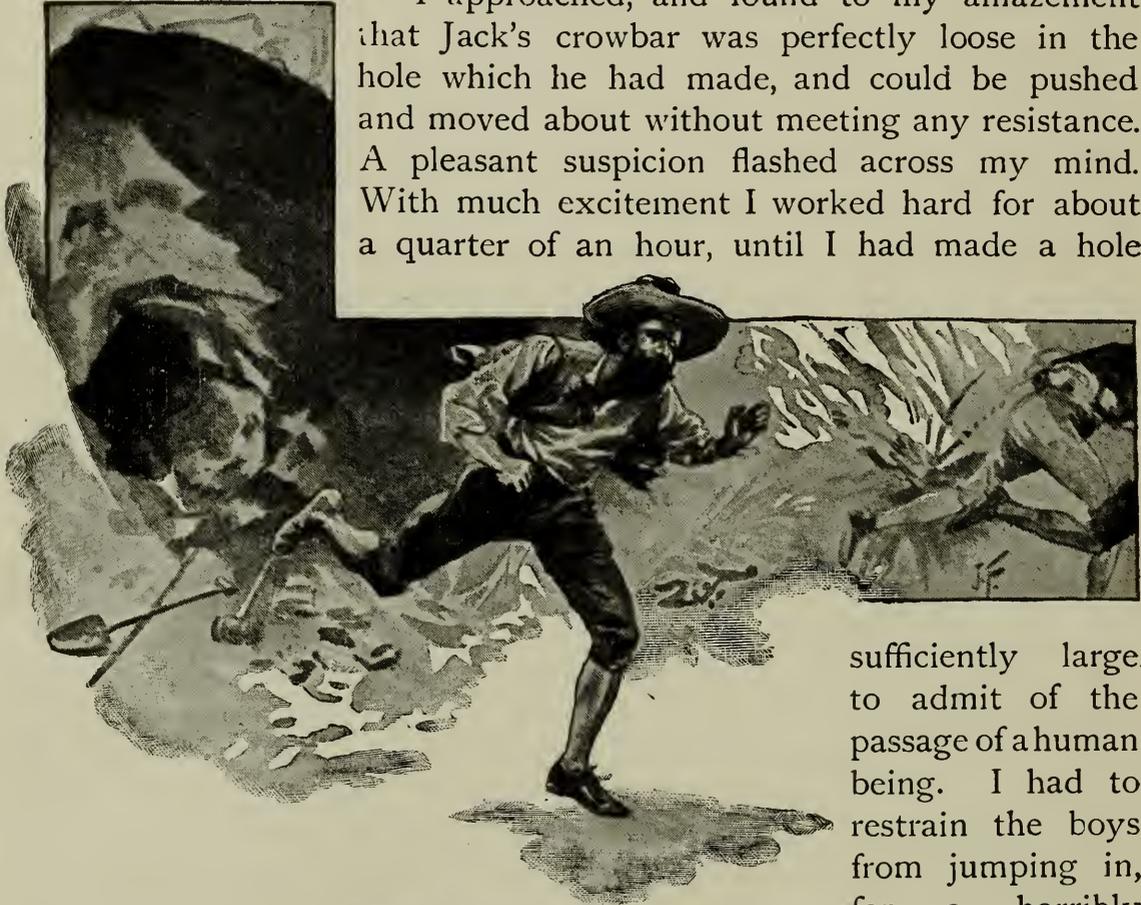
“What *do* you mean by through?” I demanded impatiently. “Not through the whole hill?”

“Yes, through the cliff! Hurrah, hurrah!” he shouted.

Fred jumped up to him, and cried out :

“Indeed, he is right! Come, father; this is most curious!”

I approached, and found to my amazement that Jack’s crowbar was perfectly loose in the hole which he had made, and could be pushed and moved about without meeting any resistance. A pleasant suspicion flashed across my mind. With much excitement I worked hard for about a quarter of an hour, until I had made a hole



Firing the grenades.

sufficiently large to admit of the passage of a human being. I had to restrain the boys from jumping in, for a horribly suffocating atmo-

sphere poured out on us, and nearly took my breath away.

“Back, back!” I cried. “Do not enter this cavern; the air will kill you!”

“But why?” they asked.

“It is bad, and cannot be breathed.”

“How is that?”

“Because,” I explained, “it is loaded with poisonous exhalations, or with gaseous vapours, or carbonic acid, thus making it too heavy to breathe.”

“What shall we do, then?”

“We must try to purify this air.”

"That won't be easy!" said Jack sceptically.

"Perhaps even impossible," I replied; "for we do not even know what has polluted it. Nevertheless we must do the best we can. Never say die! We will first make the fire test. Quick! a bundle of dry grass!"

In a few minutes this had been gathered. I lighted it, and threw the burning clump into the cavern; but it was instantly extinguished. We sat down and looked at each other.

"Could we burn some gunpowder in it?" said Jack.

"I have it!" I exclaimed, as I jumped up from my seat, remembering that we had reserved, among other things, a case containing rockets and grenades, which were intended for signalling purposes. Quickly I started for the tent, followed by the curious boys. I took out a couple, and gave them some also, and with these we returned to the opening in the yawning cavern.

"Now we will exorcise these evil spirits of the air," I said, as I fired my first grenade.

It went off with a bang in the horrible cave, and the sparks flew about like meteors, and a stream of mephitic air poured out of the opening. The rockets had also a splendid effect; they fizzed about the place like dragons and revealed to us the beautiful vaulted dome of the cavern, and then left all in darkness again.

After having spent some time in firing like this, I made another attempt to light the hay, and now the bundle burnt quite calmly to ashes; so that we could effect an entrance without incurring any danger from the air at least. The only risk we ran was that of banging ourselves against something or other or being drowned in any water which the cave might contain.

I therefore refrained from entering the grotto, but ordered Jack to gallop off to Falconeyrie to communicate the glad intelligence to the others, and to bring them back armed with as many candles as they could find.

Meantime Fred and I set to work to enlarge the entrance and to clear away the rubbish, so as to make a good pathway for the family to enter by.

In a couple of hours mother and Ernest arrived, with Frank on our potato cart.

We immediately lighted the candles, and formed a solemn procession to explore the grotto. Each of us carried a lighted candle in the right hand and some utensil in the left, with another candle, unlighted, in the pocket. We all entered, myself leading the way. The boys were half frightened, half curious, and mother brought up

the rear attended by the dogs, who looked more than usually concerned at the strange spectacle.

It was a splendid sight which unfolded itself before our eyes as we entered the grotto. The walls glistened round us like the starry firmament. From the arches of the natural vault hung countless glittering crystals, and many protruded from the sides. The flames of our candles were everywhere reflected, as though we were standing in a royal palace or a Gothic cathedral during high mass with all the lights burning, reflecting many-coloured rays.

The floor of the cavern was firm and solid and covered with fine sand, and so dry that no trace of damp could be discovered.

I ascertained, partly from the formation and partly from tasting the crystals, that we were in a cave of crystalised salt on a foundation of lime or selenite. We were delighted with this find, for we now had plenty of salt for our cattle, without having to collect it laboriously on the sea shore.

As we continued our exploring expedition we noticed the wonderful shapes in which the salt had formed. Here and there were regular pillars of it, which reached right up to the vaulted roof. Sometimes there were projections. In some instances the salt looked like furniture, cupboards and presses, and then again there were altars and seats as though made of glass. Sometimes we came across formations that looked like fantastic animals and human beings.

In some places we found fragments of crystal which seemed to have fallen from the roof or the walls, and which made us fear that such cases might be repeated and endanger our lives. But a close inspection proved this view to be erroneous, for the blocks were firm and immovable and did not bear traces of having been dissolved by damp. I therefore concluded that they had been precipitated by the shock of our grenades, and determined to be careful. But as all our attempts to remove them were unavailing, I gave up this theory also, and became convinced of the solidity of the grotto.

We now made plan after plan for the utilisation of this beautiful palace in the rocks.

Of course Falconeyrie remained our summer residence; but we spent the best part of each day in the grotto, making the necessary preparations for the fitting out of comfortable winter quarters. We confined our work at Falconeyrie to the absolutely indispensable, to feeding and milking, the preparation of food, and of course we slept there.

My first solicitude was for the admission of light, and fresh, wholesome air, into the salt grotto; and so I began by making a number of windows in it. Of course we had to reduce the thickness

of the outer wall in the first place ; for if we had made the windows in the same fashion as the wall we should have filled the grotto with rubbish, and yet in the end have obtained very little light. We commenced our operations from the inside, where, after the salt had been removed, the rock was softest. Nevertheless it was a hard and laborious job, and we thought we had well earned our day of rest when the windows out of the wreck, in accordance with the dimensions of which we had made the apertures in the rock, shone brightly in the sun.

The entrance we made of the height and width of the door of the captain's cabin, which we brought over from Falconeyrie. I made up my mind to mask the entrance to our winding staircase there with bark, so that in the event of an attack by savages it might, for a time at least, remain undiscovered.

As the grotto was very spacious we divided it into two compartments, which were separated by means of a passage which was partly flanked by poles. The space to the right of the entrance was to be our dwelling-place, while the compartment to the left was intended for the kitchen and workshops. In the depths of the cave, where no windows could be introduced, we proposed to construct stables, storerooms, cellars, and other offices. All these compartments were in time to be divided by means of partition walls and connected by means of doors, so as to resemble in every way a comfortable house.

The section in which we proposed to live was further partitioned off into three rooms ; the first to be the bedroom of mother and myself, the second the dining-room, and the third the dormitory of the boys. The first and last of these rooms were fitted with glass windows, but in the second we were satisfied to bar the apertures. In the kitchen we constructed a hearth between the two windows, and made a slight opening in the wall at the top, over which we fitted a kind of roof to catch the smoke from the hearth and carry it to the aperture. For our workshop we divided off an exceptionally large space, with a wide door, so that we could have plenty of room to work in during the winter, and could, if we so desired, introduce our cart and sledge. Here and in the boys' room we constructed some of those large presses to which we Swiss are so partial. The stables were divided off and situated along the back and sides of the cave, near our powder magazine and provision loft. The air was admitted to the stables, if not at first hand, still from our own chambers : for of course our parting walls did not reach up to the roof of the grotto. Besides, we constructed, with a view to the ventilation of these other premises, apertures over our

windows, which we protected by means of bars only. In front of these there ran a gallery supported on poles and accessible on each side by means of a staircase hewn roughly out of the rock. Well secured ropes formed a balustrade along this stone gallery. Nevertheless the situation of the stables made it incumbent upon us to keep them scrupulously clean.

Our prolonged sojourn at Tentbourne made us aware of advantages on which we had not counted. Enormous turtles made their appearance from time to time on the beach to deposit their eggs, and thus brought these, as well as their own bodies, almost to our kitchen. I made arrangements to ensure our having a good supply of this succulent food whenever we wanted it. As soon as we spotted a portly animal of this species on the beach, some of us ran off to bar his retreat. We then put the lazy fellow on his back, made a hole through the rear part of his shell, inserted a long rope, made this fast to a pole near the water, turned him over on his legs again, and thus kept him in our possession, without preventing him from taking his walks, swimming about and getting food.

One morning, as we were coming from Falconeyrie to our grotto, we saw a spectacle near the beach which we had never beheld before. For some distance the sea was agitated as though it was being blown up by subterraneous fire and boiling in an enormous cauldron. The air was full of sea-mews and similar birds of prey. Every now and then numbers of them swooped down upon the surface of the water, and kept flying and circling about.

The sea was also a remarkable sight. In the red light of the early dawn we could discern small lights, like flames, popping up and being extinguished in the waters. The entire seething mass was moving in the direction of the shore towards Refuge Bay, whither we hurried.

On the way we each tried to explain the phenomenon. Mother supposed it was a bar which we had hitherto neglected to notice. Fred opined it was a volcano which was on the point of bursting. Ernest thought it was some dreadful monster of the deep. But, on reflection, I concluded it was most probably a shoal of herrings.

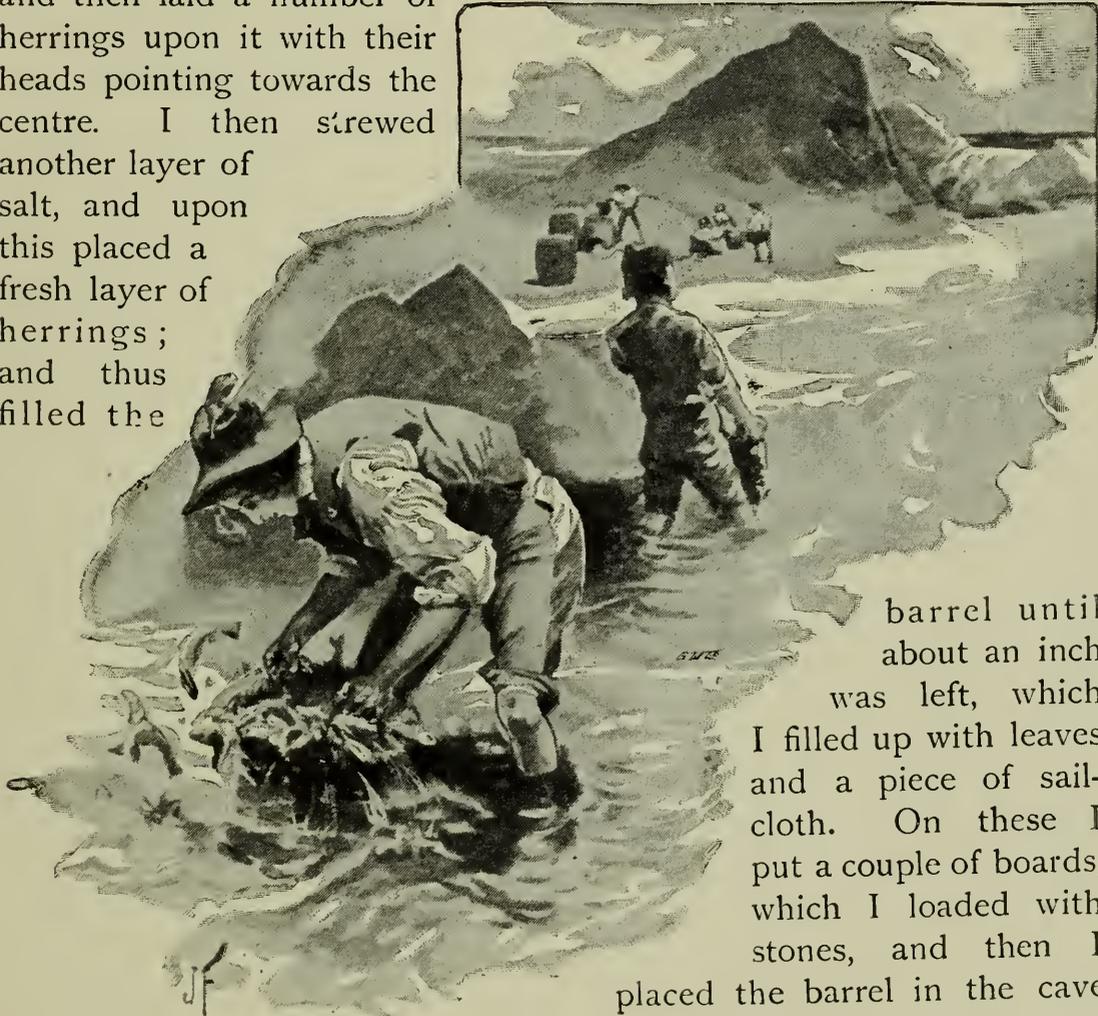
We got to Tentbourne as quickly as we could; and we had scarcely unyoked our team from the cart before the shoal of herrings came rushing in, and so rapidly that often one fish jumped over the other, on which occasions their shiny scales emitted bright sparks, which we recognised as the flames we had previously noticed.

But this was no time for standing idly by and looking at the curious spectacle. We had to be up and doing in order to prevent the fish from escaping. A better supply of winter provision we could

not have wished for. I therefore speedily made suitable disposition of our forces.

Fred was detailed to stand in the water in order to shovel out the fish in baskets and hand them to us. Ernest and Jack were told off to clean the fish out. Mother prepared the salt. Frank had to fetch and carry for all. For myself I reserved the task of salting and packing the fish in barrels, for this required the most skill.

I first strewed the insides and bottoms of the barrels with salt, and then laid a number of herrings upon it with their heads pointing towards the centre. I then strewed another layer of salt, and upon this placed a fresh layer of herrings; and thus filled the



"A shoal of herrings."

barrel until about an inch was left, which I filled up with leaves and a piece of sail-cloth. On these I put a couple of boards, which I loaded with stones, and then I placed the barrel in the cave to cool until we could completely close up the barrel.

This work occupied four days, and kept us at Tentbourne, for we were unable to prepare more than two barrels a day.

We had hardly finished this job before we had to do another, equally novel, which was a consequence of the former; for a school of seals followed the shoal of herrings, which they were pursuing for prey. They gambolled about the shore without the least timidity. I did not consider these particularly desirable as food, but longed for their skins; for I was much in need of good leather for saddles

and harness for our animals, and also thought of making clothes out of them, seeing that our supply from the wreck was getting exhausted, and mother could not possibly have made us sufficient apparel from the flax. Besides leather, the seals would yield the oil, which would be wanted for the dressing of their skins.

For this purpose our harpoons were put in requisition. The two youngest boys also got ready for the chase, and were delighted. But they were of little use to us, splashing about in the water, throwing their darts and hitting nothing. All the work devolved on Fred and me ; for Ernest, who hated wetting his feet, had declined to join us. Of course we were not remarkable for our skill, and many a miss was hailed with shouts of derision by the two younger ragamuffins. But at last we succeeded in capturing a sufficient number of animals, and we commenced the work of skinning. We turned the skins inside out, salted them well, and laid them to dry in the sun, after which they were conveyed to the cave for subsequent treatment. Mother cooked us a piece of seal as a sample, but it had a disagreeable fishy flavour, and so we voted against it. But the fat, of which there was a large quantity, was eagerly collected ; and after it had been boiled down in a kettle, was stored in a barrel, not only to be used for tanning, but also as fuel for our lamp, and even for the preparation of soap if we should find time for it. Besides the fat, we also retained the bladders of the animals, which I thought would make useful receptacles for liquids and be otherwise serviceable. All the other portions of their bodies which we did not require we threw into the Jackal Brook ; and this led me to construct a reservoir for sweet-water crabs, so that we might always have a plentiful supply of these edible little creatures. For we discovered a number of these animals upon the bodies of the seals. We took an empty sailor's chest, and, piercing a few holes at the sides, we loaded it with stones and put it in the brook ; into this we placed as many of these crabs or crawfish as we could catch. Of course we provided them with good food ; so that we had every reason to hope that they would grow up into splendid fellows, and increase and multiply. Another similar reservoir was attached by a rope to a post and dropped into the sea. This we filled with herrings for the present ; but we formed the design of keeping it constantly replenished with fish, so that there might always be a copious supply for the kitchen.

For all this, we did not neglect our grotto, but continued our work on it intermittently.

Ever since I had discovered that the base of the salt rock was composed of selenite, I determined to use this stone as building

material. But as our cave was sufficiently large already, I thought I might possibly succeed in obtaining, by blasting, some other rock of the same formation. Presently I hit upon a spot near our powder magazine behind the shoulder of the cliff and close to the reed bank, where the ground seemed sufficiently soft for easy work. The earth thus excavated was taken to our hearth at Tentbourne, where it was made red-hot, and then cooled, after which it was pulverised and placed in a dry place. For I intended to make an attempt to produce plaster of Paris, by means of which I hoped to economise our boarding in the erection of the partitions.

My first experiment with the lime was to make a coating of it over the herring barrels, which I intended to keep for the winter: of this I obtained a thick, air-tight covering for my barrels. However, I did not apply it to all of them, as I excepted four barrels, the herrings of which I intended to smoke; and in a few days arrangements were made for carrying out this process.

In a secluded spot behind the shoulder of the cliff we erected a hut of plaited cane and branches resembling those of the coast dwellers of America. In the centre we constructed a hearth. Upon this hearth we laid the herrings, and kindled a smoky fire with damp moss and dry twigs, closed up the hut, and thus obtained splendid bloaters, which had a smiling golden glow, and were stowed away in dry sacks.

About a month after the advent of the herrings we were visited by a number of sturgeon and salmon, which made for sweet water, and swam towards the brook, where they proposed to breed according to their custom.

These fishes were so big that Jack took them for young whales. They were not so easy to capture as the herrings. Jack, noticing my difficulty, ran off to the cave, and came back with his bow and arrows and a couple of blown-out seal-bladders, besides a ball of string, and promised to help me.

I regarded the boy with interest and astonishment as he tied the string round the middle of the bladders, and attached an arrow, to which he had fastened a hook, to one end, while he made the other fast to the beach by putting a big stone on it. He now put the arrow in his bow, aimed at a splendid salmon, and hit it.

Jack jumped up with pleasure, shouting:

"I have got it! Look here, father! Fred! Ernest! It can't escape!"

The salmon tried to get away, and drew the bladder and the string after it into the sea. But the stone would not let the string go, and the bladder swam to the surface, so that the fish could not

touch the bottom. Besides, the loss of blood, and probably the fright, tired it out, so that we could haul it on shore by means of the string.

This happy experiment led us all to imitate it. Fred took the harpoons, with their ropes and windlass. I seized a trident, like Neptune, to prod the fishes. Ernest provided himself with large fish hooks; and Jack prepared his arrows and bladders once more. Thus equipped we returned to the charge. Ernest baited his hooks with the entrails of the salmon we had already caught, and threw them into the water. Jack made a few misses, until he succeeded in landing another monster with some difficulty. I myself managed to spear a couple, but I had to go deep into the water before I could get them completely in my power. Even Ernest caught a young sturgeon, though mother and Frank had to help to haul it on shore. But Fred had most trouble, for he harpooned a terrific sturgeon at the back of its head, and found it very hard work to keep hold of it by means of his rope and windlass. I ran to his assistance; but it took two more harpoons, which we plunged into the brute's belly, to tire it out and draw it up. We had to slip a running knot over its head and haul it in by the aid of the buffalo.

These splendid fishes were now disembowelled. I put the roe and the fins on one side for a special purpose, cut up the fishes in suitable pieces, salted and packed a portion very much as I had done with the herrings, while I tried to preserve the other in oil, after boiling it in salt.

Mother thought, after all these preparations, that we had enough good things, and suggested that I should throw away the roe, fins, tails and bladders. But I opposed this manfully, and told her that we would make delicious caviare of the roe, and that the other refuse would yield a capital glue. My wife shook her head; but I began to carry out my design at once, lest decay should set in.

The boys had to wash the roe, of which we had about thirty pounds, in fresh water, and carefully clean it. It was then salted, strained and pressed, and kept standing for about twenty-four hours, so as to drain away all the liquid matter. We were then able to take the residue out of the extemporised gourd sieves, and obtained about a dozen globular lumps, which we now proceeded to smoke, in order to have another capital store of good food for the winter.

‘And now,’ I said, ‘we will tackle the bladders, and turn them to account also.’

The bladders were separated from the fleshy skin, washed clean,

cut into long strips, and strung on a thread ; they were then dried in the sun. The preparation of the fins and tails took more time ; for these had to be boiled down and skimmed, so as to leave a thick jelly, which had to be slightly dried and spread out on a clean surface, dried again in the sun, and then cut up into ribbons and allowed to get hard. Thus we obtained a splendid transparent glue, which I hoped would not only be useful in carpentry, but might even be a substitute for glass.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FARM.

OUR kitchen garden at Tentbourne was by this time in splendid condition, and yielded, without much tending, an excellent harvest of delicious vegetables. What was especially agreeable to us was the circumstance that the vegetables did not seem to be limited to any particular season of the year, and that they were at our disposal during the entire summer.

Our greatest difficulty, besides weeding, was keeping the garden properly supplied with moisture; but this we accomplished with comparative ease by means of the sago tree, which we used as a conduit from the Jackal Brook. This small expenditure of energy was amply rewarded, for we obtained, besides various kitchen stuff, capital cucumbers and melons, and maize of a phenomenal size. The sugar-cane prospered also, and we had likewise transplanted some pine-apples, so that we had no lack of good fruit.

The flourishing condition of our various plantations round Tentbourne made us hopeful of those at Falconeyrie, and so we prepared to start for our forest residence. On our way we passed the potato fields, which we had uprooted, and where mother had so freely scattered seeds of all sorts. Here we found a flourishing growth of all kinds of grain, partly ripened. We saw barley, wheat, oats, peas, lentils, rye, etc., in abundant variety; so that we were struck with wonder at mother's marvellous resourcefulness.

The maize was in the most flourishing condition of all, for of this mother had sown an entire field. But we also found that a number of uninvited guests had made good use of their opportunities. As we approached the maize field we startled a flock of bustards who had been fattening upon it; and as our dogs gave chase, a number of smaller birds flew up into the air, while others, resembling thrushes, unable to fly, waddled hastily away.

Fred was not at a moment's loss. He pulled out his eagle,

which he always carried in his hunting bag when he went on expeditions, took off his hood, pointed at the bustards, and let him go. Thereupon Fred jumped on his quagga and pelted away after him.

We now saw an interesting spectacle in mid air which riveted our attention. The eagle had marked its prey, lifted itself above it, and swooped down. As soon as the bustards saw it they showed signs of fear, and did all they could to evade it,—now thronging together, now scattering over a wide area. But the eagle was not to be balked of its prey. It made its choice, and had singled out the finest bird of the lot. Dropping to the ground, the bustard probably intended to escape by running. But the eagle overtook it, got on its back, and stopped its flight by beating it with its wings, and weakening it by pecks with its beak.

Fred now arrived on the scene, jumped off Lightfoot, threw his handkerchief over the head of the bustard, tied its legs together, and slipped the hood over the eagle's head, disengaged its claws, and put it back in its old place in the hunting bag. Now he rent the air with his cheers, and we all ran up to him.

Jack alone remained behind, for his young jackal was as keen as the eagle. It had been stealthily sneaking up to the little birds which we had taken for thrushes, and as soon as it got up to them, jumped upon one and seized it by its wings and brought it to its master. Thus it had already captured about a dozen when we returned with the bustard hen.

Fatigued and thirsty we arrived at Falconeyrie, and mother promised us a refreshing drink. She mashed up a few soft grains of maize, diluted them with water, strained the fluid, sweetened it with sugar-cane, and offered us a delectable drink resembling milk.

We spent the rest of the day in peeling and storing our grain, and made the necessary preparations to depart on the following morning. We selected particularly a flock of poultry, which we intended to let loose as colonists in the wilds, so that they might increase, find their own food, and be afterwards caught and eaten. To these we added four young pigs and a couple of goats, for our



"The eagle had marked its prey."

flocks were already assuming formidable dimensions, and feeding them was no light task.

On the following morning, therefore, after we had loaded our cart and fed our animals and armed and equipped ourselves, we started for Falconeyrie. The cow, the buffalo and the old donkey had to draw the cart. The quagga was mounted by Fred as usual, who preceded us to see whether there was any danger ahead.

We struck out a fresh route this time, for we travelled half way between the beach and the cliffs, in order to make ourselves thoroughly acquainted with the region between Falconeyrie and the large bay beyond the Cape of Disappointed Hope. At first we had some difficulty in making our way through the long grass, until we got into the wood, when our progress was further impeded by creepers and all kinds of underwood, so that we had literally to cut our way through.

After rather a fatiguing march we got to the other side of the wood, and were confronted by a small plain overgrown with thickets. We stopped and looked at it with surprise, and Frank cried :

“Fancy, snow! A beautiful winter without wet or cold!”

We laughed at the idea; nevertheless, the ground and bushes were really covered with a white substance resembling snow. I suspected the true origin of this appearance, and Fred confirmed my impression. We had cotton plants before us. Our delight was indescribable, and we began to enumerate a number of things which we would now be able to prepare.

We collected, cleaned and packed as much of this valuable substance as we conveniently could stuff into our sacks, and mother filled her pockets with seeds, so that she could sow the plant at Tentbourne.

Presently we reached a small rising ground, from which we obtained a beautiful prospect. Trees of all kinds covered the slope of this hill, which lost itself in a fruitful valley, watered by a clear brook. Here we determined to picnic. We pitched our tent, constructed a hearth with a few stones, and separated to carry out several necessary arrangements. Mother and the boys collected as much cotton as they could, and cleaned it, so that we might at least make pillows out of it. I went and reconnoitred the immediate neighbourhood, and found a group of trees which stood at a convenient distance from each other, so as to afford capital natural supports for a farm building which I proposed to erect. We went to rest betimes, with the intention of commencing this work early next morning.

The trees I had selected stood at almost regular intervals in a

quadrangle, the broadest side of which looked towards the sea. We cut grooves to the height of about ten feet in the first three trunks, in which we fitted two cross-bars about five inches in diameter. At the back a similar arrangement was made with three other trees. Two cross-bars were now fitted in the front corner trees and the back ones, and these ran, with an incline of two feet, into the unequal height of the grooves. We then fitted thin laths from tree to tree in the same direction as the cross-bars, and fastened them with wooden pins, thus forming a large frame, and covered it with bark, which we nailed fast after drying in the sun.

We utilised the rubbish of the bark for fuel, because it was resinous and combustible; and now we perceived a delicious fragrance, and discovered that the bark contained a kind of turpentine or mastic. Further, we discovered a kind of acacia or mimosa, whose thorns made capital nails.

Presently we owed to our goats another discovery, for which we were equally grateful. They began looking for, and chewing, among the rubbish a peculiar kind of bark, which they devoured with avidity. The boys, who could never look on in cold blood when an animal was feeding, got very anxious, tasted the bark themselves, and found it possessed an agreeable aromatic flavour; Fred proclaimed it to be cinnamon.

Over our meal we discussed our new discoveries, and I had to tell the boys all I could remember of the uses of turpentine, mastic and cinnamon. The first two, I explained, were brought by the Venetians from the islands of ancient Greece and traded off in Europe. Boiled turpentine was used for the preparation of colophony or resin, but we could use it, diluted with fish oil, as a substitute for pitch.

With regard to the mastic, I explained how it leaked out of trees and was dried by the sun into hard transparent drops like amber, and how it could be used for smoking meat, for the manufacture of glass and porcelain clay, and, mixed with spirits of wine, as a varnish.

The best cinnamon, I told them, was found on the island of Ceylon, and obtained from young trees which had been first divested of their outer rind; the firm inner bark was peeled off, cut into strips, and dried in the sun, when the strips rolled themselves into little tubes.

"These tubes," I said, "are fitted into each other, bound together in bundles, and sewn up in cotton sacks, which are first beaten and then packed in fresh ox hides, which are dried in the sun, and become as hard as horn; and thus the cinnamon, secure against theft or adulteration, is put on board ship and sent away."

After our food we continued our work of building, at which we

were engaged for several days. We plaited the walls with lianas or creepers and with flexible twigs to a height of five feet, and made them as tight as we could. The space between this and the roof was protected by a light lattice-work, which admitted the air and did not shut out the view. We left an open door on the side facing the sea. We fitted up the interior as well as we could without wasting much wood on it. A partition running half way up divided the building in two unequal parts, the largest of which, nearest the main entrance, being the stables, the smaller a place of rest for ourselves. In the stables we fitted a hatchment for the poultry, which we protected with rails that admitted the egress of the poultry, but not that of the sheep. We made complete arrangements for the feeding of our animals, and fitted a lattice door to our own chamber which could also be securely fastened.

We purposed to make all this much more elegant in time, but for the present we were satisfied to have a shelter for our cattle and poultry into which they could accustom themselves to return of a night after grazing. We therefore filled their troughs with salt and other delicacies, which would be sufficient for some days, determining to replenish them from time to time, so that they might always offer an attraction.

I had hoped to finish all this work in about three or four days, but it occupied more than a week, so that our provisions were well-nigh exhausted. But as I did not wish to return to Falconeyrie until all was completed, I sent Fred and Jack there, in order to fetch the necessary supplies for ourselves and the cattle.

I gave them the donkey as a carrier, and allowed them to ride the quagga and the buffalo. They would find sufficient rope and sacks at home. In high glee they trotted off, and drove on the donkey with their whips. During their absence I went on a tour of inspection, with Ernest, to see whether we could find potatoes and cocoanuts, and to make myself familiar with the neighbourhood.

We therefore proceeded along a small brook towards the cliffs, in order to reach from thence our old accustomed route. But we soon arrived in a swamp and a small lake beautifully situated. I noticed that wild rice was growing in the swamp. We shot five ruffed cocks; but this would have been a pure waste but for our jackal, who had come with us, and was most valuable.

On our departure from this spot, Snip, who was as usual mounted on Bill, helped us to a grand discovery. He suddenly jumped down, and picked some berries, which he began to eat with great gusto. We found they were beautiful strawberries, and so we had a glorious feast. They were quite as luscious as pine-apple. We filled up the

monkey's basket to the brim, so as to let the others taste some of this delicious fruit. These we packed with leaves and a handkerchief, so that Master Snip could neither spill nor eat them. To this we added some samples of rice. With this booty we now returned to the farm.

In about a quarter of an hour Fred and Jack came back from Falconeyrie, and gave us a complete report of all their proceedings. The boys had carefully carried out my instructions, and had supplemented them by their own thoughtfulness.

Having supplied the sheep, goats and poultry with food, we broke up on the next morning, after christening the farm Woodstead. In a copse which we presently entered we came upon an incredible number of monkeys, who received us with horrible yells and a hail of pine-cones; but we soon put them to flight by firing a few slugs into them.

Fred picked up the pine-cones they had thrown at us; and I recognised them to be the fruit of the so-called sweet-pine tree, which was most welcome, both on account of their pleasant flavour and the oil they contained, for which reason I made the boys gather a good quantity.

We continued our march, and soon arrived at the monkey forest, which we quickly traversed, and so came to the Cape of Disappointed Hope. On leaving the forest, I observed a hillock: as this promised to afford a good prospect we ascended it, and were not disappointed. So I determined to make a settlement here; and as soon as we had rested a little we set to work, and erected a hut on the pattern of the one we had left behind us at Woodstead. To this one we gave the name of Highpeak.

I had undertaken this journey in the hope of finding a tree whose bark would be suitable for the construction of a canoe: so far, my search had been in vain; but now I found a couple of splendid tall trees resembling the oak, although with somewhat smaller fruit, and with a bark which looked like cork, but was much tougher.

Having selected the most suitable tree, we attached our small rope ladder, which we had brought with us, to one of the lowest branches. Fred made the ascent, and sawed through the bark right round the tree, while I sawed it near the roots. We then cut a narrow vertical strip of the bark down, and set to work and gradually pulled off the whole of the bark; the tree being in full sap, the bark was supple, and the task an easy one. As the bark was still moist and flexible, it was now in a favourable condition to receive any shape I wished to give it. I therefore immediately inserted a powerful wedge to prevent the bark from rolling up. At each end

I cut open a length of about five feet, and closed these ends together, so that they overlapped and came to a point, in which condition I securely nailed them. Thus I had obtained a canoe; but it was too flat in the bows for my purpose, and I had to brace them up with ropes. But there was still much to be done; and so I sent Fred and Jack to Tentbourne to fetch the sledge, which I had now placed on the wheels of my gun-carriage, in order to transport my embryo canoe to a spot more suited for my boat-building operations.

Meanwhile, I went off in search of hawse-pieces and knee-pieces. With the aid of Ernest, I was also fortunate enough to find numerous chips of resinous wood for the fire, which gave splendid material for stretchers and ribs. We also discovered a kind of resin, which was remarkably strong and adhesive, and seemed well adapted for purposes of pitching.

It was late before the boys turned up with the sledge on wheels, and so we lay down to rest. But on the following morning we started afresh, and put our canoe, with the wood we had collected in it, on the cart, and retraced our steps.

Our route led us through reeds, and we had to clear a way for our donkey. Here I came across some splendid bamboos, and of these we selected one to serve as a mast.

After some time we finally got clear of the reeds, and found that we had a great river on our left, instead of the sea; while the cliffs on our right swept backwards slightly, and left us but a narrow passage, which we christened the Causeway. Here, at the narrowest point, a few paces from a brook which rushed out of a cleft in the rock and debouched into the river, we constructed a substantial dam of earthwork, leaving a straight passage towards the brook and the grass-covered valleys of the interior, which we protected by means of a narrow barred gate. The intermediate space we planted with prickly dwarf palms, Indian figs, and a variety of thorns, and through it made a sort of zigzag pathway, which we intended to conduct over a covered wolf's trap, and which was in future to be protected by drawbridges at the brook and over the ditch; and thus, we hoped, when the thorny underwood had assumed bigger proportions, the pass would be safe from the attacks of wild beasts.

We had driven our pigs across the Causeway Brook, and named the spot where they had crossed Boarsford; and now, after two days' work, we were able to continue our journey.

We made a two hours' halt at Falconeyrie for dinner and to make arrangements for feeding the poultry, and then we went on to Tentbourne.



J. H. Munroe, 98.

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THE NEW CANOE.

Here, after a short rest, we tackled the canoe. We gave it ribs and hawse-pieces, a knee-piece fore and aft to strengthen it, and a keel to stiffen it. Along the sides we constructed a border of supple poles and laths, to which we attached iron rings for our rigging. By way of ballast I put in some heavy stones, which I cemented together by means of clay; over these I made a floor of planks, and seats were fitted across. The mast was placed amidships, with a triangular sail; and aft I attached a rudder, by means of a couple of door hinges, which had a long arm projecting into the canoe.

For the better safety of this craft, I got mother to construct a couple of floats, made of seal skin filled with air and carefully pitched all over: these were tied amidships on each side of the canoe, and prevented it from sinking or capsizing.

I had forgotten to mention that our cow had some time before thrown a bull calf; and in order to domesticate this animal, I had pierced its nostrils like those of the buffalo, for the purpose of inserting a ring or wooden staff later.

The calf had grown considerably by this time, and had been weaned: so I thought it was time to train it for future service, but was at a loss to know what that ought to be. Fred helped me out of the difficulty by suggesting that we should make a Hottentot fighting bull of it. This puzzled mother considerably, and I had to explain his meaning.

"The Hottentots," I said, "are surrounded by wild beasts; but as they mostly live by cattle-farming, they train several of their bulls to defend them against these, and against their enemies, the Hottentots of the bush. The courageous bulls keep the grazing flocks together, watch over their safety, warn them of impending danger, and drive them into a circle, of which the centre is composed of calves, while the bulls and cows stand facing the enemy with their horns. The fighting bulls are said even to attack the enemy—such as lions, for instance—roaring at them, and sacrificing their lives in the defence of the others. It is even recounted that when one tribe of Hottentots makes war on another, the first shock of battle is felt by the bulls of the opposing forces, who sometimes do all the fighting."

The boys were delighted with such warlike preparations, and the question now was to whom the animal should be entrusted.

Ernest had enough to do to look after his monkey; Jack was content with his buffalo and jackal, and Fred was satisfied with the quagga. Mother had the care of the donkey; so that only Frank remained, and to him we confided the calf. For myself, I retained

the supervision of all the animals; and thought that probably some special foundling might soon turn up for me besides.

Frank eagerly accepted the trust, and said :

“You told me, father, some time ago, of a strong man, who, I think, was called Milo, who began by carrying a small calf, until he was able to lift an ox. In the same way I will try to tame our little animal now that it is weak ; and so perhaps in time, when it has grown up, I shall be able to master it.”

I smiled, and explained that a calf grew up much more rapidly than a human being, and that it would therefore be difficult for a little boy like him to retain the mastery of the animal when it had got big in about a year's time. The next thing was to hit upon a name for the calf, but none of the names usually given to these animals in Switzerland pleased the boys.

“Let us call it Growler, father,” said Frank ; and this name was accepted with acclamation.

While we were on this subject, we thought of christening the buffalo, and Bill's two young mastiffs as well.

Jack was obstinate about his pet, and insisted on calling it Storm, for he said it sounded very grand to “ride on the Storm.” I laughed, and replied :

“But how would it look if our bragging hero takes flight on the Storm, and is blown away ?”

The dogs were called after their respective colours—Brown and Tan—and with this our inventiveness was exhausted.

The discovery of the cotton did not lead to its domestic use quite as quickly as the boys had thought, for the seeds had to be got out. Even the inhabitants of Asia and North Africa use an appliance for this purpose which is called “tchurka” by the Indians, Persians and Turcomans. I had seen this appliance in the British Museum, and so set to work to make one. I fitted a couple of rollers, a foot long and of the thickness of my finger, into two uprights, which I fastened to a board, and I let the ends of the rollers project by about a hand's breadth. The upper roller I made square at one end, so as to admit of a crank being fastened on. On the two opposite projecting ends I carved screw threads, so that the one could impart its motion to the other.

Nobody understood the use of the machine ; but when I had finished it, and secured it with wedges, and had brought it to our rock house, I cried :

“Now, let me have some of that cotton !”

Jack ran off at once and brought me a good-sized bundle. I fed my rollers with my left hand while turning the handle with

my right—and lo! the cotton was taken up by the rollers, while the seeds separated and fell to the ground. A cheer from the boys rewarded my industry. Mother tried to use the appliance herself, but in her excitement forgot which way to turn the handle. Although the machine was rough enough in all conscience, it answered its purpose, and gave us great pleasure.

We now worked for nearly two months in our “salt-cellar,” in order to complete the floor and the necessary partitions, reserving the more elaborate details for the rainy season. It was hard work, but we managed to finish it before the winter. Our plaster of Paris industry thrived amazingly, and we made all our partitions of plaited cane, and stuccoed them over.

The floor, like that of some thrashing floors, was made of clay, well beaten down, and fairly thick. All this got perfectly dry in the great heat of summer. Nevertheless, we thought we should like to have a carpet; so we made a sort of felt of goats’ hair and sheep’s wool. This also was fairly successful. After we had thoroughly dried the wool and hair, we spread them equally over a large piece of sail-cloth, and poured a quantity of boiling water, mixed with fish-glue, over the mass; we then rolled up the sail-cloth, beat it with cudgels, soaked it again in water, and finally obtained a kind of felt, which we were able to peel off the sail-cloth and dry in the sun.

One morning after these labours I awoke exceptionally early, and, not wishing to wake the others, lay calculating how long we had been on this coast. To my surprise, I made out that the following day would be the anniversary of our arrival and rescue. I felt that this important day should be fittingly celebrated, and determined to surprise the others with my discovery. I spent the day in making a few needful preparations, and at supper I said to my family:

“Do you know, children, what day to-morrow will be?”

“No, father: what *will* it be?” they replied.

“It will be the solemn anniversary of our rescue!”

“Well, I should never have guessed that!” said Jack.

All were surprised that a year had thus quickly flown by, and mother doubted the accuracy of my calculation.

“Look here, my dear!” I explained: “a month ago the year in which we were shipwrecked came to an end. We were wrecked on the thirtieth of January: so that our calendar, which I saved, lasted us for eleven months; and as this is the second of February, we have been four weeks without a calendar. It was on the second of February that we landed. But as my

stationer has neglected to deliver an almanack, we must make one of our own."

"What a lark, father!" cried Ernest. "We need but do what Robinson Crusoe did, and cut notches in a stick."

"Quite right," I answered; "but we must know how many days there are in each month and in the year."

"Why, a year has 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 45 seconds."

"Most correct, Mr. Professor; but the hours, minutes and seconds might cause some difficulty."

"Not in the least," replied Ernest: "we will lump them together, and every four years they would amount to about a day, and then we would have a leap year."

"Capital, my boy! You shall be our Astronomer Royal, to whom we will entrust the clocks and chronometers of this our kingdom! To prevent mistakes, it will be best if each of us keeps his own record, and from time to time we will compare them."

We now went to rest; but during the night I overheard the boys whispering together, and caught one of them saying:

"I wonder what father has prepared for to-morrow?"

Early next morning we were aroused by a shot from a cannon, and jumped up to see what was the matter. To my surprise, I noticed that Fred and Jack were missing. Thinking them still asleep, I went to wake them, when they came up, laughing cheerily, and Jack cried:

"Did we not wake you up pretty smartly?"

In view of the solemnity of the occasion, we pardoned the fright they had given us, and after breakfast we consulted as to the best means of celebrating the day.

I opened the celebration by reading my diary, in order to bring back to our minds all the circumstances of our rescue. We then went down on our knees, and poured out our hearts to God in thankfulness for His great mercies. I concluded my prayer with an "Amen" in a tremulous voice, and mother squeezed my hand and pressed her face against my shoulder.

"Now," I said, "let us sing the hymn mother has taught you:

"Now thank we all our God,
With heart, and hands, and voices,
Who wondrous things hath done,
In Whom His world rejoices."

And, clear and full, six thankful voices poured out their souls in heartfelt gratitude to Heaven. Then we all separated silently, and went about the various needful duties of the day.

Soon mother summoned us to dinner, which was composed principally of two splendid fat fowls which she had killed the day before.

"Now," I said, when we had finished dinner, "the rest of the day shall be spent in festivities. Moreover, I want to test your mettle. Our future depends largely on your fitness. You shall show us what you have done to make yourselves efficient. Mother and I will be the umpires. Hulloo! there!—trumpeters!" I shouted, turning in the direction of the ducks and geese, who, frightened at my stentorian shout, sounded their cackling notes, to the amusement of the boys.

"To arms, to arms!" I cried. "The trumpet has sounded!"

I decided to begin with a shooting competition. I made a rough target of wood, and fastened it to a rock.

Frank was excluded from the competition. Each of the three boys were allowed two shots. Fred made two bulls'-eyes; Ernest hit the target once only, and so did Jack. The next competition was with pistols, and here Fred again came out first. I now threw a board in the air for each boy, which he had to hit on the wing, so to speak: and here I found, to my surprise, that Ernest was not far behind Fred, while Jack was nowhere. Archery came next, to which Frank was admitted; and I was pleased to find that all the boys acquitted themselves creditably.

After a short interval, I started a foot race. The course was from the salt cave to Falconeyrie, and I told the boy who got there first to bring me a pocket-knife which I had left there, in token of his victory. Of course Frank was excluded from this also. At a given signal, Fred and Jack went off like the wind; while Ernest started in a steady jog-trot, keeping his wind for the finish, and in about three quarters of an hour he returned the victor. But at first I was somewhat confused: for Jack was the one who came in sight before the others, galloping on his buffalo, and followed by the quagga and the donkey, which made me suspect that the boys had covered part of the distance on these animals.

"That won't do!" I cried: "this was a foot race!"

"No, thank you!" said Jack, as he came up to us. "I was not going to run myself to pieces when I saw I was bound to come in last in any case! But I thought I would like to see the fun: so I got Storm at Falconeyrie, and overtook Fred and Ernest on the way back; the other animals came with me against my will."

Fred now came up, followed at a distance of fifty paces by Ernest, who had the knife in his pocket.

"How comes it," I asked, "that although you, Fred, arrived first, Ernest has got the knife?"

"Because I got to Falconeyrie about two minutes before him!" cried Ernest; "for he tired himself out. But on the return journey, he ran as steadily as I did, and so distanced me. But then he is older than I."

They had made the journey—which usually took me seventy-five minutes—in fifty, and so I praised them for their fleetness. They had a good long rest, and then the climbing competition was begun. In this, Jack far out-distanced his brothers, showing the agility of a monkey. In riding, Jack was also foremost—although Fred ran him very close. They both rode bare-backed. They managed to jump off and on while their animals were in motion; but they failed to jump on from behind, as the circus riders do. Ernest rode fairly well, but was no good at the tricks.

Even Frank wished to display his horsemanship, and bestrode his Growler. Mother had made him a saddle-cloth of seal skin, to which were attached a couple of straps with loops for his feet. In its nose the animal had a brass ring, and to this the bridle was fastened. It was wonderful to see how well Growler had been trained by Frank, who introduced himself as "Mr. Milo of Cretona, the great bull tamer."

We concluded our festivities with a swimming and diving competition, which was also a capital refresher: but at this Fred was the undisputed master; he was like a seal in the water, and showed no signs of fatigue. Ernest was timid, and Jack too impetuous, but Frank showed he was made of the right stuff.

It was late before we finished our sports, and returned home in solemn procession. Mother had preceded us in order to distribute the prizes with proper dignity. She sat enthroned on a tub whilst the boys defiled before her, making a martial trumpeting noise through their hands—Fred leading, and Frank bringing up the rear.

Fred received the prizes for shooting and swimming—an English double-barrelled fowling-piece and a handsome hunting-knife. Ernest got for his running a gold watch. Jack, as champion horseman and climber, got a pair of plated spurs and an English riding-whip. Frank received a pair of iron stirrups and a whip of rhinoceros hide.

I now came forward and awarded a well-earned prize to mother, consisting of a handsome English "house-wife."

"This," I said, "is the due of the eminent purveyor of equipments for the boys and their able trainer."

Mother was surprised and pleased, and the boys cheered. They gambolled about a good deal, when they suddenly asked me to finish

the day by firing another gun. I had to give in ; and so we concluded this solemn festival—after a good supper.

Shortly afterwards, the time for our pigeon harvest set in ; for the wood-pigeons we had preserved had been capital eating, and I wanted to lay up another supply.

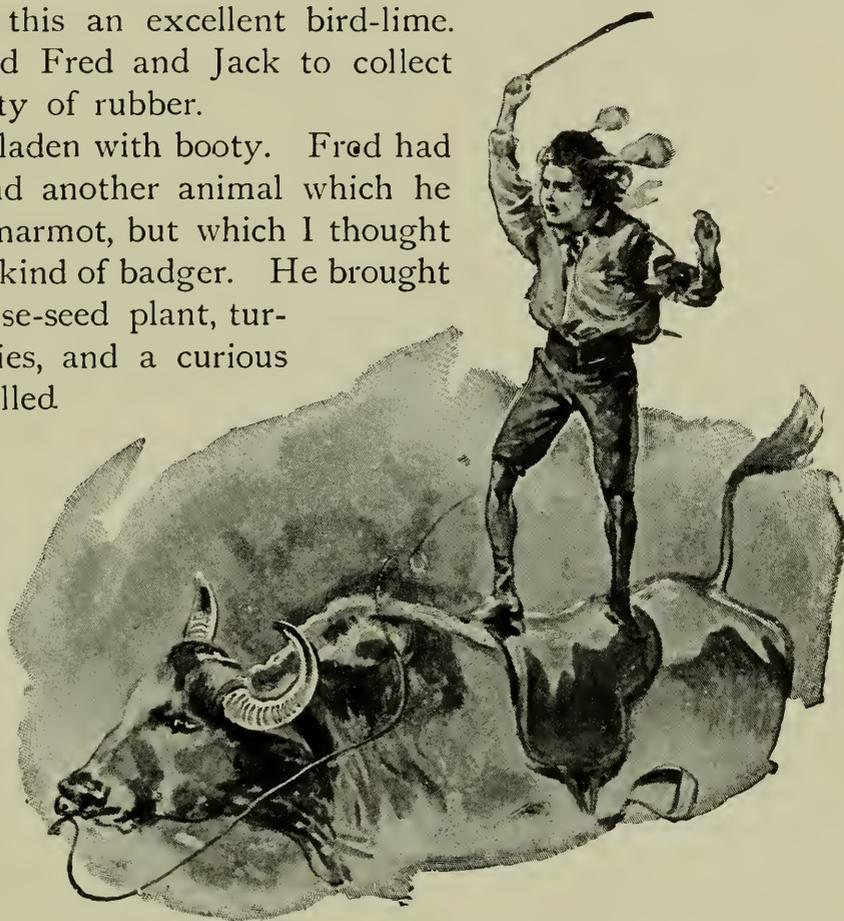
In order to save our powder, I thought of applying the methods of certain natives of the West Indies, who mix indiarubber with oil, and prepare from this an excellent bird-lime. I therefore deputed Fred and Jack to collect a sufficient quantity of rubber.

They returned laden with booty. Fred had caught a crane, and another animal which he supposed to be a marmot, but which I thought looked more like a kind of badger. He brought us, besides, an anise-seed plant, turpentine, wax berries, and a curious root, which he called monkey-root.

“Not far from Woodstead,” he said, “we came upon a tribe of monkeys who were very busy in a clearing. We slunk up to them, and saw that they were digging up roots. It was very funny to see them. When they could

not pull the roots out with their hands, they fastened their teeth into the plant and jerked themselves back ; this loosened the roots, and caused the monkeys to make a back somersault. They devoured them with great avidity. So we drove them away, and tasted the roots, and found them capital.”

I inspected these roots, which looked slightly withered, and decided them to be specimens of the much-prized Chinese ginseng, which is considered most strengthening and wholesome and a sort of universal remedy, for it is supposed to prolong life. The Emperor has the sole right of collecting it, and it is jealously guarded by sentinels. It also occurs in Tartary and Canada, and has been planted in Pennsylvania.



“In riding, Jack was . . . foremost.”

“After we had collected the roots,” Fred continued, “we went on till we got to Woodstead. But gracious! what a sad ruin we found! The poultry wild and frightened, the sheep and goats dispersed, and everything dirty and filthy. All this had been done by the monkeys. We now heard a great rustling and screaming in the distance, and, looking up, saw a flight of large birds of passage, who were so high up that they looked like sparrows. Presently they descended, and swooped down upon the lake, where they settled on the rice. We stole after them: but they had posted scouts, and on our approach took fright, and flew off before we could have a shot at them; but I could see they were fine cranes. Annoyed at losing them, I let off my eagle, and we got on our animals and rode after him. He pounced on one of the cranes, and came down with him so rapidly that the crane fell dead at my feet. Fortunately the eagle was all right, and he deserved the pigeon we gave him.”

We tried to roast the anise seed and the ginseng root, and found the latter so palatable that we declared it to be worthy of being planted in our neighbourhood.

CHAPTER XV.

MASSACRES AND DOMESTICITY.

“**T**O-DAY, my children,” I cried next morning as soon as day broke, “we must rise with the sun, for we have lots to do.”

We were soon at work. The boys were despatched to collect twigs, whilst I prepared the bird-lime by mixing over a slow fire a sufficient quantity of oil with indiarubber and adding some turpentine. I stirred the whole mass carefully, and thus produced an excellent bird-lime. This was painted over the twigs the boys had brought, and then I went off to select suitable spots for their erection. I became convinced that we had only come upon the stragglers last year, for the number of wood-pigeons which now descended was so great that even a blind man could have made a good bag. They seemed to have a particular partiality for the oak forest. Pleased with this discovery, I determined, in the event of our not catching enough birds with the lime, to make a torchlight descent upon them at night, after the manner of the Virginian settlers, for which purpose I got ready a quantity of resinous wood.

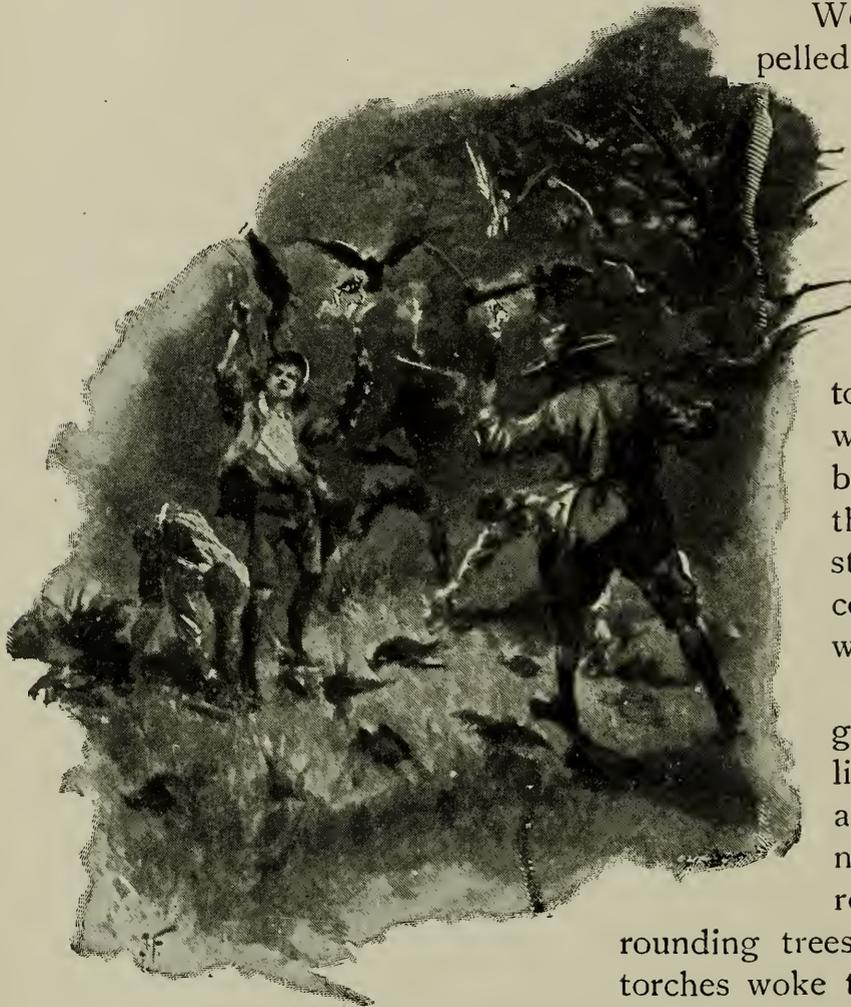
On my return, I made Jack plant the twigs upon the branches of the surrounding trees.

The boy had scarcely completed this work, and was coming down to fetch more twigs, when the pigeons, without the least suspicion, settled upon the dangerous perches. Every now and then one of these birds came fluttering and tumbling to our feet, sticking fast to a twig; and all we had to do was to secure the bird, and give the twig a fresh coating of lime, when it was again placed in position. Jack so thoroughly entered into the business that I was able to leave him to himself, while mother and Frank plucked away at the pigeons for dear life, and I prepared my torches by dipping the pieces of resinous wood in turpentine.

While I was thus engaged, Jack brought me an exceptionally beautiful pigeon, which he had not the heart to sacrifice.

“ I should think not, indeed ! ” said Ernest indignantly, and looking at it carefully : “ why, it is one of our own ! ”

So we freed the poor creature of lime, and put it away among our poultry. Later we caught a few more of our own European pigeons, of which we were able to collect five pairs, which we decided to keep. But we did not get anything like a sufficient quantity of wood-pigeons, who had been somewhat scared by our frequent climbs.



“ We lighted our torches, and discovered huge numbers of pigeons. ”

As soon as we got to the forest, we lighted our torches, and discovered huge numbers of pigeons roosting on the surrounding trees. The flare of our torches woke them up and dazzled them, and they began to hop aimlessly from branch to branch, frequently knocking their heads, and falling stunned to the ground, when they were quickly popped into our bags ; but by banging about the branches with our bamboos, we added considerably to the number. Mother and Frank had their work cut out to fill the bags.

Having caught enough, we retraced our steps before our torches had burnt out. We carried our booty in bags slung over bamboos, which we supported on our shoulders, so that we looked like a funeral procession of the dread Vehmgericht of old.

The best part of the following day was taken up with plucking, cooking and preserving the plunder.

We were therefore compelled to start that night for the oak forest and carry out my plan. We were quaintly armed—for each of us carried a long bamboo pole, a torch, and a bag, which puzzled the boys considerably ; they could not understand how a battue could be conducted with such weapons.

As soon as we got to the forest, we lighted our torches, and discovered huge numbers of pigeons roosting on the surrounding trees. The flare of our torches woke them up and dazzled them, and they began to hop aimlessly from branch to branch,

The day after we intended to fit out a primitive expedition against the monkeys. For this purpose I had the bird-lime rather strengthened, my intention being to save powder and shot, but to use serviceable cudgels instead.

We packed our outfit on the buffalo, and left mother and Frank at home under the protection of Turk, but took the other dogs with us.

Close to Woodstead we called a halt in a thicket, secured our dogs and beasts of burden, and pitched a tent. Then we proceeded to Woodstead to make our arrangements. I planted several posts loosely in the ground, and connected them with ropes. I then made a labyrinth, or maze, so that it would be difficult to get to the farm building without rubbing either against a post or a rope. These posts and ropes were covered with the lime I had prepared, and I also set several baits in the shape of cocoanut shells and gourds filled with rice, maize, and even palm wine: and these I also covered with lime—nor did I omit to anoint the trees.

All this took up an entire day. Early the next morning we heard noises in the distance, announcing the approach of the monkeys. We divided into two parties, armed ourselves with substantial cudgels, and stole cautiously, our dogs leashed, to Woodstead, where we lay in ambush.

The noise drew nearer and nearer, and very soon a swarm of monkeys was on the spot. Some were jumping from tree to tree, while others had already let themselves down and made straight for the building and the baits.

Fearlessly they broke through the ropes, pulled out the posts, and made their descent on Woodstead, climbing to the roof and breaking into the building.

Soon, however, they were seized with terror, for there was scarcely one of them to whom something did not stick—either a gourd, or a cocoanut, or a post. It was funny to see them squat down and, with ridiculous grimaces, try to get rid of these articles. Those who tried to help each other got stuck together and more and more entangled: some fell, tired out, to the ground; others wound themselves up hopelessly in the ropes; some had both hands glued to an article they had seized, and when another came up to rob him of his prey, he also got stuck. One monkey, who had emptied a cocoanut shell containing palm wine, had glued both his hands to his head, and looked most ridiculous. Those who managed to get away were caught by the twigs of the trees; some got stuck to thorny acacias, and were in a particularly woeful plight, getting badly scratched. Presently they

were seized with a panic, and tried to run ; but at this moment we let the dogs loose on them, and these made terrible execution, biting and killing right and left all those who were unable to get away into the trees. We now came up with our cudgels and finished the business. Presently the place had the appearance of a battle-field, and the horrible noises of the agonised monkeys were succeeded by a death-like stillness which filled us with awe. I found that about thirty or forty monkeys had been massacred. The boys looked very serious, and Fred said :

“ No, father, this is too horrible ! Do not let us do this again ! ”

“ It is indeed horrible,” I replied ; “ but let us hope it will be a warning to those who have escaped. Our pigeon battue was scarcely milder, but that did not seem to affect you to the same extent ! ”

It was no use wasting time in sentimental regrets ; so we cleaned the dogs, who were all sticky with lime, got rid of the monkey carcasses, burnt our cudgels, poles and other implements, and, having made the farm building tidy, collected our poultry and sheep and goats, and put them back.

While we were thus engaged we heard three falls to the ground, and found three magnificent birds, which had been caught by the lime which still remained on some of the twigs in the trees. They belonged to the pigeon family : one I took for a giant pigeon from the Moluccas—it had a nutmeg in its crop ; another for a Nicobar dove. I determined to take them home, make a handsome dovecote, and try to tame them.

On our arrival at Falconeyrie, mother was delighted with the splendid birds ; and so we loaded our cart with provisions and started for Tentbourne, where I intended to build the dovecote in a cleft in the rocks.

A part of the dovecote was excavated out of the rock, where the entrance was made, with three pigeon-holes besides. A few perches and a shutter were added, and finally a very creditable dovecote constructed.

“ And now,” I said to the boys, “ we will try on some of the tricks of pigeon fanciers ! All we have to do is to prepare a mess of anise seed, clay, lime and salt, of which pigeons are very fond : that will ensure their regular return, and the smell may attract others ; and so we will coat the doors of the dovecote with oil of anise seed, that some of it may adhere to the feathers of the birds.”

We pounded up some anise seed in a mortar, added a little oil, and strained the oil through linen. Next we kneaded a mess of lime, anise seed and salt, which we hardened a little at the fire, and

sprinkled with the oil. This was placed in the dovecote, and the pigeons very soon found their way to it. The rest of the oil was poured over fresh anise seed and stowed away in a cool corner, to be kept for a couple of days, so that the oil might get impregnated with the smell.

The pigeons grew quite tame, and showed no signs of fear when we looked into the dovecote, but kept pecking merrily away at their cake, and seemed quite used to us.

This went on for two days; but on the third I was impatient to try my experiment. So I got up very early, ascended to the dovecote, by means of the rope ladder, with Fred alone, not having awakened the others, and coated the dovecote with the fresh oil of anise seed. I then went and roused the others, as though I had only just got up myself, and told them my intention of letting the pigeons out that morning.

I instructed Jack to open the shutter. Very soon the pigeons ventured cautiously out, and looked into the world from which they had been shut out so long: they strutted about a little, hopped back into the dovecote, came out again, fluttered their wings, and then suddenly rose so rapidly into the air that we lost sight of them in a moment; but they soon returned, circling down upon their dovecote. Presently the three strangers rustled out again, and flew off impetuously towards the woods of Falconeyrie, until I was unable to keep them in sight even with my telescope.

“Goodbye!” said Jack, taking off his hat mockingly.

We spent the best part of that day watching for the return of the strangers, and confined our labours to the embellishment of the dovecote.

Towards evening we grew rather despondent, and next morning nobody cared to refer to the fugitives. We walked away inside the grotto, and were silent.

At noon Jack, who had gone out for a moment, came back, looking very excited, and crying:

“It is there! it is there!”

“What is there?” we all asked in chorus—“what? what?”

“The blue pigeon!” cried Jack. “Hurrah!”

“Bosh!” said Ernest. “I don’t believe it!”

Nevertheless we all rushed out to the dovecote; and, sure enough, there we saw with pleasure not only the blue pigeon, but its mate, cooing together on a perch. But the returned fugitive now flew down to the shutter, turned its head to its mate, and cooed its invitation, nodding at the same time. It then tripped into the dovecote, and tripped out again, and seemed to be so pressing in its invitation that

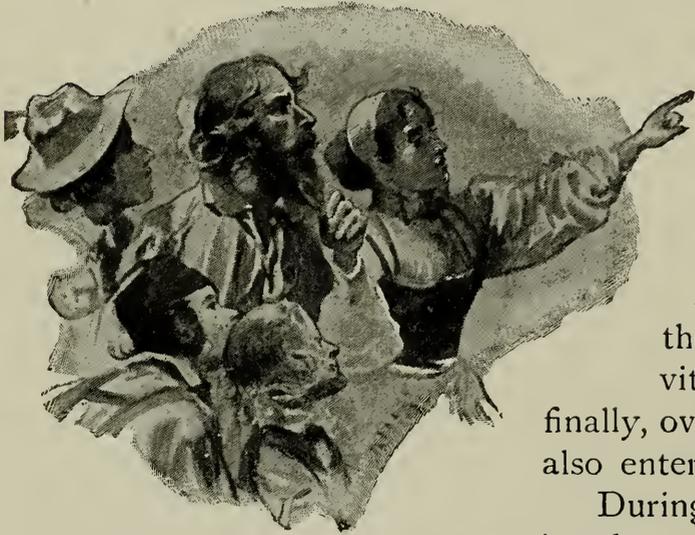
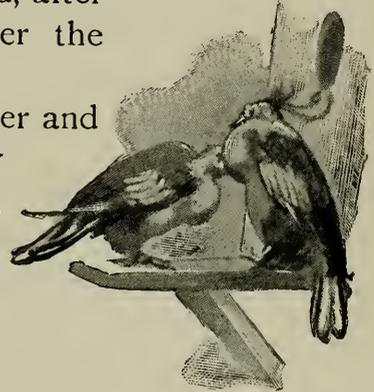
its mate timidly joined it, and at last followed it in, though with considerable hesitation.

The boys were for closing the shutter at once ; but I restrained them, saying they would only scare the timid bird. " Besides," I said, " there are two others to expect."

" They are coming !" cried Fred, looking up.

Indeed we could now discern our second fugitive, also accompanied by its mate. The boys set up a ringing cheer, which rather frightened the pigeons ; but they were too exhausted to turn back, as we could tell by the weak flapping of their wings. I therefore enjoined silence, and then these two also settled on perches, and, after some demur, the mate was induced to enter the dovecote.

We now returned to our work, while mother and Frank went to prepare supper. Presently Frank returned, as his mother's ambassador, and announced, with due solemnity, the arrival



"We ran out and found them on a perch."

of the Molucca dove and its mate.

We ran out and found them on a perch, while the other four pigeons invitingly nodded to them, and, finally, overcoming their shyness, they also entered.

During the evening and the following days we noticed with pleasure that the pigeons seemed to make themselves more and more at home. Soon they began to build nests ; and for this purpose brought home all kinds of fibre, among which I noticed a kind of grey moss, which I had before seen hanging like a gigantic beard from old trees. This I had taken for manilla hemp, which grows in the Philippine Islands, and with which mattresses are stuffed in the West Indies, while Spaniards make ropes and cords of it.

My discovery gave mother much pleasure, who immediately began to make all sorts of plans for the use of this remarkable material.

The pigeons also brought nutmegs, of which we stole a few and planted several.

About this time an accident occurred to Jack which interrupted the monotony of our work in the salt cave. One morning he returned from a secret expedition, which he had undertaken by himself, covered with black mud and a sort of green slime. He carried a bundle of Malacca canes, which were much in the same state as he, and he looked fagged and tearful.

We could not help laughing at his appearance, although mother looked rather solemn over the disgraceful condition of his clothes, an important piece of which he seemed to have left behind him.

"Where on earth have you been, you careless boy?" I asked

The others began to chaff him, when he replied:

"I have been to the precipice near our powder magazine and the duck pond."

"But what did you do there?"

"I wanted to get some canes to make baskets and wickerwork with."

"Well, that is all right. But how came they to be in such a state?"

"Why, the finest canes grew at some distance from the swamp—not on the banks: so I jumped from clump to clump to get to them; but as I got farther, I found the ground softer, until I sank up to my knees, and even deeper, and could not get out. I screamed, but nobody heard me."

"If we had heard you, Jack, you may be sure we should have come at once," said Fred.

"Well, Hunter is a brick! that is all I can say. He heard me, and came up and helped me, barking round about the swamp."

"That was a useful thing to do," said Ernest. "But why did not you swim?—such a champion swimmer as you, too!"

"It is very easy to talk. Just you try to swim with your legs sticking in the mud, and bamboos scratching your body! If it had not been for Hunter I do not know what I should have done; but he saved me. I cut down a lot of bamboos with my hatchet, and tried to put them under me, so as not to sink deeper, when I suddenly got the idea of catching hold of Hunter's tail and making him pull me out. I succeeded capitally."

"Well, old fellow," I said, "Hunter has proved a friend in need.



"I suddenly got the idea of catching hold of Hunter's tail."

But you also have shown pluck, and I am very pleased with you. A year ago you would not have shown so much presence of mind. Now be off and get clean."

After he had cleaned them I selected a couple of his canes of about the thickness of my finger, split them up, and then bound them together again to prevent them from getting warped: with these I proposed making a weaver's loom, which mother longed for, in order to turn the flax she had spun to use. I also cut a wooden frame for the carding comb, for which the boys made me a number of teeth. They wanted to know what these "toothpicks" were for, and as I did not wish to let the "cat out of the bag," but intended to prepare a surprise for mother, I told them they were going to form part of a Hottentot musical instrument, called "gom-gom," which would make them all kick up their heels.

We had at this time an agreeable addition to our family, which the old donkey presented to us. It was a very fine animal, and was unanimously voted to be my future steed. As it showed considerable nimbleness, we gave it the name of Rapid.

This circumstance made us think of forage for the winter, and we collected a good supply of hay, etc., in our cave. We had trained our cattle to assemble at the sound of a shot, or even in response to our shouts, by giving them salt or some other dainty on these occasions. The pigs were the most unruly, but our dogs used to bring them in whenever we wanted them.

My next problem was to get fresh water within easy reach of the cave, so that during the rainy season we might be spared the long journey to the Jackal Brook. We therefore set to work to make a conduit or water-pipe of hollow bamboo, which I laid for the present on forked pegs stuck in the ground: the ends of the bamboos I carefully fitted one into the other; but I did not lay my main underground for the present, as I doubted whether there was sufficient time, for I was expecting the rainy season to set in any day. A large tub was our reservoir, and a small barrel by its side received the overflow. Mother was as pleased as though we had made a marble fountain.

We now laid in a good stock of provisions, roots, vegetables, fruit of all kinds, potatoes, rice, guava, etc.; nor did we forget to sow our fields.

The difficulty was to find a sufficient number of receptacles wherein to store all these foodstuffs; so mother had to sew a dozen bags of sail-cloth, while we took our old catamaran to pieces for the sake of the tubs.

Gradually the weather began to break; heavy clouds gathered on the horizon, driven along by violent storms, and deluging us with

their passing showers. Sometimes thunderstorms would break upon us unexpectedly from the other side of the cliffs, and threatened to inundate us, driving us into our cave. The sea also became agitated, and roared and raged upon the beach. In short, everything denoted that the rainy season was upon us.

I had calculated its approach by our calendar, but found that it came a few days before it was due. The rain did not pour down on us every day, but the weather remained threatening and changeable.

Of our animals we only kept the cow, the donkey, Lightfoot and Storm in the cave for the present: the cow on account of its milk, the donkey on account of its foal, and Storm and Lightfoot for the sake of being able to despatch the boys to Falconeyrie whenever we wanted to; for there we had left all our other animals and a considerable portion of the poultry, as well as most of the forage. The dogs, the jackal, the monkey, and the eagle, we kept with us for company's sake.

Our grotto was now fairly comfortable, but much was still wanting. As yet the light was admitted from only three sides, and hence the cave was still rather gloomy; for the light was not well distributed, and was unable to overcome the darkness which seemed to be enthroned there.

For the present I thought to get over this difficulty with the aid of Jack's nimbleness. I dug a small hole in the centre of the cave, and fitted into it a tall, thick bamboo, which I had selected for the purpose, and the top of which nearly touched the vaulted dome of the cave. This I pinned up securely with pegs; and now I made Jack shin up, and with hammer and chisel make a hole in the rock, into which could be fitted a kind of pulley or wheel, over which a rope was passed. Jack now glided down comfortably on to the mattress which I had stretched out by way of precaution. We attached the ship's lantern to one end of the rope, and hoisted it up, having previously filled it with train oil. Thus we obtained a splendid light; for the lantern had four wicks, and their rays were reflected by the crystal walls of the grotto.

The preparation of the rooms took some days. To Ernest and Frank were confided our books, which they arranged on shelves; mother and Jack prepared the kitchen and sitting-room; Fred and myself fitted out the workshop, for which the most strength was required.

The captain's iron turning lathe, of exquisite workmanship and provided with a chest full of all necessary appliances, was placed in position, and the tools hung along the wall. In a small adjoining

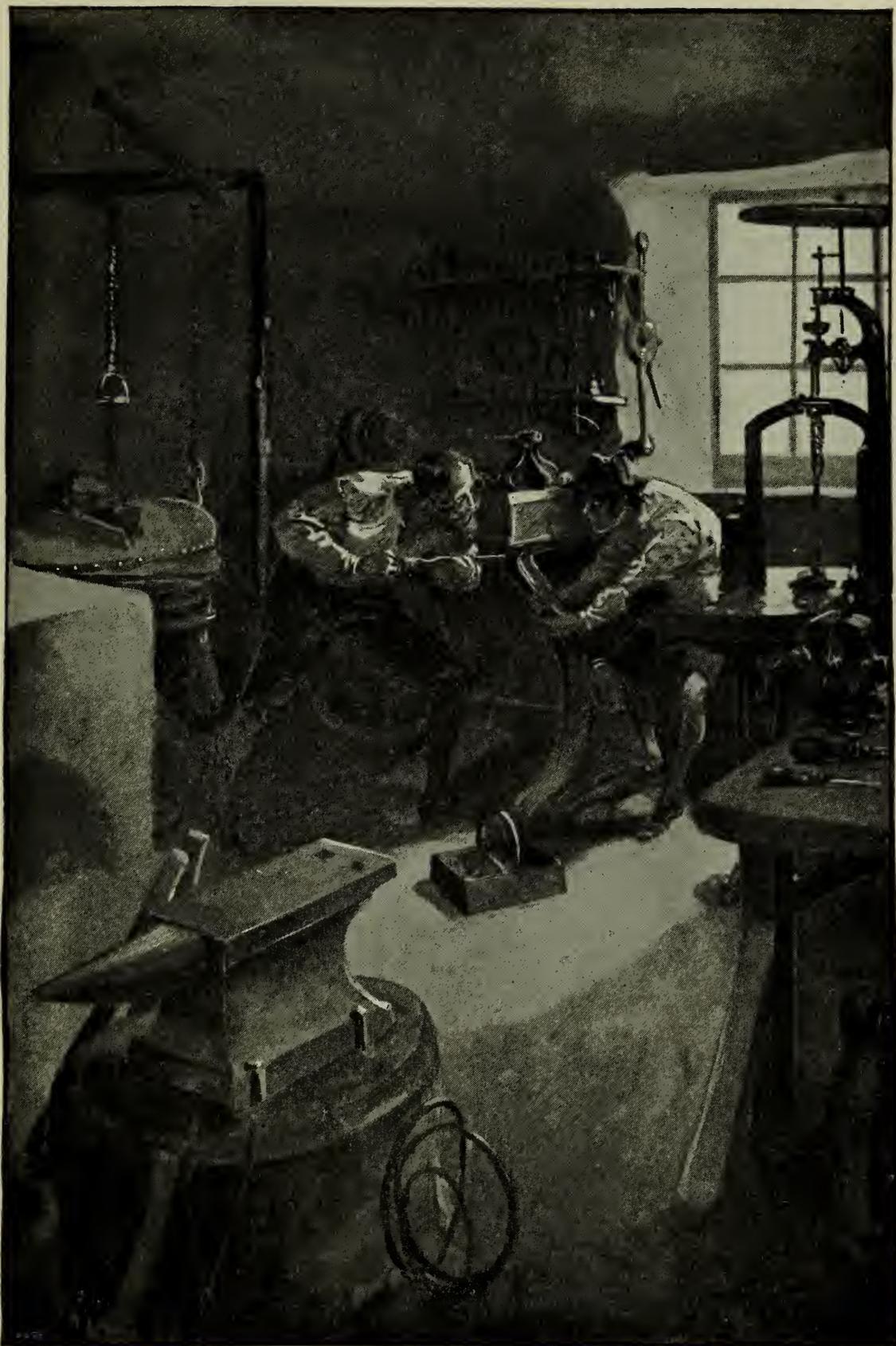
cavity we made a forge with stones and the anvil and bellows which I had saved from the wreck. We also constructed a carpenter's bench. As soon as we had made these general arrangements, we found countless details had been omitted: chests of drawers, ladders, shelves, benches, and tables, etc., besides screws and hooks, pegs and nails, bolts and door-handles, till at last it seemed as though the work increased in proportion as we seemed to get nearer completion, and we were quite astonished to find how many things were considered indispensable by Europeans. However, I did not confine my solicitude to indispensable articles; for I knew how important it was to keep my boys hard at work, so as to prevent them from becoming soft and flabby.

In front of the cave we made a verandah, or terrace, of the rubbish and boulders which had collected: this we covered in with a roof of bamboo, and it formed a sort of entrance hall to our palatial residence.

Ernest and Frank had fitted up a splendid library, composed partly of our own books, partly of those of the captain and officers of our ship. They were principally books of travel, well illustrated; and there were, besides, numerous charts, mathematical and astronomical instruments, a capital globe, and a good collection of dictionaries and grammars. From these I expected to derive especial benefit.

With French we were all fairly familiar. Fred and Ernest had learnt a little English during our short visit to England, and had made considerable progress with that language, which I had also done my best to master—for is it not the principal language of the seafaring world? At the Cape of Good Hope, where she had lived in a Dutch family, mother had picked up a good deal of Dutch. Jack wanted to learn Italian and Spanish: so I decreed that we should make a study of languages, each taking his speciality, so that if some strange vessel should discover us, we had a chance of conversing with the sailors, no matter from what country they came. German and French were, of course, common to all; English and Dutch were the languages allotted to mother and the two eldest boys; Ernest was to keep up his Latin—such a universal medium for books of science, of which we possessed a few. For myself I selected Malay as a language, which would be a useful one for me to learn, seeing the great probability there was of our being discovered by some natives of the Malay Archipelago.

Thus we formed a sort of small Babel—for we were constantly airing our linguistic accomplishments before each other. On



"FRED AND MYSELF FITTED OUT THE WORKSHOP."

Sundays we frequently read aloud to each other, and so we all picked up a general smattering of foreign languages.

At last we found time to unpack and investigate all the treasures stored in the chests we had brought away from the wreck. We discovered looking-glasses, chests of drawers, marble-topped chiffonniers, chairs of all sorts, two charming writing-tables, and a number of clocks, etc. In short, we found ourselves to be possessed of more wealth than we had thought. Of course there was much to mend, finish and polish, which helped to fill up the twelve weeks of the rainy season so well that I scarcely found time to do more besides than construct a yoke for our oxen, some cards for the cotton, and a cotton spinning wheel. But in revenge we were now established in a splendour befitting princes, and were not a little proud of our beautiful dwelling.

When all was finished, my people wanted to give our magnificent abode some high-sounding title. Although this name of Tentbourne was very dear to me, owing to its old associations, I nevertheless consented, and after much discussion we agreed to call our new residence Homecliff, retaining the old name for the district.

Towards the end of August, when I thought the rainy season was approaching its close, the weather seemed to grow more stormy than ever: Fearful tempests raged, with thunder and lightning, the sea ran mountains high, and we sincerely congratulated ourselves on our comfortable dwelling place, for at Falconeyrie we should certainly have been washed out.

At last, however, the storms abated, the sky cleared, and we ventured out.

We surveyed the scene, with its many evidences of the recklessness of the storm, and its promises of the future, with pleasurable surprise: when Fred's sharp eye discovered a new feature in the landscape. Among the small islets of Flamingo Bay lay a round, oblong object, which looked very much like the wreck of some vessel. I took my glass to look at it, but was unable to make it out.

We therefore determined to go and investigate it, especially as we had been cooped up so long. So we got out our canoe, baled it dry, pitched it carefully, and on the following day Fred, Ernest, Jack and myself started on an exploring expedition. As we drew nearer we made all kinds of suppositions; but I soon hit upon the idea that we had a stranded whale before us, which turned out to be correct. We were unable to land close to this leviathan, for it lay on a sandy shoal of the island, and the sea was still surging wildly round it; but we found a capital landing place on the other side of this little island. We ascertained that

the islet itself would repay cultivation; for the present it was the home of a quantity of sea birds, whose nests, eggs and young we saw in abundance, and, indeed, we took a few eggs with us as a present for mother.

The whale could be reached from two directions: one way led along the shore round the boulders; the other led straight over them, but was an arduous one to follow. I therefore sent the boys round by the easier and more circuitous route, whilst I selected the direct line, in order to make myself thoroughly acquainted with the islet. From the top of the rock I could see the entire island, which was devoid of trees, and the whale, which lay stretched in the sand before me at a distance of a few hundred yards.

For a moment I indulged myself in a contemp'tation of the beautiful scenery, and surveyed the coast from Homecliff to Falconeyrie. I then descended towards the boys, who greeted me joyously. They had already, with the flightiness of youth, forgotten all about the whale, and were intent on the shells, corals and crustaceans which they had picked up, and with which they had filled their hats.

"Oh, father!" they cried in chorus, "what beautiful snails, shells, and corals we have found! Where could they have come from?"

"They have probably been washed ashore by the storm, together with quantities of oysters and other marine animals from the bottom of the sea. The violence of the storm is proved by this monster here who has also fallen a victim to it."

"Yes, that is a terrific monster," said Fred. "I had no idea he was so big! What a pity we cannot get closer, to see what use we can make of him!"

"Oh!" Ernest replied, "there is not much to see. His oil may be of use to us, but he is not beautiful; these shells are much more interesting."

"Well, we will content ourselves with these little things for the present," I said; "but in the afternoon, when the sea has calmed down, we will return, and bring our tools with us, and see what is to be done with the whale."

The youngsters were all ready to come back at once, except Ernest, who prayed to be left behind, because he thought he would like to play at being Robinson Crusoe.

"You should be glad," I said, "that you are not cast by yourself on a desolate island, on which you would either die of starvation, or be torn to pieces by wild animals, or become like a wild beast yourself through solitude and hardships. Robinson Crusoe's experiences are very entertaining to read about, but would be anything but pleasant to experience. Man is a gregarious

animal, and solitude is bad for him. We ourselves form a sort of Robinson Crusoe family, and we have hardships enough. Come along, and don't be an ass!"

Ernest was thus persuaded to give up his dreams, and we returned home in our canoe.

"What is the use of corals?" asked Jack on the way.

"Formerly they used to be pulverised and taken as medicine. Besides, women used to have necklaces made of them: but these fashions have passed. When we get home we will look up our scientific books, and read all about them."

"They are as hard as rocks," said Fred; "but I think I can see little animals inside them."

"Quite right, my boy: corals belong to the animal kingdom."

I explained how the coral colonies and islands were formed, and told them all about the coral fisheries.

On our arrival the boys gave mother a detailed account of the expedition, and the somewhat useless shells and corals pleased her greatly. After dinner she begged to be allowed to accompany us, with Frank, to see to what use the island could be turned. I willingly agreed, on condition that she brought a sufficient supply of provisions with her, to guarantee us against any unforeseen accident. "For the sea," I said, "is a treacherous friend."

We prepared to start immediately after dinner. In order to get all the blubber we could, we had determined to use my old catamaran, with her tubs, which I had put together again—for I wanted to take as much oil as possible for the lantern, which I kept alight night and day.

Fully equipped, but proceeding very slowly, we rowed up to the whale, and as the ebb-tide had set in and the sea had grown very much calmer, we were able to land quite close to the monster. My first care was to place the canoe and tubs in safety, and then we gave our attention to the whale.

Mother and Frank were astonished at his size, for his length measured about sixty feet, and he was about twenty feet broad in the middle: roughly speaking, I should say his weight would have exceeded fifty thousand pounds. The size of the head was especially remarkable—about a third of the whole body; while the eyes did not seem much bigger than those of an ordinary bull. But the beard which garnished his jaws—composed of what is known as whalebone—was all the more enormous: this stood out in horny plates, partly covered with hair; and in the middle it was quite ten or twelve feet long, from the upper jaw downwards. The tongue also seemed extraordinarily big, and his jaws were terrible—in curious contrast

to which was the exceedingly narrow throat, scarcely large enough to admit of the passage of an arm. Fred remarked with astonishment that the animal did not seem intended to swallow large pieces of food at a time.

"In this," I said, "the whale resembles the larger land animals, except that the latter live on plants, whereas the whale feeds on little fishes, worms and insects: these the whale gulps in with quantities of water, which he expels through a couple of air-holes in his head, or through his beard. But I am surprised that you did not know all this before: you ought to have learnt it at school. And now to work, before it gets too late."



Fred and Jack, equipped with iron guards to their feet, climbed quickly over the tail and body of the animal up to his head, and cut, at my direction, the upper lip away. They now attacked the whalebones: I think I counted six hundred of these; but we only took away the longest and best—about a hundred in all. Mother and Frank carried these to the boat, and helped Ernest to cut pieces of blubber out of the whale's side with hatchets, and peel off the skin.

But we very soon found ourselves surrounded by uninvited spectators. Numbers of gulls and similar birds of prey swooped down upon us, and, confident in their numbers, took no notice of us, but began pecking away at the carcass of the whale. We had

to go for them with our axes, and killed several that way, mother collecting them for the sake of their feathers.

I myself attacked the skin, for I wanted to cut off some really good long pieces, which I hoped to tan with its own oil and make into leather harness and reins, as well as soles for our shoes. The skin was the thickness of about three quarters of an inch, but there was every reason to believe it would shrink when it got dry.

I would have gladly got some of the sinews of the tail of the animal, but our time was limited: besides, we had cargo enough as it was; but I cut off a piece of the tongue, which I had heard was the only part of the animal which a European could eat with satisfaction. And now, as evening was approaching and our craft well loaded up, we started on our homeward journey, much annoyed with our appearance, for our horrible occupation had left its traces on us. We reached home without adventure, and landed our tubs by the aid of the donkey and the cow.

Next morning we were off again in our canoe, only mother and Frank were this time left behind, for the task I had before me was too ghastly for them to witness: it was nothing less than the disembowelling of the monster, in order to get at the animal's guts, to make bags of. Notwithstanding the change of tide, the animal was still on the same spot; but the number of birds of prey had increased enormously, and they flew screeching round our heads.

This time we took off our clothes, and put on some old sailors' shirts which mother had found for us; then we cut open the whale's belly, and threw its insides into the sea to take off the attention of the birds. Such parts of the insides as I thought serviceable I cut up into strips of twelve and fifteen feet, and peeled off the skin. I then turned every piece inside out, so that the internal skin was revealed, and could also be peeled off; and thus only the middle, sinewy skin remained, which we wetted with sea water, and put away.

As a fitting sequel to this ghastly work I thought of getting the liver, which I knew contained large quantities of excellent oil. The tail was an easy prey, for the birds had prepared the way, and almost laid it bare.

Thus laden, we returned home late, but not before making a very hearty meal.

On our return journey the boys said:

"But, father, what put it into your head to get the insides and sinews? What is the use of them?"

"Necessity is the mother of invention, and in countries where there is neither wood for barrels, nor hemp for string, the natives

have been compelled to use whale-guts as a substitute for one and the sinews as a substitute for the other. The Greenlanders use the sinews to sew their clothes with, and the guts to keep the oil in, as we shall. The whale, like most mammals, has guts composed of three or four skins, of which the middle one is best suited to our purpose, being very strong and practically indestructible. Out of it all kinds of articles are prepared: strings for musical instruments, small balloons——”

“What! balloons?” the boys cried. “But not the big ones in which people go up in the air?”

“No; only toy balloons. The big ones are made of silk, and covered with a coating of indiarubber, so as to make them air tight. The gondola, or basket, is suspended from a net by silk cords; the balloon is then inflated with gas, which is lighter than atmospheric air, and thus it rises until it gets into layers of lighter air or until the gas escapes.”

“But how is this gas prepared?” Jack inquired.

I explained to them the composition of this gas, and then also told them how music strings were manufactured.

Mother awaited us on the beach with some anxiety; but the sight of our plunder quieted her, and we immediately proceeded to Homecliff, where we blew out the whale's guts, tied up the ends tight, and carried them off to be smoked.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DONKEY AND THE BOA.

“**L**OOK alive, my boys!” I cried on the following morning before the day had yet dawned. “To-day we will try our luck with the oil.”

We brought our leather bags out of the smoke chamber, and dragged up the four barrels containing the blubber on the sledge, and lifted them on to a trestle covered with boards: thus we were able to draw off the oil, which is usually the best, with ease. We then strained it through a coarse cloth, and ladled it into a leather bag. The remaining fat and the liver were cut up into small pieces, placed in a large boiler, taken some distance away from our dwelling on account of the repulsive smell, and boiled: thus we obtained a clear, pure oil, which I allowed to cool in the tubs, and then poured into the leather bags.

The refuse, together with the sea-gulls, which we did not like to eat, we threw into the Jackal, where our ducks and geese feasted on them; and the crawfish collected round them, so we had an opportunity of getting a good many of these succulent crustaceans.

While we were engaged in this oil industry, mother made the suggestion that we should make a settlement on the island, which would be safe from the depredations of monkeys, and where we could conduct all such unpleasant industries as the present for instance; for she thought that the gulls would keep away as soon as we established ourselves there.

This seemed a capital suggestion to me, and especially delighted the boys, who were for jumping into the canoe at once and starting work. But I reminded them of the putrid carcass of the whale, and advised them to wait until the waves, birds and insects had done their scavenging work.

In revenge I promised to take them for a trip to the Cape of

Disappointed Hope and to the colony at Highpeak, in order to see how things were looking there. We therefore made all necessary preparations, and went early to bed in order to be able to start all the earlier next morning.

We left Tentbourne in the best of spirits, mother taking the tongue of the whale, which she had salted and boiled, with her for food. We got into the current of the Jackal, and were soon in the calm sea, leaving Shark Island behind us ; and presently we could espy Highpeak, for my crew worked with a will. I steered within about a hundred yards of the coast, and the view was extremely picturesque, with the fig trees of Falconeyrie and the oak trees all in blossom. In the background we had unfolded to our gaze a plateau covered with luxuriant vegetation. The magnificent monotony of the ocean was interrupted by the green of Whale Island.

When we got near the Monkey or Cocoanut Forest I steered in shore, so as to collect a few cocoanuts. As we landed, we were greeted by cock-crowing and the cackle of hens ; they were our colonists from Woodstead.

Having loaded the boat with a sufficient quantity of cocoanuts, we rowed off to Highpeak, where we landed in a small cove where I knew there were some black mangroves. These trees flourish on the sea shore, and protect it against the action of the waves ; their bark, besides, yields an excellent tanning material. We selected several dozen of these shrubs, pulled them out by the roots, tied them into bundles, and then we ascended the steep side of Highpeak. Everything was found to be in perfect order. The sheep, goats and poultry were a little more shy than we had expected to find them ; but their numbers had increased considerably, and there were lambs, kids and chickens in great quantities. Milking the goats was out of the question. But the boys produced their bola slings, and speedily captured a couple of goats, whom they gave salt to eat, and proceeded to milk. Part of this milk, which was excellent, we consumed at dinner, and part we poured into a gourd to take home. We also caught a few chickens by throwing some grain to them, and these we determined to take home and roast.

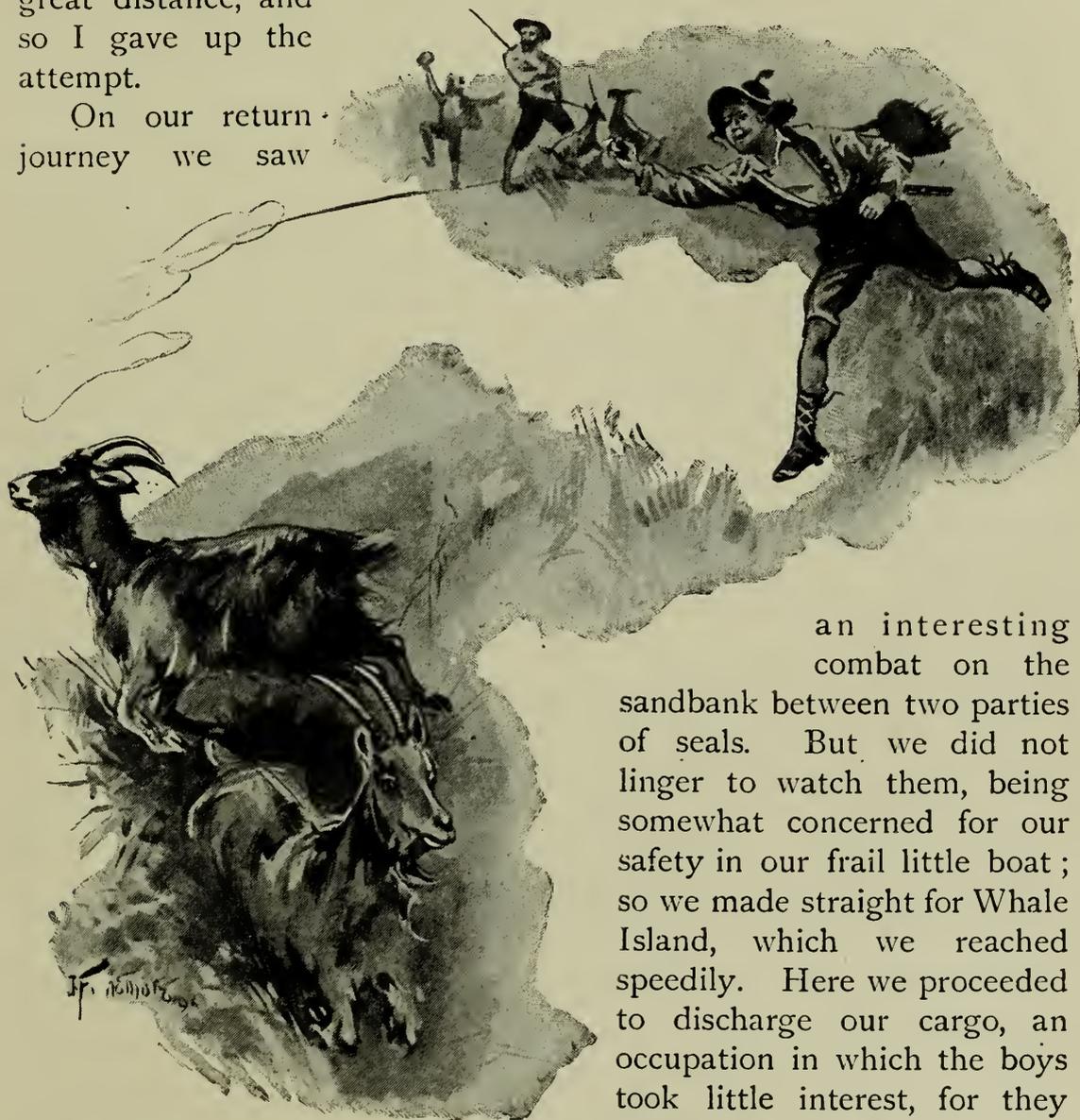
The whale tongue, of which our dinner principally consisted, was voted loathsome, and finally thrown to Hunter—Jack's jackal—who had accompanied us. We had to eat a few herrings to drive away the disgusting flavour, and then contented ourselves with cocoanuts and milk.

While mother packed away the remnants of the picnic, Fred and

I set out to get a few bundles of sugar-cane, which I thought of planting on Whale Island.

Thus well-laden with booty we re-embarked, and I now tried to sail round the Cape of Disappointed Hope in order to have a view of the coast beyond; but the Cape justified the name we had given it, for a long sandbank stretched out to a great distance, and so I gave up the attempt.

On our return journey we saw



an interesting combat on the sandbank between two parties of seals. But we did not linger to watch them, being somewhat concerned for our safety in our frail little boat; so we made straight for Whale Island, which we reached speedily. Here we proceeded to discharge our cargo, an occupation in which the boys took little interest, for they sidled off, one by one, until mother and I found ourselves left alone to do all the work.

"The boys produced their bola slings, and speedily captured a couple of goats."

But Jack soon reappeared, shouting with great excitement:

"Father, father! A mammoth! An enormous skeleton! Come and see!"

I laughed at him, and told him it must be the whale.

"No, father," he replied, "they are not fish bones. The whale

must have been washed out to sea again. This mammoth is much larger, and lies high and dry."

I shook my head incredulously; but nevertheless followed the boy, to convince him of his error, when I heard Fred calling me.

"Come, father, quick! Here is an enormous turtle, and we can't manage it. It is escaping into the sea."

This seemed to me to be a much more business-like call, and so off I went to join Fred, taking a couple of oars with me. I soon saw a really magnificent turtle making off to sea as fast as it could crawl, although Ernest had got hold of one of its legs. I quickly gave Fred an oar, and we jumped down to the beach and began using our oars as levers to throw the turtle on its back. This was no easy task, but we accomplished it. The animal turned out to be a giant turtle, about five feet long, and weighing probably some three or four hundredweight.

Having put the brute on its back, in which position it was helpless, we went to inspect Jack's "mammoth." But I discovered that it was only our whale, as I proved to him by showing him the footprints round it and the bits of whalebone still hanging to the jaws. The gulls had picked the bones so clean that not the least particle of flesh or skin remained.

"What on earth gave you the idea of calling it a mammoth?" I asked.

"It was not my idea at all. Ernest—our professor—suggested it," said Jack.

"And so you believe whatever you are told without investigation?" I asked.

"Not exactly. But there are mammoth fishes, and I thought this one had been washed ashore," Jack replied.

"Washed ashore!" I exclaimed. "No, my boy, your credulity is marvellous! You thought the skeleton of the whale had disappeared and that an enormous mammoth had taken its place! You are a flighty fellow! As a punishment you shall now tell me what you know about mammoths."

"If I am not mistaken they are fossils or bones lying in the ground, which are found chiefly in Siberia."

"Quite right, my boy," I replied: "that you knew. And although you are perfectly aware that we are not in Siberia at all, or in any northern locality, you are as ready with your mammoth as with a cocoanut. Well, well! But these fossils, out of which a kind of ivory is made, are indeed found in Asiatic Russia, in North America, and in parts of Europe even. In recent times a mammoth has been found in the Arctic Ocean with skin and hair,

covered partly in mud and partly in ice. The skin was of a brownish red, and the teeth like the tusks of an elephant. It is probable that this animal was the precursor of our elephants."

"But I did not think a whale had bones like this!" cried Jack.

"Nonsense!" I rejoined: "the whale is a mammal, and has regular bones like any land animal, with this difference, that as they are intended for swimming they are more porous or spongy; besides, they contain an oil which is lighter than water, and consequently reduces the weight of the whale in the water. Thus birds have also a peculiar formation of the bones: for these are mostly hollow, and contain air, which facilitates flight. The loose cellular tissue under their skin is for the same purpose, and the light air in the quills of their feathers takes the place of the air-bladders of fishes."

"But look at the splendid bones, father!" said Fred: "don't you think we could turn them to account?"

"Not as yet, my boy. We will let the waves and the air and the sun act on them a little longer, and then, perhaps, when they are sufficiently bleached, we may be able to saw some chairs or such like out of them," I answered.

We now returned to the work of planting the trees, but I foresaw that we should have to come back in a few days to look after them.

It was not before evening that I made preparations for our return, and went off to consider how best to get the turtle home.

"Bah!" I said, after some reflection: "the fellow can swim to Tentbourne by himself; he can row better than we."

So I emptied our water cask of water, bunged it up again, and slung a strong rope round it. One end of this rope I fastened to the canoe, and attached the other carefully to the head and fore feet of the turtle. We now turned the animal round again, and put it on its feet, whereon it immediately waddled off into the sea; but I quickly threw the tub after it, and jumped into the canoe with my family.

I stood ready with my axe to cut the rope at the least sign of danger, but the cask seemed to prevent the turtle from diving. It rowed itself rapidly towards the shore, towing us after it. The boys shouted with pleasure, and Ernest compared us to Neptune in his chariot drawn by dolphins. For trident I had seized a long boathook, and kept the turtle by its means in the right direction.

We landed satisfactorily at Tentbourne, and after we had liberated the turtle from the cask, we secured it by means of several strong ropes. But on the following morning we gave it its quietus for I was afraid of delaying execution lest it should escape; and

I wanted the shell, which was five feet by three, for a basin to our fountain. So we cleaned it out very carefully and dried it in the sun, while we salted the meat and preserved it for many a good future soup.

I had had the intention to get ready a field immediately after the rainy season to sow various kinds of grain in. But many unexpected occurrences had taken away my attention; and as my beasts were scarcely sufficiently accustomed to the yoke for the purpose, I postponed my agricultural operations to a later period, and gave my mind seriously to the construction of the long promised weaving-loom. I produced a sufficiently useful machine, though it was scarcely elegant, and had reason to be grateful that I had cultivated in my younger days the habit of observation, and had taken an interest in many industries. I still wanted the dressing for the threads; but in the absence of paste—for we did not like to waste our flour—I endeavoured to use fish glue as a substitute, after diluting it greatly, and found that it answered my purpose even better. Before that, I had tried to make a sort of window glass out of this glue, which would have been quite as transparent as the old-fashioned panes of horn, and, as the thickness of the rock protected it from the rain, it did very well.

The good results of my handiwork emboldened me to crown them by a work of still greater domestic utility. So in compliance with a request of the boys, I made them saddles and riding equipments; and as I had already constructed a couple of wooden cruppers besides the yokes, the work came easy. For this purpose I utilised the remaining seal skins to cover the saddles, and stuffed them with manilla. I plaited a couple of long tails of this material, wound them round staves, and dipped them in a preparation of water, train oil and ashes, so as to prevent them from getting too dry and brittle through the action of riding. This soapy solution answered my purpose perfectly, for it made the hemp, after drying, elastic and curly, exactly like horse hair. I not only stuffed the saddles, but also some pillows and yoke cushions, and mother did the sewing, showing the boys how this was done. I had yet to get ready a considerable number of belts and straps, girths, stirrup belts, bridles, etc.; and being very inexperienced, I was compelled to measure the animals as though I was their tailor.

Storm and Growler did not submit to the yoke easily, and I found it preferable to fit this badge of bondage to their heads and horns, for they seemed to toss, rather than pull; besides, I thought by this means I would have better control over them if they should show any disposition to bolt.

This business had been scarcely completed before we were again visited by a herring bank, as in the previous year, and these were again followed by seals, so that we had our work cut out.

All this time the boys had been begging me to take them on a hunting expedition inland; but before I would consent to this, I wanted to essay my skill at basket-making, for mother stood in great need of some convenient means of bringing home the various fruits and vegetables which grew around us in such abundance. So we collected a goodly number of willow twigs—for I did not like to waste the beautiful canes Jack had got on mere experiments—and after some failures we at last succeeded in producing a couple of very serviceable baskets for the carrying of our grain crops. As soon as they were completed, the boys put Frank into one of them, and then Jack and Ernest slung it on a bamboo pole and carried him about.

This gave Fred an idea, and he suggested that I should make a litter for mother, on which she could accompany us with much greater comfort than on the cart or the donkey.

But the question was how this litter should be carried, for the boys were scarcely strong enough. Jack proposed promoting Storm and Growler to the dignity of palanquin-bearers; and as they had been carefully trained, this was effected without difficulty, and the basket attached to their saddles, upon which Frank and Jack mounted, while Ernest was put into the basket between them. This proved a capital contrivance, and was as pleasant as a cee-spring carriage.

But the larky youngsters soon got tired of walking in slow procession, and whipped up their animals to a trot, at which Ernest pretended to be delighted, though his teeth chattered audibly as he was being shaken up and down in the basket. Presently the trot warmed into a canter, and then into a full gallop; and now Ernest yelled like a madman, for the basket was making impressions of its pattern all over his body, besides threatening to chuck him out at every fresh jolt. He clutched the sides convulsively and howled. But Jack and Frank did not slacken their speed until they had made the tour of Tentbourne and brought their animals to a halt in front of us.

Ernest now climbed out and exhausted his vocabulary of abuses, but he got little sympathy. Frank and Jack pretended that their beasts had got out of control; and as for myself, when I had sufficiently recovered from my laughter, I told Ernest to be ashamed of himself for being such a booby.

While mother and I were engaged on another basket, Fred suddenly jumped up, looked towards the avenue which we had planted from the Jackal to Falconeyrie, and cried: "What on earth

is that in the distance over there? It is moving towards us, and in a very curious way."

As all our animals were with us, I was at a loss to explain the phenomenon.

"It is a very curious thing," said Fred: "sometimes it looks like a large cable coiled on the ground, sometimes like a mast rising out of the dust; but whatever it is, it is coming nearer to us, and when it is coiled up it seems to move, but when it rises it seems to be still."

Mother was frightened at this description, and ran into our dwelling, whither I also sent the boys to get our guns. I fetched my telescope to see what it was, while I sent the smaller boys on to the gallery with their guns, but kept Fred by my side.

There could be no doubt that we had an enormous serpent in view. Fred was for fetching a couple of axes, and marching upon it with his gun. But I told him how difficult it was to kill these reptiles, and ordered him to go up to the gallery, which he did unwillingly.

The serpent had got too near to make it safe for me to draw up the bridge across the Jackal. It was making straight for us, and kept lifting its body about eight feet high, and looking round and projecting its tongue, as though it were reconnoitring and looking for prey.

I jumped up and joined the boys, who did not seem to be quite so anxious to meet the monster as they were before, but whose courage was revived on my approach. Armed with our guns, we stood ready to receive the enemy.

It had already crossed the bridge, and was once more looking curiously about it. At about a hundred yards from our cavern it stopped once more, when Ernest suddenly let fly. Jack and Frank followed suit, and even mother pulled her trigger. When the smoke had blown away, we looked out anxiously, and saw that the brute was not hurt, but was making off as fast as it could towards the swamp. Fred and I each sent a shot after it, but with no other result than to accelerate its speed, until it disappeared among the reeds of the swamp.

We gave a sigh of relief, and began to compare notes. We all agreed that the reptile was about thirty feet long and one foot thick, but each had received a different impression of its eyes and mouth.

Nevertheless I was considerably exercised at having this formidable creature for a neighbour, and strictly enjoined my family not to leave the grotto.

We kept indoors for three whole days, and might have begun to think that the monster had got away, for we saw no sign of it, if the behaviour of the ducks and geese had not indicated something



"ERNEST YELLED LIKE A MADMAN."

unusual. Every evening on their return from their expeditions out to sea, they circled round the swamp cautiously, and then, uttering piercing screams, flew off to Shark Island, where they remained.

Thus kept prisoners, we were getting desperate when our old donkey helped us out of our difficulty.

The last remaining forage had been consumed by our animals on the eve of the third day. I therefore resolved to drive them out to grass, not over the bridge, but higher up across the ford, where the serpent would be less likely to see them. We tied them therefore to each other, and thus in single file they were led out by Fred, who headed the procession on Lightfoot. Mother and the other boys were posted in the gallery, with orders to shoot on the serpent if it should appear and get within gunshot.

I took up a position on a cliff, from whence I could overlook the swamp, and could yet retreat to the cave in time if the serpent should go for me. Fred had orders to pelt to Falconeyrie in a like contingency.

But the three days' rest and the excellent food had made the donkey restive and playful, and before we could prevent it, our grey steed was off, and bolted straight for the swamp. Fred on Lightfoot tried to bring the long-eared one back; but in vain, and only demoralised the other cattle. A few kids followed the donkey, jumping skittishly. I stopped Fred in time, seized him by the arm, and shouted:

"Keep here!"

"Look, look!" cried Jack.

The reeds rustled; a cold shudder passed over us. The serpent stood erect like a pillar, its eyes gleaming, and its split tongue quivering in the air. The donkey and the kids stood rooted to the spot. The next moment the serpent shot down upon one of the kids, wound itself round it, and squeezed it. The poor little creature kicked about most lamentably, while the other kids ran away as fast as they could. The donkey tried to follow them, made a tremendous bound, somehow missed its footing, turned a back somersault in the air, landed in the swamp and sank.

"Oh!" cried Jack, "it is drowning, and we cannot save it!"

"Father," they all said under their breath, "let us go up and shoot the monster. Perhaps we can save the poor kid."

"It's no use," I said: "we cannot save the kid; but when the serpent is swallowing it, that will be the time to go up and shoot the monster."

"It is surely not going to swallow that kid whole?" said Jack.

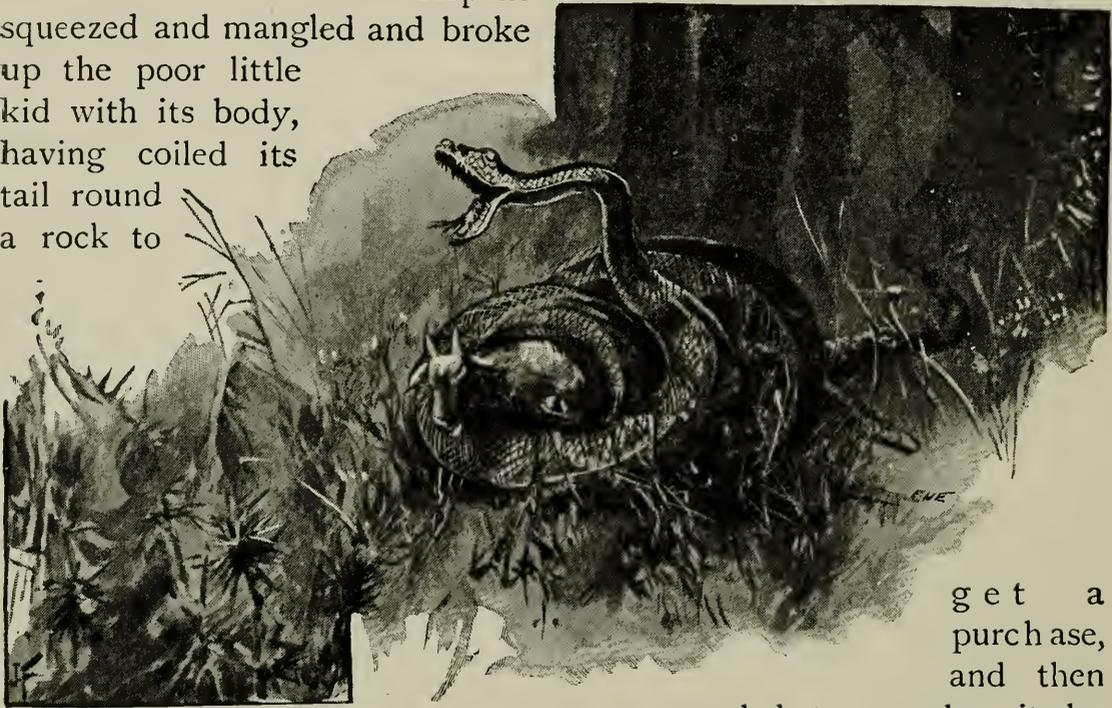
“As it has no teeth, only fangs, how else can it feed, except by devouring its prey whole?”

“But how,” asked Frank, “does it manage about the bones? Is it a venomous serpent, father?”

“No, it is not venomous, but it is very strong. You will see how it will swallow the kid.”

Fred at this moment said: “Look at it now! look how it is crushing up the poor little kid, so as to be able to swallow it afterwards! Oh, how horrible!”

Mother was so overcome by the spectacle that she ran back home, taking Frank with her. I confess that I would have liked to have followed her. The serpent squeezed and mangled and broke up the poor little kid with its body, having coiled its tail round a rock to



The death of the kid.

and suffocating the wretched kid. As soon as life was extinct, the serpent recommenced its mangling operations, until every bone in the kid's body had been broken.

The serpent then circled round the carcass, gloating over its victory, and proceeded to cover it with a loathsome slime which it poured out of its jaws. It then stretched out the carcass with some skilfulness, extended the hind legs backwards, pulled out the fore feet in a line with the head; then it uncoiled itself, and, laying itself out straight, it began to suck up the hoofs of the hind legs, then gradually the entire legs—and so it went on, giving extraordinary jerks, until it came to the middle, and here it had a struggle, but it finally succeeded in getting that down too. Presently nothing remained

get a
purchase,
and then

proceeded to smother it by
putting its head in its mouth

of the poor little kid, buried in a living grave, but its head, which stuck out at the serpent's mouth, and which, notwithstanding the volumes of slime emitted to make the carcass slip down easily, seemed to be too hard or too big to go down. This had lasted from seven in the morning until twelve.

I waited anxiously for the favourable moment when the serpent could be most safely attacked. Now the time had arrived.

"Forward, my boys!" I cried. "Now we can settle it; it cannot defend itself."

Quickly I emerged from my place of concealment and approached the loathsome glutton, my gun cocked. Fred followed, his gun also ready. Jack kept ten paces behind us, and showed some signs of funk, while Ernest prudently remained where he was.

When I got close to the monster, I myself was seized with fear. I thought I saw before me a specimen of the celebrated and dreaded boa constrictor. There it lay, an immovable log; but in contrast to its rigidity, the eyes gleamed and rolled all the more terribly, and the tail kept swaying about with a wavelike motion.

At a distance of about eighteen or twenty paces I gave the word, and Fred and I fired. The two balls entered its head and crushed it in. The eyes were extinguished; the front part lay rigid as before, but the tail end had been rolled up for the purpose of hitting out right and left. We fired off a couple of pistols to make sure, and the tail instantly extended tremulously, and the serpent lay stretched out like a beam. To show his prowess, Jack now approached quite close and fired a perfectly useless pistol shot, as we thought, into the animal's belly; but it suddenly lifted its tail, and gave Jack a whack which stretched him on the floor. The youngster immediately jumped up again, and faced his antagonist with a second pistol, but the serpent was dead.

With a shout of triumph we rushed to the spot, and mother ventured out of the grotto, saying:

"What a bloodthirsty war-whoop!—just like a lot of wild Indians!"

"Look at the powerful enemy we have slain!" I replied. "Is not this victory worth a cheer? If we had not laid him low we should have been compelled to fly."

"Now I can breathe freely," said Fred. "But we owe our deliverance to the folly of the donkey: it has been our Curtius."

"What shall we do with this disgusting thing?" asked Jack, pointing at the serpent's carcass.

"I vote we stuff it, and keep it as a memento," said Fred.

"Splendid!" cried Jack. "We will put it before our dwelling

with its jaws open, and it will frighten the savages when they come!"

"Thank you," said Fred; "and how about our cattle? They would run at the sight of it! No, that won't do! But I think its proper place is in our museum, with the corals and other curiosities."

"Couldn't we eat it?" Frank inquired wistfully. "It would keep us in meat for a fortnight."

"Anything else?" cried mother indignantly. "Fancy, eating poisonous vermin like that!"

"Well," I replied, "to begin with the boa is not poisonous; besides, the flesh of the most venomous serpents is good for food. The rattlesnake, for instance, is capital eating; and in Europe viper broth is considered in some cases most invigorating. Of course, the head and venomous fangs are thrown away. But poison does not harm the stomach, and savages do not hesitate to eat the flesh of animals killed with poisoned arrows. Of course, if a poisoned piece touches a sore spot on the gums or tongue, and the poison is thus introduced into the blood, disease or death would follow. But pigs eat venomous snakes without any bad consequences; and that reminds me of a story."

"Oh! tell us, father!" they all cried.

"In a lake in North America," I began, "there is a small island, which is avoided on account of the number of rattlesnakes it harbours. Once upon a time a vessel with a cargo of pigs was wrecked on it, and the sailors and pigs went on shore. Another vessel picked up the men, but as the pigs had distributed themselves in the island they could not be caught, and were left behind until their owners came to find them, and it was discovered that the pigs had grown very fat in the time and had completely denuded the island of rattlesnakes."

"Is it not possible that some other cause might have explained the disappearance of the rattlesnakes?" the philosophic Ernest suggested; "for instance, a sudden descent of a flight of secretary birds?"

I laughed at the idea.

"What is the secretary bird, father?" asked Frank. "Secretaries write, but birds can't write, can they?"

"They write in the sand with their feet," I rejoined. "No, seriously, the secretary bird derives its name from the feathers behind its head, which make it look as though it had put a pen behind its ear like a secretary."

"Why did you laugh at my suggestion?" Ernest asked.

“Because, like a great many other learned theories, it won't hold water. The secretary bird, or serpent hawk, lives in Africa, and chiefly at the Cape, and also in the Philippine Islands, but not in North America. Besides, it does not go about in flights, but leads a solitary life with its mate. But the best refutation of your theory is the fact that when the pigs came to be slaughtered remains of the rattlesnakes were found inside them.”

“How are venomous snakes distinguished, father?” was Fred's question.

“By their fangs, my boy, which they show whenever they are frightened or in danger. Generally they then shoot up into the air, and open their horrible jaws, showing two terrific fangs at each side, which are otherwise concealed in a kind of bag in the gums. The fangs are hollow, but so sharp and pointed that they could penetrate leather. At the bottom of each fang, close to the gums, there is a small receptacle containing poison, which is squeezed by the action of biting, and thus presses a drop of poison into the hollow fang, and this poison then oozes out through the fang into the bite. The poison is thus introduced into the blood of the victim, generally with fatal results. But venomous snakes have another characteristic: their heads are generally very broad and flat, and in the shape of a heart.”

“Which are the most venomous snakes in this part of the world?” the inquisitive boy continued.

“There are so many in hot countries, like Africa and America, that I am afraid I could not tell you all their names. But the most dreaded are the rattlesnake, and the hooded snake, or cobra di capello, which has a mark like a pair of spectacles on the back of its neck, and when it is angry the skin ruffles up in the shape of a hood or sail and gets inflated. But this snake is of a jovial sort, and is fond of dancing.”

“How can a serpent dance? It has no legs! You are joking, father!” Jack cried.

“Indeed I am not. The dance of the cobra is a gentle, undulating motion of the body to the time of wretched native music, it rears its body to two thirds of its length, spreading out its hood and bobbing its head. Snake charmers make a great mystery of their power over snakes: but it is said that the smell of certain herbs has a stupefying effect on these snakes, especially garlic; nevertheless, the general belief is that the charmers previously deprive them of their venomous fangs, although there are travellers who assert that they have seen the fangs in their heads while they were dancing.”

"I should not care about that job!" said Ernest. "Who are the snake dentists?"

"That is a very easy business," I explained. "All you want is a cloth, or a good strong rag: this is inserted into the snake's jaws; the fangs are seized, and come out of themselves with a slight jerk."

"Still, are not snake charmers looked upon as enchanters in some countries?" Ernest asked.

"My dear boy, people are always prone to ascribe to magic what they cannot explain. But even the snakes themselves are supposed to possess a charm: thus, the rattlesnake is said to be able to fascinate its prey by looking at it fixedly, and can thus prevent it from escaping; and there can be no doubt that this is so, though it is difficult to explain. The rattlesnake is a lazy creature, especially when it is most venomous—that is, when it is changing its skin; therefore, as it preys chiefly on rats, mice, squirrels, and such small fleet animals, this power of fascination may be a beneficent gift to keep it from starving altogether."

I then told them how the savages of South America artificially imitated the rattle, and succeeded by this means in catching squirrels and other game.

"But," asked Fred, "what is the best thing to do if you are bitten?"

"Well, the best thing to do is to immediately cut out the piece that has been injured; but that is a heroic remedy. Another remedy is to cauterise the wound with a few blank shots of gunpowder, or red-hot iron; salt and oil are also recommended; others advise getting the system full of alcohol, even at the risk of intoxication; then there is said to be a special herb which is believed to be a strong antidote."

This somewhat lengthy conversation was the result of a natural reaction after the long period of terror which we had experienced. But it was now time to think of getting rid of the carcass: so mother was despatched to prepare us something to eat, while Fred and Jack were sent to fetch our draught animals, with yokes and harness, and I remained with Frank and Ernest as a death watch, to prevent the carcass from being devoured by birds or beasts of prey.

Armed to the teeth there we sat, when presently Frank's eyes lighted on the traces of the poor donkey's hoofs, and he said pitifully:

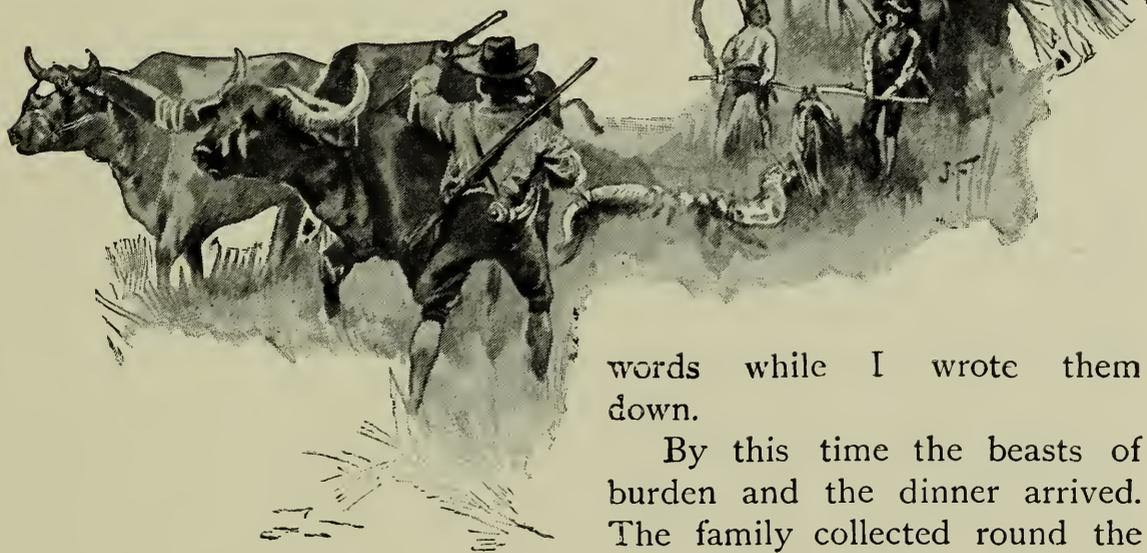
"We cannot even give the poor beast a decent burial."

"That is true, for it has buried itself in the swamp; yet we owe our lives to it. I say, Ernest, you are the poet of the family: write us an epitaph on the poor brute."

Ernest took the invitation quite seriously, and with trouble and pains hammered out the following doggerel:

“ Here lies the body of a hard-working ass,
Whose mournful death did come to pass
Through its wilful conduct, foolish and bad ;
Yet saved it the lives, by its end so sad,
Of parents two and of children four,
Who were cast away on this rocky shore.”

“ Well, you *are* a poet and a half ! ”
I cried. “ If you are as generous with
your money as you are careless about
your metre, you will come to
a bad end. But for the present
we will inscribe the epitaph
upon this rock ” ; and I took
out my red, carpenter’s pencil
and made Ernest repeat the



“ We then yoked our oxen . . . to the tail
of the boa.”

words while I wrote them
down.

By this time the beasts of
burden and the dinner arrived.
The family collected round the
improvised tombstone, and we
all burst into fits of laughter
over Ernest’s poetical effusion, in

which I was glad to see Ernest himself good-naturedly joining.

As soon as we had appeased our hunger we commenced work
on the serpent: and first we extricated the skull and remains of
the poor kid, which we threw into the swamp, covering them over
with a large stone; we then yoked our oxen as well as we could
to the tail of the boa, and dragged it up to Homecliff, carrying its
head in a sort of sling.

“ How shall we stuff it ? ” the boys asked.

“ Suppose you follow the example of the negro in the ‘ Voyages

of Captain Steadman,' who tied the serpent he had shot to the lofty branch of a tree, and, knife in hand, slid down its carcass, ripping open its skin as he went," I suggested.

This illustrious example was followed by Fred, who was the heaviest, and then the stuffing began. Jack bestrode the carcass, and did the disembowelling, and after the skin was properly cleaned and washed with salt, we filled it out with manilla hemp.

Jack looked very funny over his work, but it took us a day to sew the beast up again.

The next thing was to put it in position, and this required some artistic skill. We planted a strong post in a crosspiece, upon which the tail was laid out, and the body was coiled round the post to a height of about eight feet; from the top, the head was made to look down, the jaws open, as though in the act of hissing—an agreeable salutation for any intruder! We painted the tongue and jaws red with the juice of the Indian figs, and made the eyes of lime and fish glue. The stuffed serpent looked so true to nature that the dogs never passed it without growling, and avoided it, whilst the cattle always shied at it as it stood to dry in the sun. We placed the thing eventually in our museum, facing the door, over which we erected a large plaster tablet, with this carved inscription in red letters:

"NO DONKEY ENTERS HERE!"

with which mild pun we were immensely delighted.

CHAPTER XVII.

LOOKING OUT FOR SNAKES.

WE had happily escaped a great danger, but we were still concerned lest the monster had left any of its kind behind it in our neighbourhood. As it was a female, its mate might have joined it at night, or it might have deposited a young brood near us. So I determined to explore the country round about, and make an expedition through the swamp, and another to Falconeyrie, from which direction the brute had come ; the latter I determined to extend to the Causeway, through which alone it could have penetrated from inland.

Of course I explored the swamp first. But Jack and Ernest showed no great liking for the enterprise.

"I am seized with a shudder every time I think of the monster," Jack said.

Nevertheless I bade them take heart of grace, and said, "Steadiness and perseverance must be our rule."

We armed ourselves to the teeth, and provided ourselves, besides, with long bamboo poles, and several boards tied to seal bladders to serve as rafts in case of need. Assisted by these appliances, which we laid on the swampy ground, we traversed the swamp slowly.

Here and there we came upon unmistakable traces of the monster ; but we were pleased to find no signs of the young or the eggs of the beast. Even on the other side of the swamp, where it had remained longest, we found nothing but some grass pressed together and several crushed plants, which formed a sort of nest ; but a little farther on we discovered a good-sized grotto, out of which a beautifully clear brook gurgled forth.

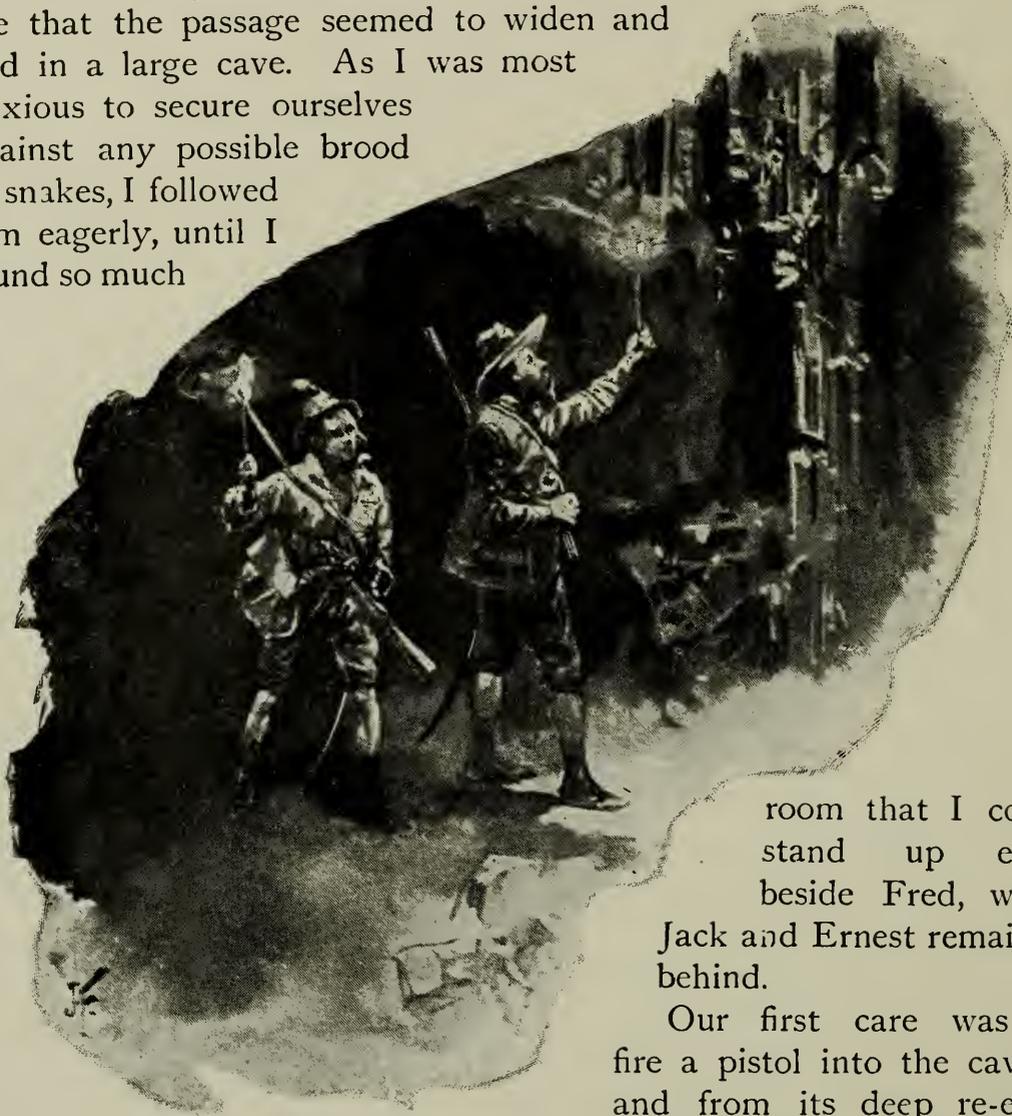
The roof of this cavern was hung with stalactites, some of which seemed to support it on splendid pillars. The ground was covered with a delicate snow-white soapy substance, which I identified as fuller's earth. I took some quantities of this as a sample to mother.

"This," I said, "is soap for our dirty clothes."

“ But is not soap a product of industry ? ” the boys asked.

“ Yes, ” I replied, “ but this earth is an excellent substitute. ”

We searched for the source of the spring, which emerged from a cleft in the rock several feet high ; and cleared the stones away, which we found so loose that we were able to penetrate some distance, until Fred crept into the opening and told me that the passage seemed to widen and end in a large cave. As I was most anxious to secure ourselves against any possible brood of snakes, I followed him eagerly, until I found so much



“ We went on with great caution. ”

room that I could stand up erect beside Fred, while Jack and Ernest remained behind.

Our first care was to fire a pistol into the cavity, and from its deep re-echo we ascertained the enormous extent of the cavity. We

immediately lighted a candle, with which our hunting wallets were furnished. I was more anxious to test the state of the air than the extent of the cavern, but as our candles burnt equably we were able to proceed without danger. Nevertheless, we went on with great caution, and looked about as far as the rays of our poor candles would let us, when Fred cried :

“ Father, this is another salt cave ! Look at the enormous blocks of salt ! ”

"That cannot be salt," I replied, "for the water runs past it without being clouded. No, I think we are in a cave of rock crystal."

"That would be capital! We should have found a great treasure!"

"Yes, indeed. But it will be of as much use to us as the lump of gold was to Robinson Crusoe."

"Well, I will at all events knock off a piece to take with us."

"Yes, but you should have been more careful, and then you would have got a brighter piece. All these beautiful masses of crystal are composed of six-cornered pillars, which run into six-cornered pyramids in different directions, and stand upon a solid crystal foundation. This is the mother; and you can discern a delicate texture, a sort of needles, which are to a certain extent the germs of the crystal. A piece of mother rock like this is called a druse, and supports a number of larger or smaller crystals. As soon as a piece of crystal is forcibly detached from this druse it suddenly grows dull and ceases to be transparent, which effect is probably produced by internal splitting."

"What should I do, then, to get a good piece of crystal?" asked Fred.

"It must be carefully dug out with the druse."

"Are these crystals discovered only by accident?"

"Formerly, yes; but to-day there are regular crystal mines."

"Is the origin of this crystal known?"

"The ancients supposed crystal to be a kind of ice. But to-day we know that it is composed of the purest silica, and congeals from a liquid state; and quartz, jasper and agate seem to form the best druses. Crystal is said to be found only in caves, and always with water, and is supposed to have been formed by continual dripping. The sudden opening of the cavern through earthquakes, for instance, allows the water to escape, and thus the pure crystals are left behind. At least similar crystals are formed of damp salt and saltpetre in glass receptacles. Probably crystals are formed on a large scale in a similar manner as precious stones on a small scale."

"How do you mean, on a small scale, father?"

"Just as crystals are found in large caverns, precious stones occur generally in single pieces of different stones, which are hollow inside, and washed out by rain storms, springs and brooks from rocks and cliffs. The richest are said to be those of India and Brazil. The mother stone is not always of the same kind, and in a crystallised hollow is found another indifferent looking stone of dirty appearance and irregular shape, which is cleaned and cut until it becomes beautiful and brilliant and acquires the desired shape."

“As precious stones resemble glass, why is it, father, that their origin is not ascribed to the action of fire?”

“Because a precious stone placed in the fire does not dissolve, but flies to pieces. But crystals betray their watery origin even more unmistakably.”

“But how is it, father, that precious stones have different colours?”

“These, I think, spring from the metallurgical solutions in the water. Thus copper will produce the blue sapphire; iron, the red ruby, the topaz, etc.”

“But how can these hard stones be fashioned into useful articles, father?”

“For this purpose diamond dust is used, and by dint of a lead disc and copper wheel it is made to act on the stones.”

While we were thus talking we continued our inspection of the cavern, and Fred was not satisfied until he had succeeded in detaching a druse with crystal pyramids, weighing altogether about ten pounds, for the museum. But our candles had burnt down to very small ends, so that I beat a hasty retreat. Before going, Fred fired another shot into the darkness, and thus ascertained that the cavern extended for yet a considerable distance.

As soon as we got into the open we found Jack crying and sobbing, but as soon as he saw us he rejoiced.

“What on earth is the matter with you?” I asked.

“Oh, I am so glad! so glad! to find you still living and well!” the poor boy cried. “Twice I heard the most horrible thunderings from the bowels of that rock, as though it were falling together. I thought you were sure to be crushed and buried.”

“Well, but what has happened to Ernest?”

“Oh! he is in the bamboo thicket, and probab'ly never heard the noise,” Jack replied.

While Fred showed off his crystals and told Jack all about them, I strolled slowly towards the swamp, on the borders of which I found Ernest. He had plaited a number of canes into funnel-shaped baskets, tapering downwards, with an opening at the bottom of not more than three inches. This funnel, he explained to me, was to be fitted into another larger basket with a closed bottom, and was intended for the capture of fishes, who, once in, would find it difficult to get out, owing to the spiky sharpness of the canes.

“I have, besides, shot a young boa,” he said proudly: “there it is, near my gun, covered with slime; it is about four feet long, and as thick as my wrist.”

I laughed as I examined it and found it to be a very fine eel,

which would make a succulent supper. When the two other boys came up and heard that Ernest had taken an eel for a boa constrictor and shot it, they burst into fits of laughter; but he was not in the least disconcerted, and said:

"Well, it was a very natural mistake; we were all on the look out for snakes."

"You are quite right, my boy," I replied. "Besides, an eel is a very respectable find, and in many respects resembles a serpent, for it can live out of the water. What I am most pleased at, my boy, is that you did not cut and run when you saw what you took to be a boa."

"I first thought of running," said honest Ernest, "but I reflected that the brute would overtake me and attack me from behind; so I turned round, fired, and there he is. But they are awfully tough customers: although I had shattered this fellow's head into little bits, he kept wriggling about for a long time afterwards."

I explained that eels, like frogs, have a highly organised nervous system which even survives them for a time.

Loaded with trophies we now retraced our steps, and found mother washing linen at the fountain; so that we were able to make an experiment with our fuller's earth at once, and obtained her high approval.

We now anticipated little danger from the direction of the swamp; but I determined on a second expedition towards the Causeway, which I made up my mind to fortify a little more securely. As this might possibly take up several weeks, and require all our united forces, we made ample preparations, and started fully equipped with all manner of utensils, implements and necessaries.

So we started one morning from Homecliff. Mother took her seat in the cart, to which Storm and Growler were yoked, while Jack and Frank rode them. The cow was leader, and Fred, mounted on Lightfoot, our outrider. I walked alongside the cow, and Ernest by the side of the cart. Our flanks were well covered by our four dogs, besides Hunter.

Woodstead was to be our first stage, and we came upon many traces of the boa on the way.

Passing Falconeyrie we liberated our flocks and fed them, and then we continued our journey to Woodstead, where we intended to spend the night in order to collect cotton and rice and explore the lake.

As we got farther from Falconeyrie we lost all trace of the boa constrictor; the monkeys also had completely disappeared. The crowing of the cocks and the bleating of the sheep at Woodstead alone animated the universal silence, and our little farm looked as neat and

pretty as though we had visited it only a few days ago and had put everything in order. At the first sound of our voices the goats and sheep and poultry came bounding and tripping up to us, and were promptly rewarded with grain and salt.

We made arrangements to spend the day in this pleasant spot ; and while mother was looking after the kitchen, we strolled off to collect cotton.

After dinner we went on a small exploring expedition, in which I selected Frank for my companion, to whom I for the first time entrusted a gun, showing him how to use it. Frank and I took the left side of the lake, while Fred and Jack started for the right, and Ernest remained with mother at the upper end to help her to collect the rice. Each party had a flying column of skirmishers with it in the shape of dogs : mother and Ernest kept Bill and Snip, the monkey ; Fred had Turk and Hunter ; and I, Tan and Brown. As we made our way through the brushwood, our dogs continually started heron and snipe, which, however, invariably made good their escape to the lake and beyond gunshot. The ducks and swans which we saw flitting over the surface of the water at a great distance were more tantalising still, and Frank was eager for a shot.

Suddenly we heard an ugly braying sound, like that of our old donkey, proceeding from the swamp and reeds on the border of the lake.

“Father!” cried Frank ; “that must be Rapid!”

“What nonsense!” I replied : “we left him far away. I think it is more likely to be a bittern.”

“Oh! I should like to shoot that!” said Frank. “But how can it make such a dreadful noise?”

“The bittern is a kind of heron, my boy,” I replied, “and has an oily flesh, so that it is not good eating. But it can roar splendidly, though more like an ox than a donkey—and is even called a water ox, or swamp ox, or even moss cow in some localities.”

“But how can a small bird make such a great noise?” Frank asked.

“Size has little to do with it : all depends upon the construction of the larynx—the upper part of the windpipe—and the lungs, and of the muscles of the throat and chest. Nightingales and canaries, for instance, have voices out of all proportion to their size. But bitterns are said to lower their beaks when they roar, which gives fulness to their voices.”

The boy had a great wish to shoot the bird ; so I set the dogs at the reeds, and Frank made ready and fired. He shouted with joy, and cried, “Hit ! hit !”

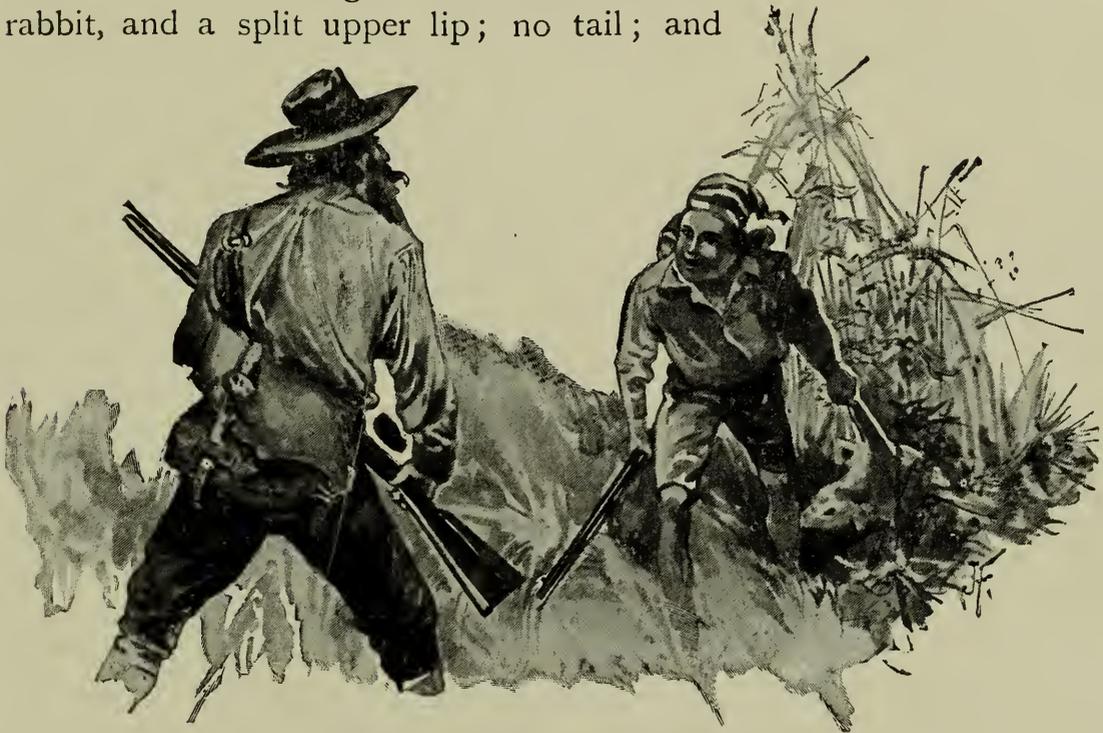
"What have you hit?" I shouted back at a distance.

"A wild boar," he replied, "only larger than the one Fred once shot."

"Ah!" I said, "you mean the agouti. I should not wonder if you have killed one of our own pigs."

I had now got up to the boy, and saw indeed an animal at his feet resembling a pig, brown in colour, and bristly, but recognised at once that it was not one of our European breed. The boy was beside himself with pleasure.

Upon a closer investigation the brute turned out to be about two and a half feet long, with incisors like a rabbit, and a split upper lip; no tail; and



"The boy was beside himself with pleasure."

fingers to its paws—the hind ones were webbed, from which I concluded that I had a capibara before me. So I told the boy that although it was not a wild boar, it was a much rarer animal—a water-pig of South America, belonging to the same class as the agouti and guinea-pigs. I drew his attention to its webbed feet, and told him that the animal swam well, ran slowly, sought its food at night, could keep long under water, and eat, sitting on its hind legs, all sorts of plants; that it was tractable, good eating, and brayed like a donkey: so that what I had taken to be a bittern had indeed turned out a capibara, and I complimented him on his quarry, which was worth a dozen bitterns.

He tried to lift it, but found it too heavy; so we disembowelled it, and threw the offal to the dogs. Even then the carcass

was too heavy, and Frank had to tie it on the back of one of the dogs.

We now retraced our steps, and soon got to the sweet pine forest, where we collected some of this delicious fruit, and then returned to Woodstead without having discovered the faintest trace of a boa or its brood. But we came upon a few monkeys; and I was sorry to find that these marauders had not forsaken the neighbourhood, and had only moved up a little higher towards Highpeak.

On our arrival at Woodstead we found Ernest engaged in the extermination of a number of rats. We asked him with surprise where he had collected so large a number, when he told us how mother and he had traversed the rice fields as well as they could and reaped as much rice as they could carry away.

"Here," he continued, "I suddenly came upon a small footpath leading to a promontory, which extended like a dam into the lake. Snip had faithfully followed us, carrying his basket on his back, and helped us to collect the rice. All at once he jumped away to the dam and clutched at something on the ground, which seemed to elude him and slip into a hole near the water. Snip chattered and gnashed his teeth viciously. I sprang to his side, and found—fancy! that he had caught hold of the tail of a great fat rat, which could not get away from him, for it was cornered in the hole. It would have turned on Snip and bitten him if it could. I seized it and hit at it till it died, though I did not relish the job. I poked my stick into the reeds, and found a fairly large vaulted structure like a baking-oven, which I managed to penetrate with some exercise of force. Immediately over a dozen rats popped out at me. I killed a few; the others escaped into the water. I inspected their dwelling-place, which resembled a cylindrical vault, and was made of mud, clay, straw and reeds. There were many such dwellings at each side of the dam, and I searched for the entrance to them. I made my bag fast over the opening, and poked at the vault with my stick. Innumerable quantities of animals rushed out, and some of them got into the bag. I killed a good many; but their screams roused the entire neighbourhood, and presently I was surrounded by rats, some of which ran, but others went for me and Snip, so that I shouted for help. Fortunately Bill came up, and made short work of them, till they took to the water. At last mother joined me, and we packed the wounded rats into my bag, wondering whether their skins would be of any use."

This story aroused my curiosity, and I made Ernest take me to the spot, and found a structure resembling the habitations of beavers, although much smaller. I turned to Ernest and said:

"I see my suspicion is confirmed: your opponents were beaver rats, or musk rats, who resemble the beaver in their mode of life. You see they are web-footed, and their tails are also like that of the beaver; besides, they also have two glands, in one of which an oil substance is secreted which smells of musk."

I thought the skins could be made into capital hats, and returned to Woodstead, where we met Fred and Jack, who had come back from their scouting without having discovered anything alarming. But Jack carried fourteen eggs covered in a sort of fur, and Fred had a black cock and hen.

We lost no time in skinning the rats, which were as large as rabbits. The skins were opened out by means of wooden stretchers, and carefully salted and covered with ashes; but the carcasses were buried, for they smelt so strongly of musk that even the dogs would not touch them.

Frank enjoyed his capibara by himself, for it had a strong, slimy flavour, and we found it uneatable.

At night the boys wanted to know the origin of the smell of musk. I explained that the musk was secreted in the glands, and that it was not uncommon for animals to possess this smell. Thus there were the musk deer, the civet cat, and the weasel; even the crocodile possessed the smell with which these animals were supposed to lure their prey.

"The Dutch," I continued, "make an industry of getting civet; they catch the animal at certain times of the year, rob it of its civet, and let it go in order to repeat the process later. Musk is much prized by some people, but it is of no use to us."

In the meantime we had finished supper, and Ernest was longing for something to take away the taste of Frank's capibara, when Jack and Fred produced a couple of cocoanuts and some sweet pines out of their hunting wallets, besides a kind of green apple.

"What are these?" I said, looking at the apples: "they look like pine-apples."

"Well, I have not tasted them," said Jack, "for Fred warned me not to until Snip had shown us an example."

I praised the boys for their caution; cut open the apples, and noticed that one half of each had a number of kernels in rows all round. Meantime Snip had slunk up unperceived and sneaked one half, which he proceeded to munch with great satisfaction. This settled the question, and the boys pitched into the remainder, leaving very little for mother and me. We all pronounced the apples excellent; and I declared them to be cinnamon apples, which are rather heating.

Presently the boys all became drowsy, and so we laid ourselves to rest in Woodstead.

Early next day we continued our journey across the sugar fields to the place where we had once before erected a kind of arbour: this we found to be still intact. But even among the sugar-cane we could find no traces of the boa.

So we sat down pleasantly to dinner, when we were suddenly interrupted by our dogs, who began to kick up a frightful row, and to rush about amongst the sugar-cane in a most extraordinary manner. We jumped out of the arbour, formed a circle, standing back to back, and were ready for the worst. In a few moments I saw a drove of small swine emerge from the thicket and run for dear life. At first I thought they were some of our own liberated pigs; but their numbers, their grey colour, and the remarkable order in which they continued their flight, convinced me that these could not be any of ours. I let fly my double-barrelled fowling-piece, and each shot did execution. But the death of two of their fellows did not distract their attention, or apparently confuse them; they ran one after the other in an orderly string.

Fred and Jack let fly beside me and laid low some more, but even this did not break the order of their flight. I thought we had probably lighted upon a troop of musk pigs; and I knew that if my supposition were true, it was most important to cut off the glandular bag in which the musk was secreted, otherwise they would become uneatable. So I ran up, with Fred and Jack, to perform this operation as well as I could.

Presently I heard two more shots, which I concluded had been fired by mother and Ernest; so I sent back Jack in support, and told him to bring me the cart as soon as he could for the carcasses.

We had killed eight of the animals and had piled them in a heap while waiting for the cart, which soon came in sight driven by Ernest, who told us that the whole drove of pigs had passed the arbour and made for the bamboo thicket, but that he, with the aid of Bill, had managed to bag three of them.

In order to lighten the load we disembowelled the animals; and I agreed with Ernest that they were peccaries, which abound in South America. The process took some time; but when at last completed, the carcasses were easily loaded on the cart, and we covered them up with leaves and proceeded with songs of triumph back to mother.

After a short meal we set to work to prepare the carcasses. We first burnt the bristles; then I cut off the hams, and separated the

other good parts from the rump. The ribs and head we threw to the dogs and the eagle. The meat was carefully washed, rubbed with salt, and placed in a bag, which was hung from a tree over a gourd, into which the salt water dripped: this was from time to time again poured over the meat, until the smoke chamber, which Fred and his two younger brothers were preparing, was got ready—though that was not before the evening of the next day, for Fred devoted the morning to the preparation of an Otaheiteian roast.

We all dug a deep ditch, and burnt reeds, grass and twigs in it, making a few stones red-hot in the process; while Fred prepared the pig, which was cleaned out, denuded of bristles, washed, and finally stuffed with pieces of meat, potatoes and spicy herbs, all chopped fine together. Hereupon it was sewn up, having been previously well salted, for I preferred the European custom of salting to the Otaheiteian one of eating the animal without salt.

The animal was wrapped in large pieces of bark. The ditch was cleared of ashes, and the carcass laid upon red-hot stones and covered with others, and finally the whole was covered up with earth.

While we left the roast to its fate, we continued the building of the smoke chamber, which was so commodious that we could suspend all the carcasses in it at once. A fire was now kindled with damp grass and fresh leaves, so that the chamber was soon filled with smoke. We kept this up until the meat was entirely smoked and dried, which took several days.

Fred's roast occupied less time. We dug it out of the Otaheiteian oven after a few hours, and found it in capital condition. A fragrant smell saluted our nostrils as we removed the stones.

I wondered over this, but explained it by the bark with which the roast had been enveloped. We quickly took the roast out of its covering, and found it excellent.

Fred was very triumphant over the happy result of his idea; and even mother became reconciled to this savage mode of cooking, as she scornfully called it. The roast was cut up, and the stuffing was found to be also very succulent.

The smoking continued three days, and was attended to by mother and the boys in rotation, while I made excursions in the neighbourhood. But nowhere could I find traces of the boa, although I always returned laden with booty. Thus I discovered in the bamboo thickets canes fifty and sixty feet long and stout in proportion, which we could easily make into barrels and pots by cutting them at the joints. Round them were strong thorns, like iron nails, which we also welcomed. The younger bamboo shoots had a sugar-like substance, which exuded from them, and which, when dried in

the sun, resembled saltpetre plants or natron. I also found some Ravensara, the oil of which makes an excellent spice, and which is found in Madagascar, the word meaning literally good leaves.

On a visit to Highpeak we unfortunately found, as at Woodstead, that the monkeys had worked sad havoc. Sheep and goats had dispersed, and the poultry were wild. The hut looked dirty and torn, and could not possibly be restored in one day, so I postponed this work for a future occasion.



"We spent the next few days in making a road."

We spent the next few days in making a road and preserving our game. We took only a few hams with us, and left the rest in the smoke chamber, which we protected as best we could from the depredations of birds, beasts and monkeys by covering it up with grass, so that it looked like a grave mound, which we endeavoured still further to protect with thorns.

At last, early one morning, we packed up our belongings and started cheerfully on our new road through the bamboo thicket to the Causeway.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SAVANNAH.

AFTER a two hours' march we arrived at our immediate destination, and called a halt on the borders of a small wood just at the entrance to the Causeway. It was a cool and sheltered spot, for the wood was flanked by rocks on one side and by the river, with Boarsford, on the other. Here we made arrangements to make a more or less lengthy sojourn. The actual pass or causeway into the unknown interior lay within gunshot, and in the little wood we were sufficiently hidden from view, although we were at an elevation which enabled us to command the country.

An expedition into the wood did not reveal any signs of danger beyond a couple of wild cats of the margay kind, which seemed to prey on birds and badgers, but bolted into the interior on our approach.

The heat of the middle of the day was so intense that we were quite unable to undertake anything, but laid ourselves down to rest. In the cool of the evening, however, we made preparations for our march in the early morning into the savannah, or grassy plateau beyond; and the next day I started with the three eldest boys, leaving mother and Frank behind with the cart, baggage and animals.

After an elaborate breakfast we four broke up, accompanied by our dogs. But first we inspected our old fortifications of the Causeway. Here we were confronted with unmistakable evidences that the boa, as well as the pigs, had penetrated into our settlement by this road: storm and flood, monkeys, buffaloes, and possibly even larger animals, had apparently co-operated in completely destroying our poor little works.

Indignantly we devised plans for the future guarding of the pass, but for the present did not carry them out, cautiously proceeding on our way instead.

We surveyed the landscape carefully, and saw to our left, beyond the stream, which we provisionally called the East River, a ridge of rocks as far as the eye could reach, covered with leafy trees and palms; and, on our right, bare rocks, mountains high, rising to the heavens, but receding before the savannah, which seemed to spread out indefinitely, while a misty background indistinctly revealed outlines of hills or clouds, it was impossible to say which.

We waded across the brook at Boarsford. The farther we pushed on the more desolate and inhospitable the country seemed to grow. Fortunately we had taken the precaution to fill our gourds with water; for as we proceeded we found all traces of moisture disappear, the grass grew poor, a few larger plants were withered, and only prickly vegetation seemed to flourish in the burning soil. Here and there a succulent ice plant relieved the general barrenness of the scene.

"This looked very different when we first visited it, father!" said Jack.

"You see, we have gone farther this time," I replied: "but the season has much to do with its appearance. I fancy that just after the tropical rains everything looks bright and luxuriant, but a long course of burning heat and a scorching sun withers it all up."

As we proceeded, groaning and panting in the heat, one of the boys cried out:

"This is Stony Arabia!"

We continued our journey for two hours, until we reached some overhanging rocks, and threw ourselves down to rest in their shade.

Silently we looked into the distance. Blue mountains of enormous height bounded the horizon, while the East River meandered along the tremendous stretch of country which intervened.

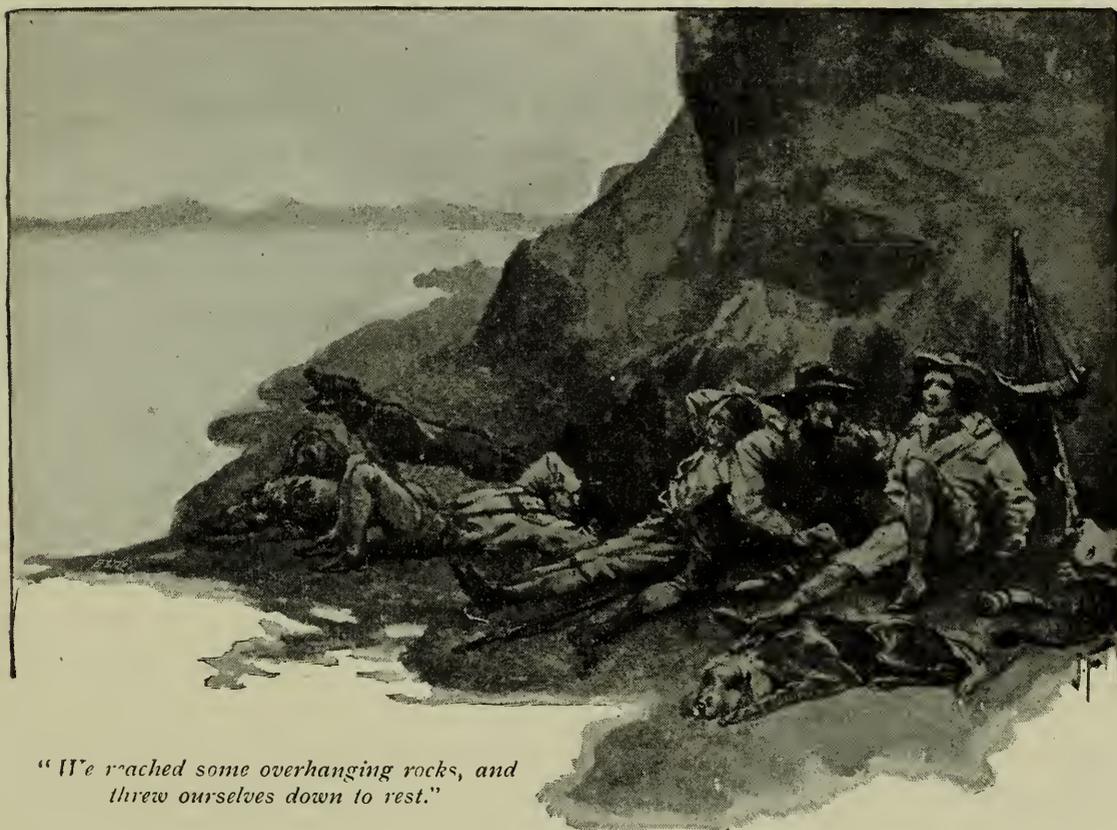
We had not been gazing very long before Snip began to sniff the air, making the most ridiculous grimaces, and then, with a hideous howl, scuttled up the cliffs behind us. All our dogs followed him, and we thought that he had scented some fresh dainty; but we were so worn out with heat and thirst that we did not feel equal to the task of climbing after them. Instead of that we got out our provisions and made a hearty meal. When we felt sufficiently refreshed to continue our journey, Fred suddenly jumped up and cried:

"What is that over there? Are those three horsemen coming along? Perhaps they are the Arabs of this desert. They are making straight for us!"

I took my glass and looked, yet the objects were so strange

and curious that I could not make out what they were. But as they drew nearer I ascertained that they were enormous ostriches. As they were approaching us it was necessary to make preparations for their reception. I therefore deputed Fred and Jack to bring back the dogs and the monkey, whilst Ernest and I sought refuge under cover of some adjoining shrubs; and now Bill came up to our aid.

According to custom I examined the shrubs carefully, and noticed amongst them, shooting out between the rocks, specimens of the euphorbia plant, so valued by chemists; the stalks were long,



"We reached some overhanging rocks, and threw ourselves down to rest."

octagonal and leafless, and exuded a corrosive fluid—a kind of gum which is a deadly poison in its natural state.

We were now joined by Fred and Jack, with their companions of the chase; they had taken advantage of the opportunity to bathe and refresh themselves.

Meanwhile the ostriches had come nearer; we could see them in their joyous security sporting with each other. There were four females and only one male, who could be easily distinguished by his white feathers. I promptly indicated him to the boys as the chief object of their aim.

"I fancy," I said, "that Fred and his eagle will be of most

use in this business; for no horse, galloping ever so hard, could possibly overtake these birds."

"But then how do the Arabs of the desert chase them?" Fred asked.

"Oh, on horseback, of course!" I replied, "but by stratagem only. They know that ostriches when pursued invariably run in a circle of about three hours' circumference. The Arabs, therefore, never ride behind them, but keep inside the circle, so as to describe a much smaller circle than the ostriches; and, if there are several Arabs giving chase, they station themselves at different points of this circle, and then give chase on their fresh horses until the bird is tired out and falls an easy prey."

"And then," said Ernest, "the bird buries its head in the sand, because it thinks it is not seen when it is itself unable to see."

"I fancy that is a pure invention," I replied: "the poor bird is hardly so stupid as that. Rather would I imagine that its object was to protect its head, which is its weakest part; or perhaps it assumes this attitude for the purpose of kicking. Even horses duck their heads when they kick. But as we have no horses, it is no use talking about stalking the birds. We must creep up to them unperceived, and try to lasso them with our bolas."

We separated and went off in different directions, using the cover of the rocks as well as we could. But the ostriches soon spotted us, and regarded us with some amazement. We immediately stood still, and kept our dogs as much behind us as possible. The ostriches, being reassured, made a few steps towards us, their necks stretched out, to inspect the unfamiliar objects. Unfortunately, at this moment our dogs got out of control, and went for the intrepid male, who was a little in advance of his companions. They were off at a bound, their wings extended like sails to catch the wind. The extraordinary rapidity of their flight gave us no time to waste in consultation, for in a moment they had nearly got out of sight.

But Fred was not behindhand with his eagle, who flew after them with remarkable swiftness, and pounced down on the male bird with such force that he nearly tore his neck to pieces and the bird collapsed hopelessly in the dust. The dogs were speedily on the spot, and the jackal was beginning to rip open the body of the ostrich, while the eagle was pecking at the head.

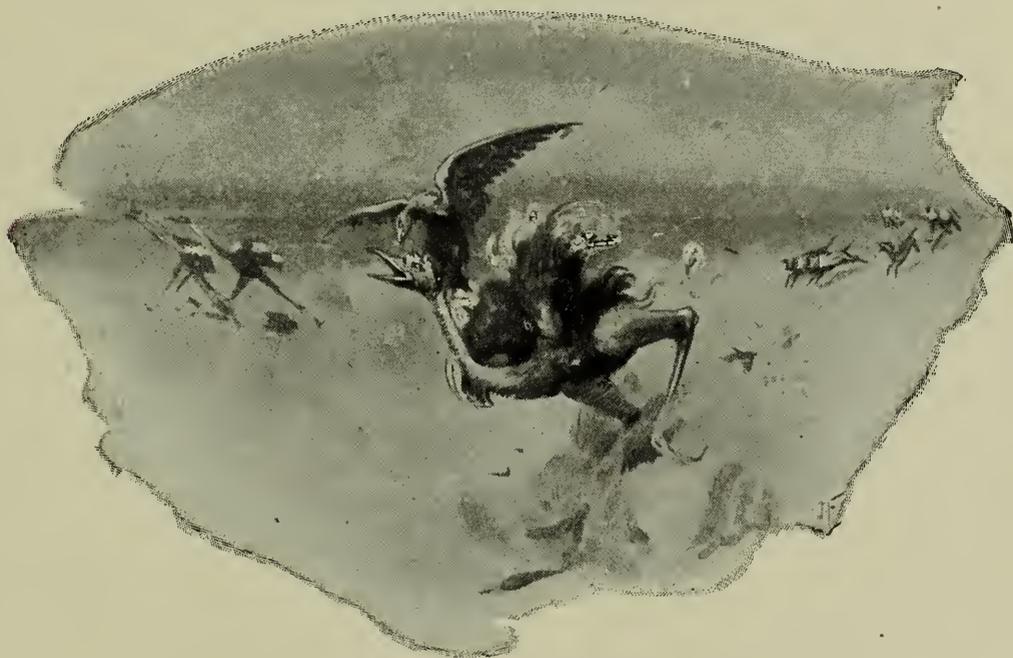
We were too late to save the bird. We pulled off the eagle and the jackal, and plucked the magnificent feathers, with which we decorated our hats, for they were as much an adornment as a source of coolness and shade.

"I am sorry for this splendid fellow!" said Fred; "for I am sure

he could have carried two of us without an effort. He is certainly five feet from his toes to his back, and his neck must be another three feet."

"But how can such enormous birds in great flocks find nourishment in these desert plains?" Ernest asked.

"Well, if the plains were really entirely bare, the ostriches would indeed find life dreary," I replied. "But then, you see, there are isolated spots where vegetation is found, such as date palms and seed-bearing plants. Besides, most of the animals of the desert are either able to keep a long time without food, or so swift of foot that they can rapidly cover the arid distances denuded of vegetation."



"The ostrich collapsed hopelessly in the dust."

"Why has it got these horny prickles in its wings?" asked Fred. "Does it really spur itself on while it is running, as some say?"

"Anything else?" I rejoined. "No, they are intended as a means of defence against enemies which the ostriches cannot manage to kick: for in this respect they resemble horses."

"Do ostriches make a noise? I did not hear any."

"They are supposed to wail and groan plaintively at night, and at other times to roar."

Jack and Ernest had not listened to this conversation, but had slipped off after the jackal. They were now standing near a withered bush, and beckoning us with their hats.

"An ostrich nest! an ostrich nest!" they shouted in great excitement.

We soon joined them, and found in a sort of hole in the ground.

and unprotected by any kind of thatchwork, a nest of about twenty-five or thirty eggs, each as big as a child's head.

"That is capital!" I cried. "But do not disturb or touch them. Perhaps the brood ostrich will return. How did you hit upon this discovery?"

"Well, father," Ernest replied, "I noticed that one of the ostriches seemed to jump out of the ground: as this seemed very strange, I noted the spot carefully, and wondered if the bird had been sitting on its eggs. That is why I took Hunter—for he has such a capital nose—and he led me straight to this nest. But what shall we do with the eggs?"

"Why, of course we will take them back with us," said Jack; "put them out in the sun, and let them hatch themselves."

"That is more easily said than done, my boy! I exclaimed. "Just calculate the weight of all these eggs: each weighs at least three pounds, I should say; that would make a total weight of ninety pounds. Who is going to carry all that? And how are you going to prevent their being broken? Besides, who is going to brood over them at night? You do not propose that we should hatch them ourselves, like the honest citizens of Lalenburg,* who discovered a mare's nest? It is much better to leave them as they are until to-morrow morning, and fetch a few of them with our cart or beasts of burden."

But this would not satisfy the boys, and so I had to let each of them carry an egg or two. However, they very soon got tired of their load, and so I made each boy pull out his pocket-handkerchief and carry the eggs as though in a sling: but even this became fatiguing; so we cut down a few thorns, and slung the handkerchiefs over them, and by placing the thorns on their shoulders, the boys were able to carry their load more conveniently. Nevertheless, and for all events, we erected a sort of cross of thorn sticks on the spot where the nest had been found, so that we might recognise it on our return.

We presently came upon a small swamp, in which our dogs had evidently refreshed themselves, as we could see by the traces they had left. It seemed to be fed by hidden springs, and formed a sort of pond at one end. All round we saw many new and old traces of antelopes and quaggas, but none of the boa. We camped near this pond, made a short meal, and filled our water-bottles with water.

While we were thus occupied, Hunter began to scratch in the sand, and presently pulled out of the ground a curious globular object,

* This refers to a comic German legend.

at which he gnawed. Jack immediately jumped up and took the thing from him to show me.

I first washed the misshapen object in the pond, for it was slimy and muddy; but what was my surprise to discover it to be alive, and indeed a small tortoise about half the size of a small apple.

"How can these animals get so far inland?" Fred cried.

"Perhaps it rained tortoises," said Ernest—"just as it rained frogs in ancient Rome."

"Why, Mr. Philosopher!" I said, laughing, "this is an ordinary land tortoise, which is found in swamps and fresh water: it is even put into gardens to eat up the weeds and vermin; in the hot weather it burrows in the ground sometimes two feet deep, just as the dormouse does in winter, and does not sally forth again until the rain softens the ground it is in."

We now resumed our march, and came into a smiling valley, dotted with beautiful woods, which formed a sharp contrast to the stony desert we had just traversed.

We called this Verdant Valley, and struck across it without feeling heat or fatigue. Here and there we espied in the distance troops of animals that looked like buffaloes and antelopes, and were peacefully grazing; but as soon as they caught sight of our dogs they stampeded off and were presently lost to view.

Imperceptibly this valley had led us to the left, until we reached a hill which we recognised with misgiving as the one on the other side of which we had halted for our mid-day meal. Although we had shot nothing all day, I nevertheless determined, for the sake of the eggs, to return to the Causeway, secretly hoping that we might come across some game yet; but as I had noticed that our dogs scared the game we sighted, I leashed them all, with the exception of Bill, who was quietly carrying Snip.

We had about half an hour's walk to the Jackal Cave, where we thought of halting and resting in its cooling shades. Ernest had preceded us, with Tan, in his eagerness to reach this cool spot. Soon we heard a cry of distress, loud barking, and a deep, vicious growl.

We ran up as fast as we could, when Ernest came to meet us, looking ghastly pale, and with his hat off.

"Oh, father!" he cried, "a bear, a bear! it is coming! it is after us!" and with these words the trembling boy clutched me nervously.

"Hulloa! then we must pull ourselves together!" I cried; and got my gun ready, and went to support the dogs, who had already bravely attacked the enemy.

To my no small dismay I saw before me an enormous bear, and presently another, coming out of the cave.

Fred aimed at the second with manly courage, while I covered the first. Jack, half afraid, followed my example at some little distance. But Ernest bolted in his panic. We fired and hit the bears, but did not kill them, for our aim had been spoiled by the dogs, who had got entangled and were pluckily fighting with them, and we did not want to hurt our brave companions, who were jumping about, dodging the formidable paws of the bears. Nevertheless, I had shattered the jaws of one, and Fred had disabled a paw of the other. The dogs were quick to seize their advantage, and bit their opponents unmercifully. But the bears made a stout defence, and fought now on their hind legs, now on their fore feet, now sitting, roaring terribly with pain and rage. I was afraid of risking another shot lest I might hit one of the dogs, and everything depended upon them; so I drew a pistol, went up to within a few paces of the most powerful of the two bears, and fired it at its head, while Fred shot the other—which was rising to go for me—in the heart.

“Thank God!” I cried, relieved, as I saw the two bruins fall groaning to the ground. “We have settled a difficult job.”

The dogs still worried their prostrate foes; and to make quite sure of them, I approached the bodies closely and plunged my knife into both, so that they might bleed to death.

Jack now gave a loud cheer and joined us, and even Ernest came slowly back. I asked the latter what had made him run on in front into the Bears’ Den, for so it was from henceforth to be called.

“Oh, father!” he replied, whimpering, “I only wanted to frighten Jack a bit: I meant to get inside and hide in it, and growl at him as he came along.”

“Then you were well punished,” said Jack.

“Let this be a warning to you,” I said, “that such practical jokes are out of place here.”

“I say, father!” Fred cried, “what splendid fellows these are! One of them is at least seven feet long, and the other not much smaller.”

“Yes,” I replied, “we have not come across any snakes, but we have prevented these fellows from giving us trouble.”

The boys now began to inspect the animals carefully; looked at their wounds, their strong teeth, their enormous claws. They admired the powerful build of their shoulders and neck, the strength of their limbs and the thickness and beauty of their silvery hair—in fact, the



"I DREW A PISTOL . . . AND FIRED IT AT ITS HEAD."

dark brown hair of their fur was silvery at the ends and almost brilliant.

“What shall we do with all this booty?” I asked the boys at last.

“We must take their coats off,” said Fred. “What splendid furs they have!”

But as we had to think of our return journey, it was impossible to waste time over such matters; so we dragged the bears back into their den, and covered them with leaves and branches, and constructed a kind of fence to protect them from jackals and other beasts of prey. We also left the ostrich eggs behind us, and buried them in the sand, so as to have less impedimenta on our march.

At sunset we arrived at the place where we had left mother and Frank; where we found nothing remained for us to do, for mother had provided for the watchfires at night, besides preparing a good supper.

Of course we recounted our adventures at length, and the bear business came first; and then mother told us what she had done in our absence. She and Frank had made a path through the underwood to the rocks, where she had found a layer of potter's clay; she had then laid a bamboo trough close to the rock to catch the water from a small spring, and had thus watered the cattle. Besides this, she had constructed a hearth with pieces of rock and some of the potter's clay in a cleft in the rock, and she had also brought up an entire load of bamboos, with the aid of the beasts of burden.

I was very grateful for all her work; and, making a ball of some of the potter's clay, I planted it on a stick and put it in the fire as an experiment, and then we all went to sleep.

A little before daybreak I roused the others, and then went to the watchfire to see what had happened to the clay. I found it hard, of a fine grain, and well glazed, but melted down too much: so that I concluded the clay was not sufficiently fireproof; but this defect I proposed to remedy without much trouble.

Immediately after breakfast our beasts were harnessed to the cart, and we started for Bears' Den.

Fred headed the procession, and as we approached our destination he called to us softly:

“Quick! come here if you want to see a whole flock of Calcutta cocks and hens. They have probably assembled to witness the funeral of the poor bruins. But there is an enormous fellow in front of the cave: he is evidently the undertaker.”

We went on and got a view of the “undertaker.” It was a big

bird, with a comb on its head and a sort of rag under its beak ; its bare, pale purple neck was surrounded at the chest with a white down collar ; its plumage was dark brown, with a few white spots, and its feet had powerful claws. This large bird held the entrance to the cave ; and although it popped in every now and then, it always immediately returned to drive back the fowls who followed it in.

We had not been long admiring this amusing spectacle when suddenly a loud rustling over our heads and the flutter of mighty wings startled us ; at the same time we were overshadowed as by a small cloud.

We looked up, but Fred had fired at the same moment, and a powerful bird fell upon the rocks of the cave, breaking its neck in the act.

We gave a cheer, and now made for the cave, Fred and the dogs leading the way. The birds took to their wings ; nothing remained but the monster whom Fred had slain and one of the supposed Calcutta fowl, which had been crushed by its unexpected fall.

Cautiously we entered the cave, and found, to our relief, that only the tongue and eyes of one of the bears had been demolished ; but if we had arrived a little later, they might have been completely devoured. We examined the two birds, and discovered that what we had mistaken for a Calcutta cock was in reality a species of kite ; and the large bird was a condor, whose wings measured quite ten feet.

The disembowelling of the bears was now proceeded with as quickly as possible, but I saw that it would occupy two days. At last I succeeded in skinning them. I then cut off their hams, separating the feet—for bears' feet are reported to be great delicacies, and I proposed eating them at once. The rest of the flesh was cut into long strips ; and when all was completed and well salted, we smoked it. But the fat we separated carefully, and recommended to mother, for I had heard that it made an excellent substitute for butter.

Both these animals, as well as the peccaries, yielded about a hundredweight of dripping, which we poured into a barrel and fastened down when it had cooled. The ribs and guts we threw to the birds of the air ; and these, aided by innumerable insects, picked the bones so clean that we were able to take the skulls, which had been picked bare and bleached by the sun, with us for our museum. The skins were kept in salt for a couple of days, washed clean, covered with ashes, and dried, after we had scraped them as clean as we could with our knives. In order to give the bears'

flesh a spicy flavour, I looked round for some fragrant herbs, and discovered to my delight a curious creeper which I recognised as the pepper plant, and which was particularly welcome at this time.

The boys collected a great number of berries, and had to separate the black from the red ; the former were soaked in salt water, the latter allowed to wither in the sun—and thus we presently had sufficient black and white pepper to last us for a considerable time. I also arranged for the transplanting of several specimens of this useful condiment.

All this, however, did not afford a satisfactory field for the energy of the boys during the long and tedious process of smoking the meat: even the bird-stuffing did not suffice for this purpose. So the boys began to get restless, and vented their superabundant vigour in useless chaff. I therefore decided to allow them to undertake an expedition into the savannah on their own account, for the purpose of bagging what they could and adding to our knowledge of the country.

This proposal was welcomed with delight by the three liveliest boys, while Ernest declared his intention to remain with us. As the expedition was to be in the nature of a holiday excursion, I did not interfere, but allowed each to follow his own bent. Frank, whom I would have wished to keep with his mother, implored me to be allowed to go, and I could not very well refuse.

The three boys jumped up, shouting and singing, and looked for their animals, which they soon caught and saddled.

I thought it a capital plan to give the boys a chance of acting for themselves. The sooner they got used to this, and the more independent they grew, the better. I might die at any moment, and then what would they do if they could not act without me? Besides, I felt that Fred could be trusted to look after the other two; and as they were all fairly well mounted, and took a couple of powerful dogs with them, I felt little uneasiness.

In their absence we found enough to do. Mother continued smoking the meat. Ernest endeavoured to make all sorts of utensils out of the shells of the ostrich eggs; and I found enough to occupy me in the cave, for I had there discovered a quantity of talc, through which ran long threads of asbestos. I detached a fairly large piece of this talc, and came upon a good substantial layer of mica. With some little trouble I succeeded in breaking off crystal-like, transparent tablets about two feet long, and found that these could be split up easily into plates of the thickness of ordinary mirrors. Even mother, who was not usually enthusiastic over new and doubtful discoveries, was delighted with this, and saw in her mind's eye a capital substitute

for window glass. Mother stewed for supper a couple of bear paws, and we awaited with impatience the arrival of our sportsmen.

But at last we heard the welcome sound of hoofs, and presently saw the youngsters approaching at a sharp trot. Like practised light cavalry they jumped off their steeds, picketed them, took off their saddles, allowed them to slake their thirst at the brook, and then joined us. They made a quaint picture. Each was loaded with live booty. Fred's bag was weighted down, and apparently contained

some lively customers, to judge by its behaviour; and Jack and Frank each carried a kid on his back.

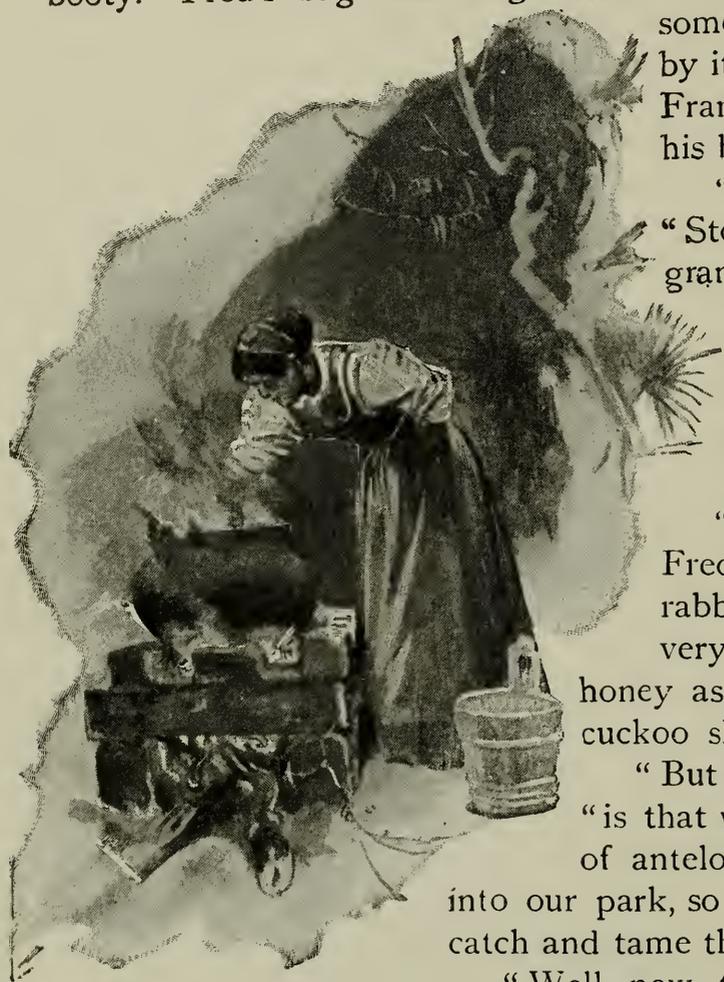
"Such sport!" cried Jack. "Storm and Growler had a grand time! Why, we even ran down these little jumpers until they were overcome with fatigue—and we were able to pick them up with our hands!"

"Yes," said Frank: "and Fred has a couple of angora rabbits in his bag; and we had very nearly brought you some honey as 'well, which an intelligent cuckoo showed us."

"But the best of all," said Fred, "is that we have driven a small herd of antelopes through the Causeway into our park, so that we can either hunt or catch and tame them."

"Well, now, tell us your adventures in due order, so that we can get a good idea of what actually occurred," I said.

"Here goes, then," said Fred, drawing a deep breath. "When we left you we started at a full trot for Verdant Valley, and found a defile, through which we got to the savannah. But before getting there we came across a barren rocky hill, and from the top of that we were able to get a view of the country, including the Causeway. Here we saw a couple of small flocks—either antelopes or gazelles—and we thought we would drive them through the Causeway into our domains, when we could catch them. So we started from three separate points, and gradually converged upon each other. The



"Mother stewed for supper a couple of bear paws."

animals seemed surprised and scared, and slowly retreated before us. To prevent their escaping us—for they began pricking their ears and jumping about most restlessly—we let our dogs loose on them, and followed these on our steeds, shouting and hulloaing, and so we chased them through the Causeway. To prevent their getting back, I fastened a rope across the defile at a height of about four feet, and stuck the ostrich feathers from our hats on it, as well as some rags I carried for cleaning the guns and our game bags.”

“Capital!” I cried. “The wind will blow these feathers and bags about and frighten the deer by day, and at night no doubt the barking of the jackals will have the same effect. But what do you want to do with these rabbits? They multiply so fast, and are so voracious and destructive, that I am afraid we shall find them a great nuisance.”

“Oh, no, father!” he rejoined. “Why should we not land them on one of our desolate islands, where they can do what they like, and we could feed them on grass and acorns. Besides, we could plant a few potatoes and turnips and cabbages. Then, you know, their skins will be useful for our hat-making—for the musk rats are all very well, but shall we be always able to get more?”

“I see you have thought it all out very carefully,” I said, laughing. “Now tell me how you caught them.”

“We came across lots of them on our way back,” Fred replied; “but they were so timid, and bolted into their warrens so quickly when they caught sight of us, that I gave up all attempt to hunt them, but pulled out my eagle and let him loose on them. He took them by surprise, and frightened them so that I was able to pick up a couple with my hands and pack them away, while the eagle was feasting on one he had pounced upon.”

“May we tell, please, what we have done, now?” asked Jack, with evident impatience.

“Fire away, my boys!” I replied. “Tell me how you captured those pretty little creatures which you have there.”

“At a hand gallop, father,” said Jack proudly. “While Fred was trying to catch his rabbits, we rode on slowly, the dogs sniffing the ground. All at once they jumped into the bushes, and started some small animals, which we took to be hares. The hares went clean away, and we after them as hard as we could pelt, with the dogs leading. Presently the dogs—having made them double till they were tired—ran them down, and we jumped off and collared them before it was too late. To our surprise, what we thought were hares turned out to be young deer. We slung them over our shoulders, and soon got back to Fred, who was much surprised at our capture.”

"My boy," I said, "those are not deer, as you think, but a couple of dwarf antelopes. But what did you do to get your face so swollen? Did you run against a mosquito nest?"

"Not a bit of it: these are honourable wounds!" the boy replied. "As we were riding home quietly and comfortably, we suddenly saw a strange bird, who kept pace with us, and every now and then flew on in front, chattering and screaming, and then dropped down on the ground and waited till we came up, when he would again fly on in front. He either wanted to lead us somewhere or make fun of us. I



"I got on Storm and was off full speed."

thought he was making game of us, and so I said, 'Wait a bit, you old scoundrel—I will spoil that amusement for you!' So I made ready. But Fred laughed me out of firing, and said it would be better to follow the funny fellow, whom he took to be the honey cuckoo or honey guide; and very soon we found ourselves before a bees' nest built in the hard ground, into which the bees flew just as though it was an ordinary beehive. We made a halt, and held a council of war, but could not hit upon any satisfactory plan to get at the honey, till I suddenly jumped at the idea of burning them out; and so I threw a long string match into the hive. What a row they did kick up! I had no idea that such little creatures could make such a

frightful noise! But now they went for me, and I had to run for it. I got on Storm and was off full speed."

"And serve you right," I said. "Now go and ask mother to dress your wounds."

I meanwhile prepared a commodious basket in which to transport comfortably the animals which the boys had caught, and we decided to land them on Shark Island, where they would be safe from wild beasts. But what exercised my mind more than all was the remarkable behaviour of the honey guide. I wondered whether we were after all on inhabited land, and whether we might not at any moment expect an attack from the natives, or whether this strange bird behaved in a similar manner to all animals in order to get them to do the hard work for it.

In any case I determined to take every precaution, and not only to fortify the Causeway, but to erect a battery of guns on the rising ground on Shark Island, from whence I could sweep the coast, and also to make the bridge over the Jackal into a drawbridge or swingbridge.

As a fitting sequel to this remarkable day, I showed the boys my plates of mica, whereat they were inordinately delighted. Though perhaps what pleased the boys most was the supper, when mother produced the stewed bears' feet. At first the boys did not seem to relish the idea of eating of this dainty, but when they had once tasted it they were loud in its praises.

We thereupon lighted our watchfires, and laid ourselves to rest, sleeping most soundly.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE TAMING OF THE OSTRICH.

AT daybreak next morning we started on our return journey ; for our work was done, and the rainy season was drawing near. Nevertheless, I did not wish to lose some of the treasures I had collected—such as the ostrich eggs, for instance, and the euphorbia gum ; so I started with the boys into the savannah as early as possible to fetch these valuables.

Fred gave me Lightfoot to ride, while he mounted Rapid. We left Ernest with mother, and gave her for bodyguard Brown and Tan.

We followed Verdant Valley, but in the opposite direction. We were soon at Tortoise Marsh, where we replenished our water bottles ; and we then continued our way to Arab Barbican, as we playfully called the elevation from which we had surveyed the savannah, and from whence we had thought we had seen mounted Arabs.

Jack and Frank galloped in front, while Fred and I made a halt to collect the euphorbia gum which had coagulated on the stems that I had cut on the previous occasion. We got a large quantity of this stuff—for the shrubs were very juicy—and I packed it into the hollow of a piece of bamboo which I had brought with me for the purpose.

I explained to Fred that this plant was very poisonous, and used at the Cape of Good Hope for poisoning watercourses in order to get rid of wild beasts.

“ Then why do you collect such a quantity ? ” Fred asked me.

“ For the same purpose, and as a protection against the monkeys and other possible wild beasts. Besides, I fancy we could use the gum with advantage for your collection of stuffed animals, and against all kinds of noxious insects. It has also a medicinal value.”

As soon as we had completed this business we set off at a trot to join the other boys, who had boldly pushed on into the savannah.

We could just dimly see how they had arrived at the ostrich nest and were on the point of attacking it in rear, so as to drive any ostriches which they might find towards us.

Fred, who had made up his mind to catch the next ostrich he came across alive, had carefully wound up the beak of his eagle in cotton wool, so as to prevent him from doing deadly execution. I made him mount Lightfoot now, who was stronger and better able to carry him for a long distance than Rapid. Thus prepared we waited impatiently for "developments."

We were not kept in this attitude long, for we soon perceived living objects rising out of the bushes round the nest, and presently they came rushing towards us as though borne on the wind. We



"This eagle swooped down low enough to reach the head of our terrified quarry."

kept so quiet that I thought the birds hardly noticed us, and certainly seemed to fear us less than the dogs who were at their heels. The boys were pretty close upon them. We could soon distinguish a male, followed by three female birds, making straight for us. They were now within pistol shot of us, and I sent my bola lasso at the male; but as I was still unpractised in this kind of sport, I missed my aim, and instead of lassoing the bird's legs, as I had intended, I sent the bola spinning round the lower part of his neck, thereby, instead of stopping, only frightening him and making him go off all the quicker in another direction.

The females dispersed right and left, and we let them go; but we followed the male as best we could, while Jack and Frank came up

just at the right moment at the opposite side, so as to drive the ostrich towards Fred, who instantly liberated the eagle. The sight of this new foe, who circled over him, completely nonplussed the ostrich, and this gave us time to get up with him. The eagle now swooped down low enough to reach the head of our terrified quarry and to strike him. Jack was therefore able to get near enough to throw the bola round his legs with effect, and the ostrich fell to the ground. We gave a cheer, and rushed up in order to keep the eagle and the dogs from doing any damage and to prevent the ostrich from escaping.

For the ostrich was struggling so violently that we feared he might succeed in breaking the bola straps and getting away. While he was kicking on one side, he was beating the air with his wings on the other. It suddenly occurred to me to throw my jacket over the bird's head and secure it round his neck. This did the business; for as soon as the ostrich found himself unable to use his eyes, he allowed us to do with him whatever we pleased. We immediately carefully pinioned his legs, so that he was indeed able to get up and walk, but absolutely prevented from kicking or running. I then fastened a strong sealskin belt, with which I had provided myself, round his body, made two incisions in it, and forced his wings into them.

But Fred still doubted whether we should ever be able to tame this bird and turn it to a useful purpose.

"Don't you know," I replied, "how the Indians and Singalese tame elephants?"

"Yes," he answered: "they fasten the wild one by means of very strong straps to two tame ones, and pinion his trunk so as to prevent him from striking out with it; and if he is intractable, his two neighbours thrash him with their trunks, and the two Mahoots on the tame elephants tickle him behind the ears with their pointed steel hooks, and very soon make him quiet."

"Then we ought to have a couple of tame ostriches," said Jack, "to bring our prisoner to reason, for I do not think it would be much use to put him between Fred and me."

I laughed, and rejoined:

"Why not between Storm and Growler? They are powerful enough, and you and Frank can keep him in order with your whips."

This proposal was received with glee. So I attached another strong belt at each side of the one round the ostrich's body, and tied their ends to the horns of Storm and Growler, whom Jack and Frank mounted.

The next thing to do was to take off the bolas and the jacket. The ostrich remained for some time lying on the ground and looking wildly about him ; but suddenly he jumped up, and ran forward in a direction where no one seemed to bar his progress. But this jump brought him immediately to the ground again. Still he did not relax his efforts to get away ; nevertheless, his two tamers were too strong to be moved. He now tried to flutter his wings and kick : these efforts were also unavailing, and he stumbled and collapsed again. A few blows from the whips of the boys brought him once more to his feet, and now he tried to turn and run back : this attempt failed also. There was nothing left for it but to run along slowly, as well as the straps by which his legs were shackled would let him. His two companions galloped comfortably by his side. The cheers of the boys frightened him ; but by dint of frequent facing about to the right and to the left, and severe thrashing, the bird was tired out, and finally gave in and walked along at a decorous pace.

Meantime Fred and I went to the nest, which we easily found, owing to the sign we had put up. I had made preparations for the robbing of this nest, and had brought some bags and cotton wool with me for the transport of the eggs. We had got to within a few paces of the spot, when an ostrich suddenly rose and bolted, and we were so completely taken by surprise that we were quite unable to attempt to chase it. I welcomed this as a good sign and an indication that during our absence the work of brooding had been going on uninterruptedly. We therefore contented ourselves with taking only ten eggs with us, and left the rest in the hope that they might in time be properly hatched.

We took the greatest care in packing these precious eggs, slung them on our steeds and returned to the others, with whom we now commenced our homeward journey, keeping the ostrich well in front.

“What do you mean by bringing me a glutton like that?” mother exclaimed in dismay when we arrived. “What shall we feed him on? What shall we do with him?”

“I am going to establish a ‘post’ with him!” said Jack. “And if this coast is part of the mainland, I will get assistance from the nearest Asiatic, American, or African colony for you mounted on this express. Let us call him Whirlwind. I will let you have my bucephalus, Storm, now with pleasure, Ernest!”

“But, father!” cried Frank, almost weeping, “Jack talks as though the ostrich were his, although I helped in catching him also, and so did Fred with his eagle.”

“All right,” I said, “we will divide the bird honestly and fairly. I take the body, for my belt is wound round it ; Fred gets the head,

for that was what the eagle pounced upon ; Jack deserves the legs, for it was he who secured them with his bola ; and you, Frank, are entitled to the tail, by which you pulled it until it fell."

The boys laughed, and understood the absurdity of the proposition.

"Of course," I said, "Jack was wrong in appropriating the bird so officiously. But his rashness will procure not only a gift, but a burden, for we will confide to him the care and training of the bird."

It was much too late to think of returning to Homecliff, so we had to secure the ostrich for the night and release his companions. We tied him up between two trees, and we spent the rest of the day in packing up.

On the following morning we started early, but it took us some time and trouble before we got the ostrich under weigh. The only way of managing him was to cover his head with a cloth and tie it round his neck. We then attached him to the horns of Storm and Growler, and harnessed all three to the cart ; while the cow had to go tandem, and was mounted by Ernest. Mother sat in the cart ; I was on Lightfoot, and Fred on Rapid—and thus we proceeded, making a well-equipped caravan.

We halted at the Causeway, for the boys wanted to collect their ostrich feathers, and I wished to collect some potter's clay and some beans, which turned out to be vanilla ; they were about half a foot long and an inch broad. The little seeds, which lay embedded in a soft, sappy substance, emitted a delicious perfume. Here and there we saw yellow six-foiled flowers still hanging on the stalks.

Before pushing on I fortified the Causeway with a stockade of bamboos. The sandy ground showed no trace of a return of the antelopes, and we carefully wiped away all traces of our own caravan with leaves, so as to leave the ground clear for the imprints of the feet of any animals or savages who might have penetrated and concealed themselves between this and our next visit.

We now quickly went on our way in order to arrive at Woodstead before nightfall. At Sugarfields we took up our peccary hams, which we found well preserved.

Tired, and at a late hour, we arrived at Woodstead, where we unyoked our cattle and made fast the ostrich between two trees. After a cold supper we stretched ourselves upon our cotton mattresses and slept peacefully until the next morning.

At daybreak we saw with pleasure that our hens had hatched their chickens, some being surrounded with tame and others with wild ones. As mother wished to take the poultry back to Homecliff, we caught them and put them in the cart ; and now we started for

our grotto dwelling, as we were beginning to experience a kind of homesickness. We reached it before noon, and settled down with the determination to stay at home for some time to come.

The first thing mother did was to open all the windows and air the place thoroughly, and then the cleaning, dusting and brushing up began. The two youngest boys helped mother in this work, whilst the two others assisted me in unpacking.

The ostrich, who was refractory, was tied up between a couple of strong bamboo pillars under the gallery, where it was decided to keep him until he was quite tame, before which his training could not possibly be commenced.

We dipped the ostrich eggs in warm water, and those which seemed to contain life we placed in our oven, of which we made an incubator, after previously wrapping them in cotton wool. I kept the oven at the same temperature by dint of frequent observations with the thermometer.

The long-haired angora rabbits were combed out with mother's card and with pieces of shark-skin, until we had got off all the loose hair, which was not much. Hereupon the two little animals were taken off to Whale Island, where we set them free.

Shark Island was made the home of the dwarf antelopes. We would have preferred to have kept these pretty and funny little animals at Homecliff, if I had not been afraid that the dogs and the other animals might have worried them; and to have locked them up would have gone against the grain, especially as they might have sickened under restraint. So we set them at liberty in Shark Island, and erected a lair for them whither they could retire, and where we proposed bringing them food whenever we visited them.

Some tortoises which we had brought with us, and of which we had left a few at Woodstead, we placed in the duck swamp, for I did not like to let them loose amongst our corn, where they would do more harm than good.

Jack, who took them to the swamp, presently came back, and called to Fred to bring a couple of bamboo poles at once. I was afraid they were up to some mischief; but they soon returned, carrying one of Ernest's fish baskets on the pole. This contained a splendid eel. The other basket had been bitten to pieces, and probably had caught some wild animal which had managed to get away. But we consoled ourselves with the eel; and mother stewed half of it in leaves, and boiled the other in salt water, cut it up in small pieces, and preserved it in butter.

The pepper and vanilla we planted in front of the bamboo pillars which supported the gallery in front of Homecliff, in the hope of

their growing up to be trained along them. Now that we had pepper I enjoined mother to add a quantity of this wholesome spice to the rice and all the vegetables, because in hot climates it was known to aid digestion.

The bear and peccary hams were stored away, but the bear-skins were stretched out on the beach in the open sun, and kept in position with heavy stones.

The poultry were put into a hencoop of wickerwork, and were fed from day to day until the wild fowls had got accustomed to us. We kept them in the shade, but well in sight, so that Snip or Hunter should not make anatomical experiments upon them.

The condor and the kite we placed in the museum, reserving the labour of stuffing them for the rainy season. The talc, asbestos and mica were taken into our workshop. I intended to make non-combustible wicks of the asbestos for our lamps, smart window panes of the mica, and all sorts of utensils out of the porcelain.

The euphorbia gum I carefully wrapped in paper, which I labelled poison as a precaution against picking and stealing, and put away.

We hung the skins of the musk rats in a bundle under the roof of our gallery, for I did not wish to have the dwelling filled with their stench. In doing this I was following the example of sailors, who attach asafœtida to the masthead when they have to bring it home from India.

My agricultural projects had the first place in my mind; the second was occupied by the problems of training the ostrich, the treatment of the ostrich eggs, and the preparation of the bear-skins.

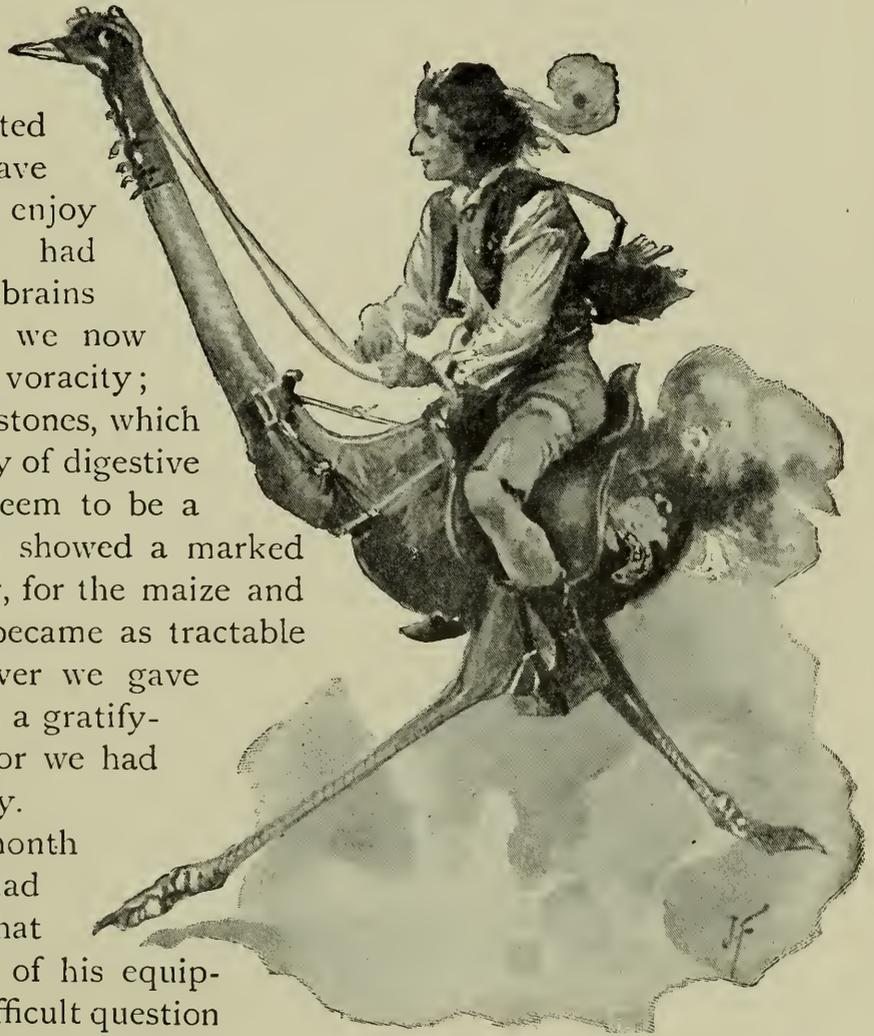
Agriculture did not please us at all, and we thoroughly understood how difficult it must have been for the ancient nomads and hunters of primitive times to become agriculturists: so we contented ourselves with bringing two acres under cultivation, which we sowed with various kinds of grain.

I laid out two plantations—one of potatoes, the other of manioc—on the other side of the Jackal, so as to have these useful vegetables within easy reach. Our oxen had got fairly used to the yoke since their expedition to the Causeway, and so we managed to plough pretty well, especially as the ground was so good that it wanted barely more than scratching.

Meanwhile our poor Whirlwind, as Jack insisted on calling him, had to go through many troubles. Each time he had a lesson he was well smoked with tobacco, like Fred's eagle, till he used to get so stupid and dizzy that he could scarcely stand, and allowed us to do what we liked with him. In this condition the boys would get on his back and bestride him, in order to accustom him to this manœuvre.

We had spread a comfortable bed of reeds and rushes under him, and his fetters were so easy that he could lie comfortably and even walk round the bamboc pillars. His food was also well taken care of; but for three days the poor fellow refused all nourishment, and grew so faint that we began to fear we should lose him. At last mother prepared some balls of chopped maize and butter, which we inserted into the bird's beak and gently pressed down his throat. After a few doses he livened up wonderfully, and his wildness and shyness seemed to disappear entirely: he became inquisitive and almost playful; tasted everything we gave him, and seemed to enjoy it. Whereas we had before racked our brains to make him eat, we now grew alarmed at his voracity; he even swallowed stones, which we gave him by way of digestive pills, and did not seem to be a bit the worse. He showed a marked preference, however, for the maize and sweet acorns, and became as tractable as possible whenever we gave him any. This was a gratifying circumstance, for we had an abundant supply.

In about a month Master Whirlwind had grown so tame that we began to think of his equipment. The most difficult question was how to make him a bit and bridle. As a bridle seemed almost an impossibility, I hit upon another device, and constructed a leather hood somewhat like that which Fred had for his eagle, with the exception that it covered more of the ostrich's neck, and had attached to it at the top a couple of brass rings. I cut out orifices for the ears and the eyes, and applied leather flaps over the peepholes, to which I sewed a couple of tortoise shells, with the concave part inwards, so that when the flaps were shut down the eyes should not be injured. Strings attached to these flaps were passed through the rings on the



"Jack was eminently suited to ride Whirlwind."

top of the hood ; and by means of whalebone these flaps were kept closed over the eyes, unless they were pulled and held open by the strings, which were made fast to leather straps, forming a sort of bridle. By pulling the right bridle, the tortoiseshell eye-covering was raised, and the ostrich went in the direction in which he could see ; by pulling the left, he went to the left ; by pulling both, he was made to go straight ; and by releasing them both, his eyes were closed, and the bird was brought to a standstill, for it was in total darkness. Of course this was a very clumsy arrangement, and it took us some time to get used to it, for its action was different from that of an ordinary bridle. The poor ostrich was often punished for our own mistakes.

The next thing was a saddle, for which also a special mode of construction was necessary. This was a very elaborate affair, with a big wooden crupper behind, and a comfortably padded wooden border in front. It was fastened to the bird by means of a complicated system of belts and straps, and was as safe a seat as one could wish.

But it took time and trouble to accustom Whirlwind to this equipment. He had, however, grown so tame that he gradually adapted himself to his new *rôle* of express, in which he was to do us such noble service as to deserve fully the ambitious name which had been bestowed upon him. He was able to cover the distance between Homecliff and Falconeyrie in a third of the time it took a man to run there.

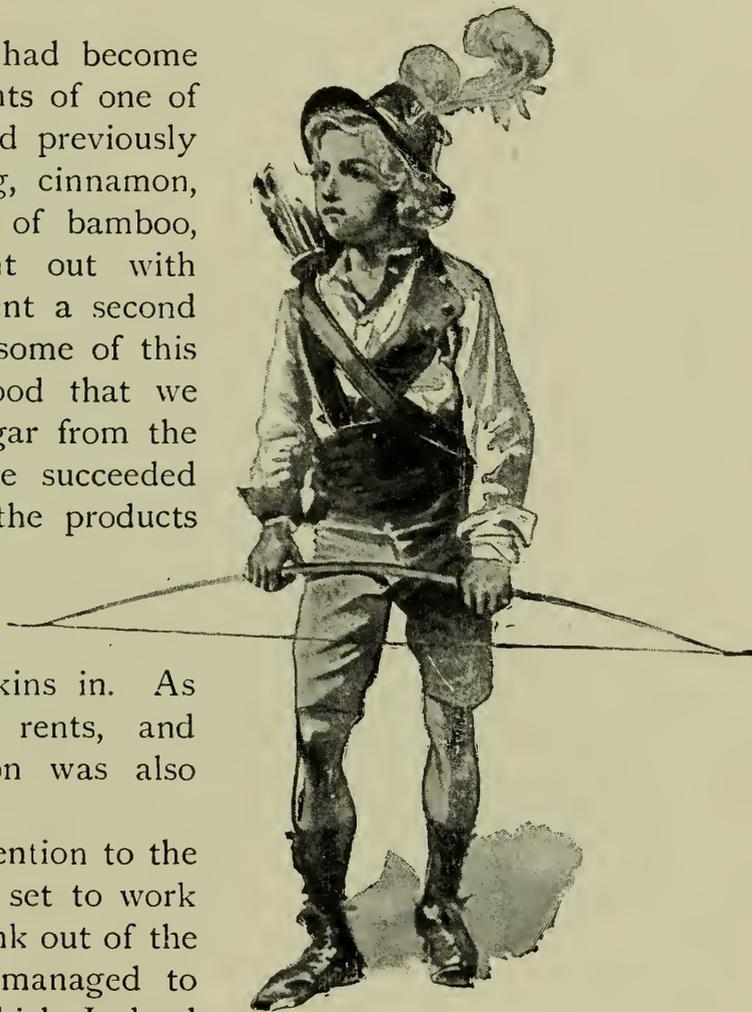
I now had some difficulty in maintaining Jack in his proprietary rights over the ostrich, which the other boys regarded with envy, and it required all my parental authority to prevent trouble. Jack, however, being lighter than Fred or Ernest, and very much stronger than little Frank, was eminently suited to ride Whirlwind : besides, having had the trouble of training the animal, he had a prescriptive right to him ; so I appointed the ostrich to be his mount, reserving to myself the right, in exceptional circumstances, of placing him at the disposal of another or using him myself.

Long before we had completed the equipment and training of Whirlwind, Fred had brought me, on three separate occasions, a young ostrich, hatched in our improvised incubator. The other three eggs came to grief, and even one of these young ostriches did not live more than a day. They were funny looking creatures, very much like goslings in appearance, with a grey down, and mounted on awkward stilts of legs, upon which they tumbled about most ludicrously. We brought them up on milk and eggs, and fed them later on maize and acorns.

We alternated the training of Whirlwind with the preparation of the bear-skins. The first process was the careful scraping of the skins with a knife. I then soaked them in honey vinegar, to obtain which I boiled a quantity of honey in water, and skimmed it off. I then poured it lukewarm into a couple of barrels, and pounded up some corn, which I made into cakes and broke up and threw into the warm honey water; whereupon I let the barrels remain uncovered in our arbour, and, owing to the warmth of the temperature, fermentation ensued.

As soon as the fluid had become clear, I drew off the contents of one of the barrels—in which I had previously placed a bag with nutmeg, cinnamon, etc.—into smaller utensils of bamboo, which we had first burnt out with sulphur, in order to prevent a second fermentation. We tasted some of this brew, and found it so good that we decided to make our vinegar from the second barrel, in which we succeeded perfectly; and we placed the products thus obtained into our rock cellar, though we used a quantity of the vinegar to soak the bear-skins in. As the skins were without rents, and very pliable, this operation was also successful.

Next we turned our attention to the manufacture of hats, and I set to work to make a silk hat for Frank out of the hairs of the rabbits. I managed to produce a kind of felt, which I dyed in cochineal, powdered, and boiled in vinegar, and then dipped in indiarubber. Finally the felt was mounted on a block, which I made with my turning lathe, and placed to dry in the oven, and so I obtained a very smart red Tyrolese hat. Mother now did her best to make the thing look pretty, and gave it a silk lining, and a couple of bows in which were stuck two ostrich feathers. The work of art was then placed solemnly on Frank's head, and really suited him remarkably well. The other boys were so pleased with this headgear that all clamoured for hats for themselves; and these I promised them if



The new hat.

they would catch a sufficient number of musk rats and industriously comb the rabbits.

In order to help them to catch the musk rats I constructed for each boy a trap of strong iron wire and in the shape of a pair of tongs, which was designed to capture the head and neck of the animal as soon as it began to nibble at the bait. For myself I claimed, as a sort of royalty, one out of every five animals caught, so that in time I might collect sufficient material for hats for mother and me.

My success as a hatter gave me courage to try my hand at china. I erected a potter's wheel behind the stables in the cave, besides



"Vessels of ordinary and symmetrical shape could be more or less easily fashioned."

a few necessary tables and counters to dry the crockery on. I took the wheel of a gun carriage, and over this I applied a platter or disc which I had myself prepared, and on which vessels of ordinary and symmetrical shape could be more or less easily fashioned.

I then mixed the porcelain with talc; and of this mixture I made several bricks, and burnt them first at an open fire and then in an earthen vessel at a closed fire.

The glass beads which I had found in the captain's cabin now came handy. I selected some black and yellow ones, and hammered them to powder, which I strewed over the bricks, and burnt in, so as to give them the appearance of being enamelled.

I eventually succeeded in producing a few cups and saucers, a milk jug, a sugar bowl, and half a dozen plates, but that was all—my other attempts were failures. Even these cost me much time and trouble: for I had in each case made wooden moulds for them, and these I had covered with a coating of plaster of Paris, in which I pressed the porcelain; and this, after carefully drying it, I placed in a cylinder of ordinary clay and exposed to the embers of the oven, cooling them gradually afterwards. The ornamentation was primitive, and confided to Fred, who had represented green leaves and red and yellow berries on them, so that if our crockery looked somewhat pale, it was nevertheless neat enough.

The turn of the condor and kite came next. Their bodies were soaked in lukewarm water, to which I added a little euphorbia gum as a protection against insects. I stretched their skins on some pieces of the corklike bark of which I had made the canoe, and which I carved into the shape of the birds' bodies. The thighs I constructed of staves of wood, round which I wound ample layers of cotton wool, and I inserted strong, sharp-pointed wires into the legs. For eyes I made four balls of porcelain, which I painted and burnt. Thus fitted out, they looked lifelike and terrible, and formed an interesting addition to our museum.

CHAPTER XX.

THE CAJAK.

CLIMATIC conditions often limit the activity of man. This was our case ; for while we were still in the middle of the rainy season, and while the training of the ostrich and much other work had to be suspended, we were in danger of being left in idleness—a most demoralising state of things. So I invited the boys to propose some great undertaking, and this livened them all up.

Fred immediately suggested building an Esquimaux cajak ; for he pointed out that now we had secured a means of rapid communication on land, through Whirlwind, we required a vessel of great speed on the water to complete our equipment.

The proposal was approved by all except mother, who anxiously inquired what was meant by a cajak ; and when she heard that it was a light bark of seal-skin used in Greenland for skimming over the water, she was anything but pleased, for she had a rooted dislike for the sea.

However, we set to work at once, so as to construct at least the shell of the skiff before the rainy season was over ; but I intended to use my own common sense in the construction.

I laid down two keels of broad whalebone, and as these curved naturally in the shape of a scythe, I used two for each keel, joining them together at the ends, so that the curved parts projected in opposite directions like the runners of a sledge ; and I carefully cemented the joints with gutta-percha, and smoothed the whole length, so that there might be no inequalities : the straight portions were about twelve feet long. Underneath each keel I made a couple of grooves for the insertion of two small pulley wheels, so that the skiff could be hauled on shore with ease. The two keels were laid parallel, a foot and a half apart, and connected by crosspieces of bamboo, giving them the appearance of a ladder in the centre, while the projections were bent together, so as to form a sharp point

fore and aft. Between these projections I inserted a perpendicular piece of whalebone for the junction of the vertical sides of the craft. At each projection, fore and aft, I attached a brass ring for painters. The beams were made of bamboo, and the ribs of the same material. The skiff was three feet beam amidships, diminishing fore and aft. The cajak was covered over like a "Rob-Roy" canoe, with a hole in the centre, under which was a seat for the occupant.

The shell of my cajak being completed, we tested it by throwing it with all our might upon the rocks, from which it rebounded with the elasticity of a ball, and we then floated it in the water, where it showed remarkable buoyancy.

I selected a couple of large seal-skins, which I had drawn off over the animals' heads without previously slitting them up the middle. Each of these formed a sort of elastic bag, which we pulled over the skiff, making them meet in the centre, where they were securely sewn together; they were also carefully stitched at the ends, and the seams were pitched with gutta-percha, so as to make them perfectly watertight. The inside of the skiff was also carpeted with seal-skin, and the bottom stiffened with cork bark.

I next prepared of bamboo a double-bladed paddle of exceptional length, and attached a bladder to it, so that it could be used as a lifebuoy in the event of the skiff capsizing.

Now mother's ingenuity was brought into requisition; for I would not have trusted out any of the boys in the shaky thing without giving him a swimming jacket, which could be fitted into the hole of the boat, so as to make it absolutely watertight and prevent its being swamped by a wave. This jacket was made with a lining, to fit tight round the body, and an outer covering, which was loose, and which could be blown out with air like an indiarubber cushion. To make it absolutely watertight, this jacket received a coating of gutta-percha.

As soon as the weather cleared up a little, we emerged from our cavernous dwelling and began our field work. But the trial of our cajak claimed our first attention. Fred had to don the jacket, and we all burst into fits of laughter as he proceeded to blow himself out until he assumed the bloated appearance of a pantomime policeman. He majestically strode into the water until he lost his footing; but the jacket supported him, and kept his head and shoulders and part of his body well above water. He trod the water until he reached a sandbank, where he touched ground, and immediately began to jump and kick and splash and beckon to us, while the other boys danced about on shore in wild appreciation of the fun.

The complete success of the experiment had the effect of inducing

the other boys to beg mother to make them similar swimming jackets also.

After this we started for Shark Island to visit the dwarf antelopes, for whom we had prepared a mess of maize, acorns and salt, which they enjoyed greatly, and which made them quite tame. We explored the island for coral, of which we collected a goodly quantity for our museum; and mother drew our attention to a lot of seaweed which had been washed ashore, and of which she made us take a cargo.

When we reached home, mother selected a number of sword-shaped, saw-edged leaves, about seven inches long, of a peculiar kind



"We all burst into fits of laughter as he proceeded to blow himself out."

of grass-wrack, stretched them out to dry, put them into our drying oven, and then solemnly placed them in a cupboard.

I was amused at this procedure, and asked her whether she intended to manufacture tobacco of the leaves. She laughed at my levity, and told me she intended to stuff some sacks with these leaves, so that we should have cool mattresses when the great heat set in. But she looked at me so archly as she said this that I felt sure she was making fun of me and had no intention of satisfying my curiosity.

On one occasion, however, when we returned hot and famished from Falconeyrie, mother placed an enormous gourd before us,

containing a delicious jelly which appealed at once to our hunger and thirst.

“What do you say to that?” she asked. “Can you suspect what it is made of?”

It was most delicious, but we were quite at a loss to identify the ingredients.

“Then I will tell you,” she said, laughing: “it is made of the grass-wrack we collected on Shark Island!”

“That does you infinite credit!” I exclaimed. “But what gave you the idea?”

“You men think women are stuffed with straw and hung on wires and know nothing,” she said.

“Well, but where did you pick up the recipe for this jelly?”

“At the Cape of Good Hope, if you insist on knowing,” she replied. “There this grass-wrack is soaked five or six days in water, which is renewed every day; it is then boiled for a few hours with a little sugar and lemon or orange juice, until it is reduced to a jelly. Instead of lemons or oranges, I added a little of our honey wine, or hydromel, and some cinnamon.”

We all congratulated mother on the capital result, and the boys were for going off at once and collecting a lot more grass-wrack.

I have forgotten to mention that on our visit to Shark Island we found that all our plantations had flourished amazingly, and discovered a small spring, which we could see, by the imprints on the ground, the antelopes had found handy.

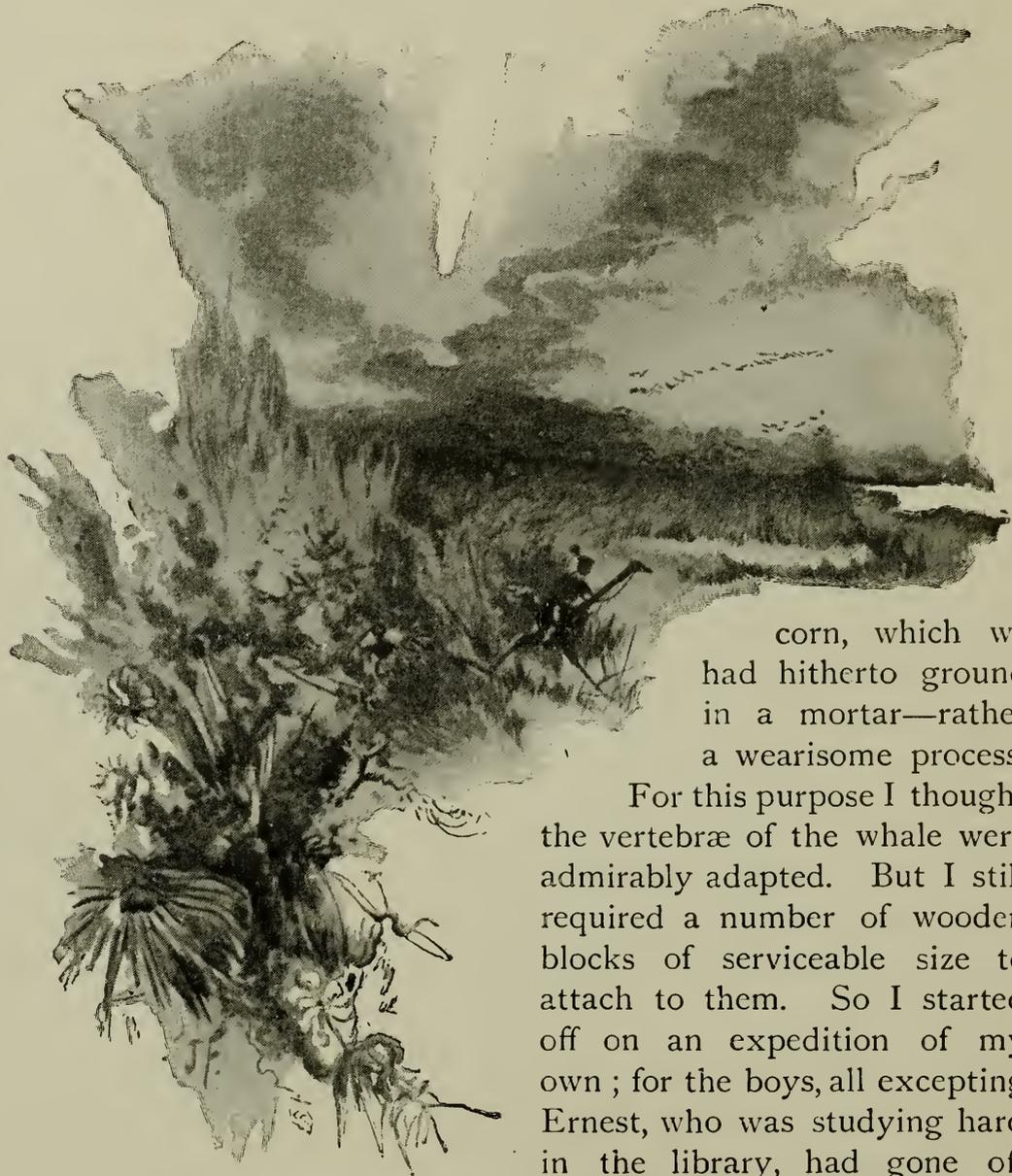
As everything was so satisfactory on Shark Island, we naturally entertained the most sanguine hopes of Whale Island, and so we put off and sailed over to pay the rabbits a visit. These had multiplied enormously; and as we approached the shore, we saw over thirty of them gnawing away at the seaweed, which we welcomed as a good sign, believing that the rabbits had confined themselves to this food supply. But when we landed and began our inspection of the island, great was our disappointment to find that they had gnawed off the barks of nearly all the saplings we had planted; and so we determined for the future to protect our plantations from the depredations of these little marauders with cactus.

On one occasion while we were at work on this island we tasted some of the grass-wrack in its natural state, and were not highly delighted with its boggy flavour, though some leaves certainly had a sweet taste, and others, again, emitted a kind of violet fragrance, which led us to believe that we had the *fucus palmatus* before us.

The skeleton of the whale was well preserved, and had been picked so clean by the cormorants and gulls, and had been so

bleached by the action of the sun and air, that it had no objectionable smell whatever ; and as I thought the bones might be put to good use, we tied as many of them as we could together by means of a strong rope, threw them into the sea and towed them home.

I wanted particularly to construct some machine for pounding our



"It was not till late that Jack arrived."

corn, which we had hitherto ground in a mortar—rather a wearisome process.

For this purpose I thought the vertebræ of the whale were admirably adapted. But I still required a number of wooden blocks of serviceable size to attach to them. So I started off on an expedition of my own ; for the boys, all excepting Ernest, who was studying hard in the library, had gone off musk-rat hunting on their own account, without permission or

notice. But mother did not mind being left alone, especially as she had a protector in the lethargic Ernest ; and so off I went by myself, taking Storm and the cart with me, and accompanied by Bill and Brown.

As soon as I had crossed Jackal bridge to inspect our manioc and potato fields, I was much annoyed to find how they had been

laid waste ; and as I got nearer I was confirmed in my opinion that the pigs had been the marauders, especially as I found traces of their footprints.

I was very angry to think that, notwithstanding the profusion of Nature, these animals should have perversely chosen to molest our own plantations. Presently the barking of the dogs, and the grunting which followed, led me to hope that we were on the track of the plunderers ; and indeed before long I recognised our old sow, half wild, accompanied by one of the pigs of its first litter, now grown into a powerful beast, and a number of little ones. They all assumed a threatening attitude, and received the dogs defiantly. I felt so enraged that I fired on them, and actually shot three of the young, while the sow and the others stampeded away and got lost in the bushes.

I called back the dogs, and gave them the heads of the pigs to satisfy their greed ; and when the carcasses had been sufficiently denuded of blood, I threw them on the cart, where I firmly secured them.

Soon I found the kind of tree I wanted. It was about two feet in diameter, and was beautifully straight. I notched it, and as it was close to the layer of clay, I loaded up a sufficient quantity of this material and cheerfully retraced my steps.

I was home before the boys, but too late for dinner ; so I begged mother to give us roast pig for supper, and Ernest and I prepared the carcasses for her.

It was not till late that Jack arrived on the wings, or, more correctly, the back of "the Whirlwind." He was followed at long intervals by Fred and Frank, who were laden with game. They unloaded two big bags, from which they produced twenty musk rats, one monkey, a couple of animals looking like hares, and half a dozen other rats, which I took to be specimens of the *castor moschatus*, which is closely allied to the ordinary musk rat, except that it has a funny little trunk. The hares I recognised as the long-tailed, black-breasted *tolays* of Buffon.

Fred had, besides, brought a truss of thistles, which we overlooked in our contemplation of the animals.

"My ostrich is a wonderful fellow, father !" cried Jack. "He flew like the wind, and went so fast that I was nearly blinded. I say, father ! you must make me a mask with glass eyelets to protect my face."

"No, my young gentleman, I must not !"

"Why not, father ?"

"In the first place, because you have no right to tell your father in that tone that he *must* do anything ; and secondly, because it is

high time that you learned to use your own brains and hands and ceased to make an automatic machine of your father. Now let us hear your adventures."

"Well, father," said Fred, "we have had great fun. We have lived on roots and game, and have brought back lots of skins to exchange for brandy or mead."

"You shall have your drink, my boys," I said; "though I am sorry you went off in such a high-handed manner, without giving us any warning. But your first care, as good sportsmen, should be for your steeds."

Presently we all sat down to supper, and great was the surprise of the boys at the good things spread before them.

Over supper Fred recounted his exploits with the garrulousness of a true sportsman. The boys had spent the whole day in the neighbourhood of Woodstead, where they set their traps, which they had baited with small fish and worms. Their food had been very scrappy and sketchy.

"Isn't my Hunter a splendid fellow?" said Jack. "He caught me those hares. What are they, father?"

"And I, father, have brought you these thistles, for I thought they could be used for carding on account of the hooks at their ends. I also shot this insolent chap here, who threw cocoanuts at my head."

The thistles, which had burrs with numerous hooked bracts, turned out to be teasels or fullers' thistles.

Next day I constructed a machine to facilitate the skinning of animals. Among the surgical instruments saved from the wreck was a large syringe: this I converted into an air-compressor by means of a couple of valves and by perforating the tube. By this simple contrivance the air entered the syringe at the valves whenever I pulled out the tube; and whenever I pushed it back, the valves in the tube opened and the compressed air came out with considerable force.

While the boys were making preparations for their laborious task of skinning, I came on the scene with my syringe, and was received with shouts of laughter.

I took no notice of this unseemly conduct, but silently picked up a long-tailed hare, hung it conveniently by the hind legs, and, making an incision in the skin on the chest, inserted my air-compressor, and proceeded to pump air into the animal with all my might between the flesh and the skin. As soon as the skin was swollen out like a balloon, I left the completion of the task of skinning to the astonished boys, who had simply to slit the skin up and take it off.

But my boys had contracted the habit of asking me the reason of everything, so I had to explain this miracle as well and tell them how the skin of animals was attached to the flesh and muscles by a cellular tissue. If these cells are filled with air they burst, and then the skin is set free.

The next day was fixed for the tree-felling operations. As soon as we reached the tree I had notched I sent Fred and Jack up to cut down the branches, so as to prevent it from catching in the



"My syringe was received with shouts of laughter."

other trees when it fell; and then I made them fasten two stout ropes round it, just under the crown, by means of which the tree could be pulled at a safe distance in the most convenient direction. We made a couple of deep incisions in the tree with a strong saw, one a little above the other, and then we pulled away at the ropes, which set the tree swaying to and fro, and finally crashing to the ground. We sawed it up into lengths of four feet; we also cut up the branches into convenient lengths, and the twigs were left to dry in the sun.

This job took us two days, and it was not before the third day

that I was able to construct a pounding mill out of the timber. While we were thus engaged we noticed that our poultry and young ostriches used to come home to roost well and abundantly fed ; and this led us to the discovery that our corn had ripened in a little less than five months since it had been sown, which proved to us that we could expect two crops a year.

Now the time was drawing near for the annual arrival of the herring bank, followed by the school of seals ; and the prospect of the work of catching, salting and skinning these, combined with that of harvesting and other agricultural work, for which our strength seemed so hopelessly inadequate, well-nigh overwhelmed us.

But I bade my wife be of good cheer, and told her we would harvest our crops in the wasteful but easy Italian manner. So I prepared a threshing floor in front of our grotto by clearing a wide space, which I watered and stamped hard with clubs. We repeated this process as soon as the sun had dried up the ground, until we had obtained a smooth, hard, impervious surface.

Armed with sickles, and accompanied by Storm and Growler carrying the palanquin, we tackled the crops.

Mother wanted to know how we were going to bind the sheaves, and the boys clamoured for pitchforks and rakes. But I replied :

“ We will have none of these elaborate things ! To-day we will work on the Italian plan, and the Italian does not hanker after them.”

“ But how shall we manage ? ” Fred asked.

“ Very simply. We will do our threshing on the spot.”

“ Oh, I see ! ” said Fred, looking very puzzled, for he had not the faintest idea how to set to work. So I showed him how to seize a number of ears in his left hand and cut them down, at a good distance from the top, with the sickle in his right ; wind a straw round the sheaf, and throw it on the palanquin, thereby saving himself the trouble of stooping.

This method gave general satisfaction, and we very soon made short work of the field.

“ That is a wasteful way of doing things ! ” mother cried. “ All the short ears and the beautiful straw remain in the stubble ! ”

“ The Italian is not quite so wasteful as you think,” I said ; “ he drinks the stubble.”

“ I should like to know how he does it ! ” mother exclaimed.

“ He drives his cattle into it, and what they do not consume he mows down and makes hay of—and thus he drinks it in the shape of milk.”

“ But what do the cattle sleep on at night ? ” mother inquired.

“Generally on the bare ground. But now we will try the Italian method of threshing, which I think we shall find as pleasant as their mode of reaping.”

So we started back home, and Ernest and Frank spread the sheaves of corn in a large circle on the threshing floor, keeping the different kinds of grain in separate heaps.

And now the fun began. The boys mounted some animal or other—even Whirlwind was put into requisition—and jumped and trotted about as merrily as could be, while mother and I stood ready with pitchforks to throw the sheaves back under the feet of the animals. Of course a few accidents happened. Some of the animals insisted on feeding on the corn they were to thresh, and so on; but on the whole the operation was most successful.

Having threshed the grain, we next proceeded to winnow it by throwing it in the air with shovels, so that the wind blew away the chaff, while the grain fell to the ground.

While we were at this work, and the chaff was being blown about our faces, our poultry came cheerfully up and began pecking away at the grain so industriously that mother had to keep them within bounds, though she did not suffer the boys to drive them away altogether, for she said very wisely :

“Let them have a few grains; they will reward us in the end by getting all the fatter.”

At last we measured our harvest, and found that it had yielded sixty to eighty fold, for we had more than a hundred sheaves of wheat and two hundred of barley.

We had to adopt a somewhat different treatment with the maize : we broke off its long ears on the field itself, peeled them, and spread them out to dry on the threshing floor, after which we beat them with twigs, and thus separated the grain from the husks. We gathered over eighty bushels of maize, so that we were well provided for.

But if we wanted a second crop in the same year we had no time to lose. We mowed down the stubble, and stacked the straw in a cone round a post, while we stored the maize stubble for fuel. With the maize leaves we stuffed our mattresses; and the ashes of the stubble yielded an alkaline salt, which mother said would be most serviceable in the washing of linen.

Having got our fields ready, we sowed them with rye, spelt and oats.

But we had scarcely finished these important labours when we saw the herring bank approaching: yet this did not greatly excite us, for we had now such ample provisions that there was no cause for anxiety. Nevertheless we pickled a few barrels of herrings, so as

to have a sufficient variety of food, and caught as many live herrings as we could store in our tanks.

But the seals were a different matter, and we buckled to to catch as many of them as we could, especially as the work of skinning had been so simplified by my syringe. We got ready the cajak, fitting it out with a good supply of ammunition, a couple of pistols, some fresh water, and a couple of harpoons with bladders attached to them.

When all was ready, Fred was arrayed in his waterproof armour and, armed with his paddle and harpoons, a Greenland cap of seal-bladder on his head, he looked like a veritable knight-errant as he got into his cajak and was triumphantly shoved off.

As soon as Fred was fairly launched he commenced showing off, and performed so many wonderful tricks in his cajak that the whole family cheered him from the shore. This applause stimulated him to further daring, until he got in the current of the Jackal and was rapidly carried out into the open sea beyond the islands.

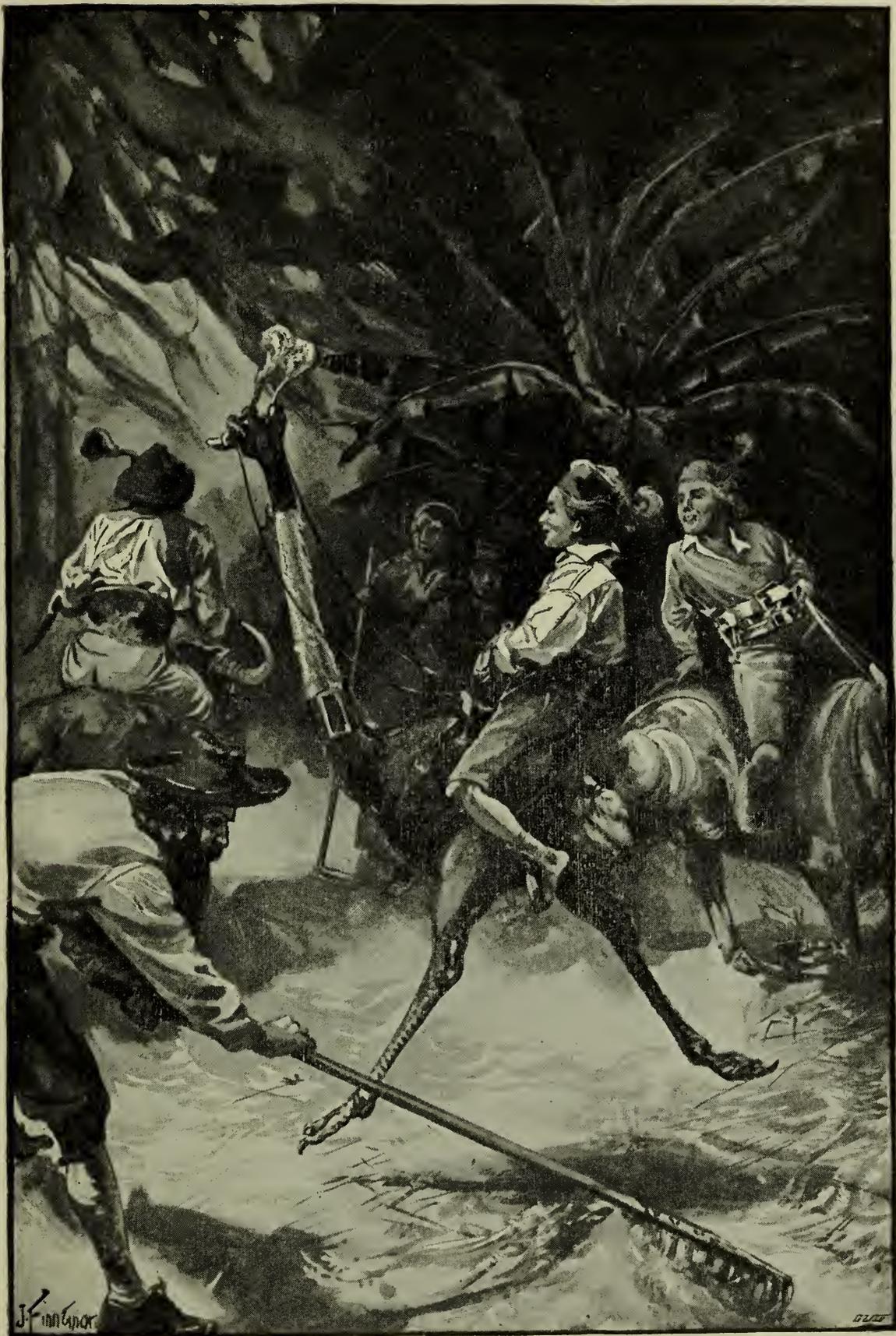
This alarmed me considerably ; and so, accompanied by Ernest and Jack, I jumped into the canoe and started in pursuit of the fugitive. But by the time we had got out of Refuge Bay he was completely lost to view. Nevertheless our canoe flew along over the water, carried by the current like a sea-mew, and we had soon reached the rock upon which we had been originally shipwrecked. The surface of the sea was broken up by rocks, and this was an extremely dangerous spot even for our frail bark to navigate in, and we got hopelessly bewildered in a veritable labyrinth of rocks and cliffs, which shut out anything like a good view of the open sea.

Suddenly I descried a small pillar of smoke at a considerable distance, and this was followed shortly afterwards by the report of a pistol.

“There is Fred !” I cried.

“Where?” the boys shouted, looking about, when another pillar of smoke rose in the air, followed by a similar report. I felt my pulse to ascertain the interval between the smoke and the sound, and counted four beats ; so I told the boys that Fred was at a distance of about a quarter of an hour from us. We fired a shot as a signal to Fred, and made as fast as we could for the direction whence we had heard the reports, while our signal was promptly returned. Ernest marked the time by his watch ; and we came in sight of Fred in ten minutes, and in another five we were alongside of him, having previously hailed him in true nautical fashion.

We were not a little surprised to see lying on the ledge of a



"THE BOYS MOUNTED SOME ANIMAL OR OTHER. . . . AND JUMPED AND TROTTED
"ABOUT AS MERRILY AS COULD BE." [Page 393.

rock close by a walrus, which Fred had not only wounded but had actually harpooned and killed.

In the first place, however, I reproached Fred for his rashness and the anxiety he had caused us by his foolhardy conduct.

He explained that he had been drawn into the current of the Jackal against his will, and that he had been unable to resist it.

"And then," he said, "I fell in with a lot of walruses, and I was unable to think of anything but the best means of catching at least one. I succeeded in harpooning the hindermost, and the bladder attached to the harpoon prevented it from diving; so I pursued it and sent another harpoon into it. The wounds seemed to fatigue the animal, and it sought refuge in these cliffs, where it got stranded, and finally died. My cajak skipped and bounded over the surging surf, which only just covered the rocks, until I was able to make it fast to this ledge, and then I made sure of my walrus by giving it a couple of pistol shots."

"It was a risky business, Fred!" I said; "for although the walrus is on the whole a timid animal, it gets furious when wounded, and turns on its pursuer and makes short work of him with its enormous tusks. But I should like to know what we are to do with this animal? It is about ten feet long, although it does not seem to be full grown."

"Well, father, if we can't manage to tug the entire animal home," said Fred, "let me at least cut off its head, so that I may fasten it to the prow of my cajak which I want to call the *Walrus*."

"We will certainly carry off the teeth," I replied: "they are indeed scarcely two feet long, and the adult animal has much larger ones; still they are the animal's principal treasure, and of a beautiful ivory, and it is for their sake that the walrus is hunted. But the flesh is useless, and would only be burdensome; still we will cut off a few strips of skin to make belts of. Meanwhile you can chop off the head; but make haste, for the air is sultry, and I fear a storm is brewing."

"What shall we do if the head begins to rot?" asked Ernest.

"Oh, I will take care of that!" Fred answered; "and will so pickle, hollow and scrape it that it will resemble those in the museum we saw in Switzerland, and become perfectly hard."

"But, father," said Ernest, "are not walruses northern animals? How comes it that they should get as far south as this?"

"The walrus is certainly a northern animal, but it is possible that these have been driven here by storms from the Antarctic Ocean. Besides, there is a kind of small walrus at the Cape, though its fangs

are much smaller. Walruses live on seaweed, mussels and oysters, which they detach from the rocks with their tusks."

While we were thus talking we proceeded with our work, and Fred observed it would be well to fit out the cajak with a lance, an axe and a small compass, which, placed in a small box, could be fastened in front of the seat. This struck me as a capital idea, especially as the lance and axe might be the means of saving much ammunition.

As soon as we had finished with the walrus, Fred started off in his cajak to announce our return, and we followed him.

On the return journey Ernest, who had been very thoughtful, asked me :

"Father, how were you able to tell so exactly how far Fred was off after you had seen the smoke and heard the report of his pistol?"

"That was a very easy matter," I replied. "Light travels so fast that it flashes along at the rate of forty thousand miles a second : so that we see fire and light immediately they ignite. But sound travels a million times more slowly ; and it is assumed that it moves at the rate of from 1036 to 1040 Parisian feet a second, although of course wind and weather and the density of the air exercise an influence on its speed. Now as I knew that my pulse—as is the case with adults and healthy men—makes sixty beats a minute, I was able to calculate, by feeling my pulse during the period between seeing the smoke and the sound of the shot, and ascertaining that it gave four beats, that we were at a distance from Fred of about 4160 Parisian feet, or about a quarter of an hour according to the Swiss method of measurement if you calculate the hour at 16,250 French feet."

"How grand to carry all these things in one's head!" Ernest exclaimed. "Where can all this be found? and is it possible to get any more information about light?"

"The study of matter and of the forces of nature," I replied, "belongs to the domain of physics or natural science. By the difference between the flash and report of a signal of distress at sea you can tell the distance of the vessel in need of assistance, and so on."

"But how about light at greater distances than obtain on the earth?" Ernest inquired : "has that also been gone into?"

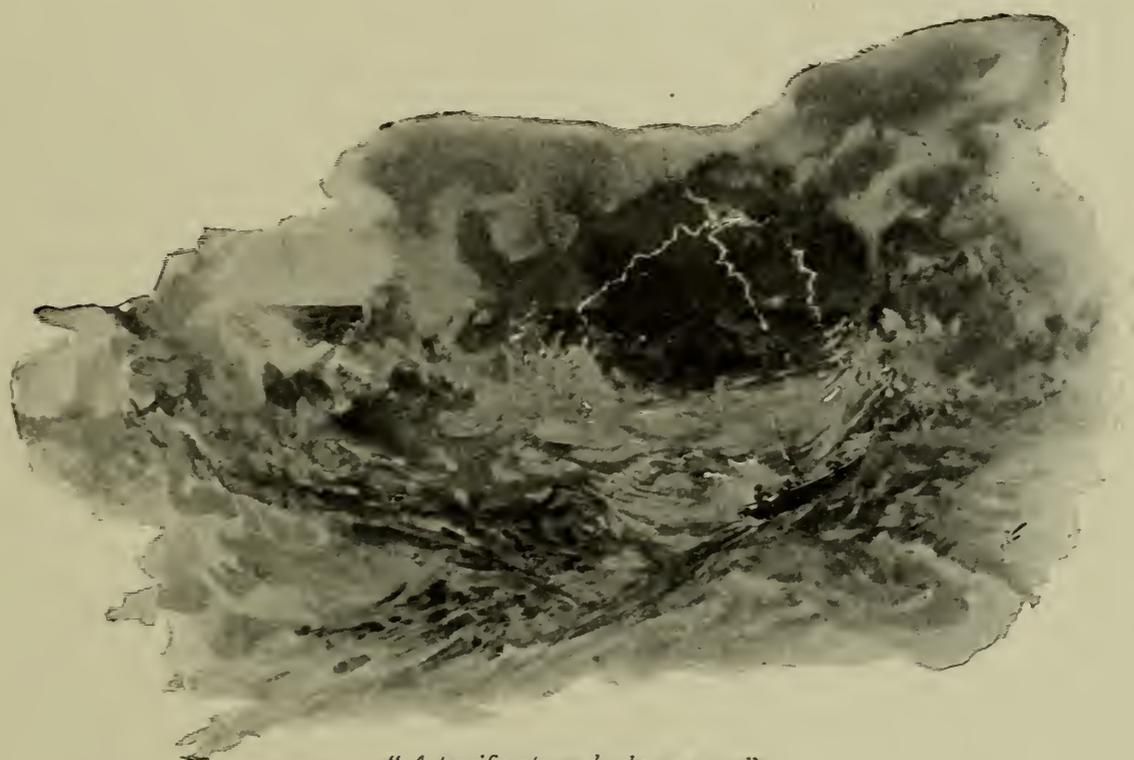
"Oh, yes, my boy!" I said. "Thus the light of the sun takes eight minutes and seven and a half seconds to reach the earth ; and it is believed that the rays of Sirius, the nearest fixed star, takes six years and four and a half months to travel to us. A report on the surface of Sirius would not reach us to-day even if it had taken place six thousand years ago."

"That is tremendous!" Ernest cried in astonishment.

"What would you say if you were told that there may be stars in the universe so far removed from us that their rays have not reached the earth since its creation?"

In the meantime the dark clouds overhead had grown more and more threatening, and presently a terrific storm broke over us. Fred was out of sight. I made the boys put on their cork jackets and lash themselves to the canoe, so that the waves should not wash them away. I followed their example, and we commended ourselves to God. As for managing the canoe, that was out of the question.

The storm grew more and more furious, although one would



"A terrific storm broke over us."

have thought it could not possibly get worse. The waves rose mountains high, and seemed to reach to the black clouds above; the lightning flashed through the darkness and illuminated with a sickly yellow colour the foaming sea. Now we rose to the summit of a watery mountain, now we dashed deep down into an awful abyss. We shipped a great deal of sea, and were driven along with a terrible velocity.

But the fierceness of the tempest was soon over: it shot past us quickly; the clouds and the waves seemed to be racing with the wind, which distanced them and left them behind, causing us considerable anxiety even after the storm had blown over.

It was a great consolation to find that our canoe behaved

admirably. The keel always righted it whenever it was on the point of being capsized, and the air-bags at each side kept it from sinking.

But I was much concerned for Fred, who must have been overtaken by the storm as well, and whose probable fate gave me great anxiety.

At last we found ourselves in Refuge Bay ; and I breathed more freely as we slipped in through the narrow straits, for we had regained the use of the helm. The storm had now quite passed away, and as we approached the shore we could just see mother holding Fred in her arms.

We were soon on shore ourselves, and I jumped towards Fred and embraced him. But mother was quite as pleased to see us safe as we were at meeting Fred.

"Mother," I said, "are you angry with us for having given you so much anxiety?"

But she only shook her head, and her lips quivered as she replied :

"I am thankful that you are safe—that is all."

"Well," said Jack, who soon regained his normal cheerfulness, "this is all right ; but dry clothes and some grub would be most acceptable."

Mother immediately sent us off to change our clothes, calling us "Poor damp fellows !" and busied herself with the food.

In half an hour we were sitting jovially at her hospitable board, and discussed with a sense of relief the dangers we had escaped.

"I cannot say," said Fred, "that I felt frightened for an instant, for I at once discovered that my little boat was able to hold its own. All I feared was to lose my rudder—that would have been serious. The wind and waves drove me home with such rapidity that I was under cover with mother when the final heavy shower came down. We had only just emerged from our shelter to look for you when you saw us."

"Well, I am very glad we are safe on land," said Ernest.

"So am I," said Jack. "I was nearly smothered in salt water."

"Then you should have kept your mouth shut, as I did," Fred rejoined. "It is better to be cool and collected than to laugh at the wrong time and place."

"You certainly showed coolness and pluck, Fred !" I cried. "But Jack's philosophy is not so bad either : there is nothing like being always jolly !"

"For my part," said mother, "I was much too frightened to be either cool or jolly. I was in what you would call a blue funk."

"Poor mother !" I exclaimed. "I think you were most to be pitied. But now the danger is over I am glad of the test we have

had of the seaworthiness of our boats. I should not mind putting out to sea in the roughest weather in them now; and if we should ever have to rescue a ship in distress, that confidence will be invaluable."

"It would be a good thing to have a small signal gun and a flagstaff on the rock on Shark Island for all eventualities," said Fred.

"Yes, my boy," I replied, "if you could get them there. But your idea is a good one, and I shall keep it in mind."

We now hauled our canoe on shore, and dragged it with our beasts of burden over rollers to our grotto, and placed it in our stores next to the cajak, which Fred and Ernest had carried in. The head of the walrus and the strips of skin were deposited in our workshop, the one to be embalmed and dried, the others to be tanned and cured.

The torrent of rain, coming at such an unusual time, had swelled the brooks which poured from the rocks to such dimensions that they overflowed their banks, especially at Falconeyrie, and caused great destruction. Even the Jackal had risen so greatly that our bridge was in danger of being carried away; and the trough and conduit at Falconeyrie had been displaced, and we had some trouble in repairing the damage.

As we went up the cliff where the water was rushing down we found the ground covered with dark red berries which were crowned with leaves and were no larger than ordinary hazel nuts or small plums. These berries looked so inviting that the boys tasted them, but had so sharp a flavour that they hastily spat them out.

Master Snip also showed little relish for them; but I recognised them by their fragrance to be mother cloves—that is, the fruit of the clove tree—in which conjecture I was confirmed by cautiously tasting them. Delighted at this discovery, I made the boys collect as many as they could and give them to mother, who planted a few in her nursery and destined the rest for spice for the rice, thus affording a pleasant substitute for the eternal pepper.

I also brought a considerable supply of clay from the rocks near Falconeyrie in order to make an aqueduct; and as I had noticed that the fields had been refreshed by the shower, I conducted the overflow from our pounding mill to our cornfield and irrigated it, and made a deep gutter for the rainy season towards the Jackal.

At about this time we made a capital salmon and sturgeon harvest; so that we again obtained an excellent supply of smoked, salted and pickled fish and caviare. I even anchored a couple of fine salmon in the water, so as to be able to eat them fresh at our leisure. We passed a tarred rope through the mouths and

gills of the fish, and secured the ends to a post in a calm and deep place in Refuge Bay. I had read that large fish were thus towed up the Danube.

Thus we spent several days. Suddenly on one fine bright moonlight night I was awakened by a loud barking and a tramping, snoring and squeaking. I threw on a few clothes, seized the first weapon I could lay hold of, and rushed to the door, which had been left open for the sake of the air.



"We made a capital salmon and sturgeon harvest."

As I looked out to see what was the matter, I saw Fred putting his head out of the window over me, and heard him calling :

"Are you there, father? What on earth is all that row about?"

I told him I was prepared for the worst, but thought it was the pigs.

"I fancy," I said, "that the dogs are resenting the intrusion. Come down at once, and let us prevent bloodshed."

Fred immediately jumped half dressed out of the window, and we rushed to the spot where the row was going on. We immediately recognised a drove of our half-wild pigs, who had stolen across the Jackal bridge in order to make a descent on mother's plantation. But the dogs had proved as vigilant as police: two held the boar

by the ear, whilst the others pursued the sow and her young, who were making as fast as they could for the bridge and the bushes on the other side of the Jackal.

I rescued the unfortunate animal from its two captors, and Fred ran after the others to call back the dogs. This was no easy task, and I had to insert bits of wood into the jaws of the dogs to make them relax their hold. The pigs immediately bolted for the Jackal.

I was annoyed to think the bridge had been left for the night, and went to inspect it, but found that the boards had been indeed removed and that the pigs had managed to get across by the beams. This determined me to substitute a drawbridge for the present clumsy structure, so as to protect ourselves for the future against the intrusion of unbidden guests.

On the following day I therefore erected a couple of strong posts, to which I attached a longitudinal frame by means of a couple of crossbeams. Here and there I inserted a few short steps, upon which one could climb up and down. I made an incision at the top of each post, where I introduced an arm of the drawbridge. The longitudinal frame was rammed into another similar one, which was placed horizontally on the ground and was firmly secured with pegs behind, so that the posts could support it with ease; it projected about a foot from the bank of the brook, so that the drawbridge could rest on it. We then cut off and cleared away the timbers of the old bridge, leaving sufficient for the outer edge of the drawbridge to rest on—about eight or ten inches. Two beams were now made fast to the tops of the posts by means of iron pivots, on which they were movable. These beams were connected on our side of the brook by a heavy cross-piece, so that they always moved together. I then underpinned the posts, so that the lowering or raising of the drawbridge might not shake them.

Thus my drawbridge was completed, and quite safe against the attacks of animals. By means of chains we could protect ourselves against attacks from human beings; for we could climb to the top of the posts up the notches or steps and fasten the drawbridge to the crossbeams with the chains, or chain the swingbeams to the posts after the drawbridge had been raised, for which purpose I also made a rough appliance.

Notwithstanding its clumsiness this structure gave us a great sense of security, although a single shot from a cannon would have bowled it all over; nor was the brook broad or deep enough to be a serious obstacle to a determined foe.

While we were engaged on this work the boys had frequent occasion to climb to the top of the posts, from whence they could look down into the forest beyond, and could see the gazelles and antelopes which we had so successfully driven into our territory sporting about, but at the least rustling of a leaf they would start and make off into the thicket.

“What a pity,” said Fred one day, “that those pretty beasts should be so timid! I wish they were as tame as our domestic animals! How jolly it would be if they came up to the brook to drink while we were at work!”



“They had been discussing the prospect of an expedition.”

“Yes,” said Ernest, “we ought to have a buffalo licking place, as they have in Georgia!”

“Why not a cake place: that would be better still!” cried Jack, laughing.

“Or a fountain with claret cup: that is what I should like!” Fred exclaimed.

“Never mind! I tell you again—a buffalo licking place,” Ernest repeated stolidly. “I have read about them.”

“Such places indeed exist, my boy,” I said; “but they are works of nature. In our country—in Switzerland—there are salt rocks where the chamois hunter is sure to find game.”

“But what is this thing of Ernest’s?” Fred asked.

“In a part of Georgia there is a tract of about four acres bearing a kind of lime which animals are fond of licking and in which deep depressions have been made through the frequent visits of animals. Wild buffaloes affect this spot particularly ; hence its name.”

“It must be easy to shoot them while they are licking,” said Jack. “But have not artificial licking places been constructed for this purpose?”

“Of course they have,” I replied ; “but they are unimportant compared to such a natural licking place, which is not affected by the weather and remains the same all the year round. Besides, this lime is more sweet than salt, so that it cannot be compared with the salt boxes in deer parks.”

“What are they, father?” asked Fred.

“They are large boxes made of boards, and about four feet high, filled with salt and lime, and used as baits for deer.”

“Oh, father! we ought to have a salt box!” the boys cried in chorus : “by that means we could get all kinds of game!”

“All right, my boys ; now you see how foolish it was to make fun of Ernest ! But how am I to find time and strength to carry out all your mad schemes?”

“We will help!” they shouted.

“Very well. But you must come, in that case, to the Causeway, and collect some porcelain earth and get some bamboos in order to make provision for the execution of yet another plan.”

The boys were beside themselves with delight at the prospect of another expedition, and commenced making their preparations.

Fred got mother to make some pemmican, or powdered bear’s meat ; and bags were collected, bird traps constructed of wire—in fact, they betrayed by their activity and the preparations they made that they had been discussing the prospect of an expedition for some time past, and had laid deep plans in anticipation.

Finally the fateful day arrived, and the boys were ready with bag and baggage. Contrary to my expectation, mother showed no desire to accompany them, and begged to be left behind, as she was in need of rest. Ernest immediately declared his intention of remaining with her ; and as I had much to do also, I decided to let the three larky youngsters, Fred, Jack and Frank, go by themselves.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE BOYS' EXPEDITION.

ON their return the boys reported their adventures to me. They started at full speed from home, careered over the bridge and were soon at Woodstead, where they thought to make a halt for two days. But as they approached the farm they were astonished to hear a curious sound of laughter, at which their oxen roared and the dogs began to growl, and sought the protection of their masters. The ostrich simply bolted into the neighbouring rice swamp, carrying his rider with him. Meanwhile the horrid laughing noise was repeated, and the terror of the animals increased, so that they became difficult to manage.

“Something must be wrong!” said Fred. “The animals behave as though there was a lion or tiger about. I will try to hold them in while you, Frank, go and scout with the dogs. Come back at once if there should be danger ahead, and we will mount and be off.”

Frank got his gun and pistols ready, called the dogs, and crept cautiously through the bushes in the direction from which the horrible sound proceeded. He continued his way for about eighty paces, when he saw a horrible hyena at some distance over a poor ram which it had killed.

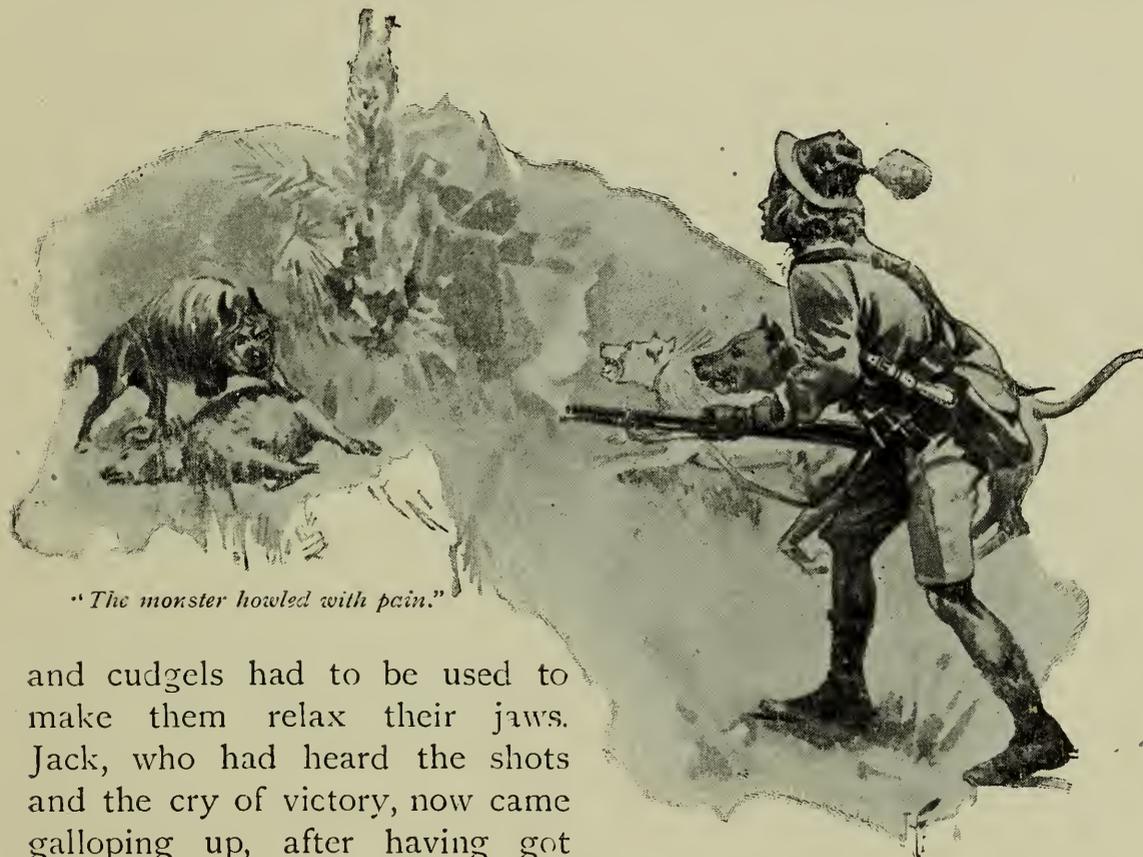
Frank stood rooted to the spot. The ghastly brute raised its gory jaws from its victim and surveyed the little bushranger with its gleaming eyes. But instead of attacking him, it calmly continued its repast. Once only its eyes flashed, and it uttered its repulsive laugh, which sounded more uncanny still at such close quarters. The plucky little boy drew a deep breath and resolutely made up his mind. Leaning against a tree to steady himself, he took aim and fired. The monster howled with pain; one of its fore feet was shattered. Immediately the dogs were upon it, and rolled in an inextricable heap with the brute on the ground. A terrible battle ensued, of

which Frank had to be a passive spectator, for another shot might have crippled the dogs instead of the hyena.

Fred, who had succeeded with much difficulty in making his oxen fast to a tree, now came up with his gun ready, but he did not dare to shoot, either. Fortunately the issue of the battle was not long uncertain. The dogs fought magnificently, and soon the hyena was completely overpowered. Brown had bitten through its throat. Now Fred jumped up and sent a pistol shot into the brute's eye.

"Hoorah!" cried Fred. "Come along, Frank!"

At first the dogs would not release their hold of the hyena,



"The monster howled with pain."

and cudgels had to be used to make them relax their jaws. Jack, who had heard the shots and the cry of victory, now came galloping up, after having got stuck in the swamp. The boys examined their adversary with amazement. It was as big as a boar; had a comb of bristles on its neck and back; its grey hide was striped with black; it had jaws like a wolf, but its ears were very much smaller and more pointed; its tail was thick and hairy; the legs powerful; and it was armed with formidable claws, against which the dogs would have been helpless if the wound in the fore leg had not placed the brute at their mercy,—and Frank therefore claimed the body as his own.

The boys immediately proceeded to take their baggage to Woodstead, and then returned to fetch the carcass of the hyena, which they disembowelled and skinned as soon as they got it there. This

occupied the best part of the day, and at night they stretched themselves on our two magnificent bear-skins, which they had brought with them.

At about that time mother, Ernest and I were sitting on our verandah at Homecliff wondering how our boys were faring.

Suddenly Ernest said :

“I expect we shall receive trustworthy tidings of them to-morrow.”

‘Indeed!’ I exclaimed. “Do you intend to pay them a visit? I should be sorry to lose your services, for you helped me manfully at my work to-day.”

“Oh, no!” Ernest replied; “I am not going to leave home. Still, I think we shall have news of them to-morrow. Perhaps I may have a dream. Who knows?”

“I say, look at that pigeon!” I cried. “What a straggler! I wonder whether it is one of ours, or a stranger? It is so dark! However, he is very late.”

Ernest jumped up.

“Then I must make haste and close the trap-door, and to-morrow we shall see what has happened. Something unusual must have happened, for it is so late. Would it not be jolly, father, if it turned out that a ‘post’ had arrived from Sydney, New South Wales? I think I have read somewhere that even the Greeks and Romans used carrier pigeons.”

“That is the case,” I replied; “for of all the birds of the air the pigeon is the one which covers a given distance in the shortest time. Carrier pigeons fly at the rate of five-and-twenty post hours in one hour. But they are very difficult to train. The American pigeon—the *columba migratoria*—however, requires no training, I understand. But it is getting late: let us go to bed. To-morrow morning you may inspect the messenger from Australia, and tell us the news at breakfast. Good night.”

Ernest was up next morning at an exceptionally early hour. At breakfast he approached us with a solemn and ceremonious manner and handed me, with a profound bow, a neatly folded and sealed letter, saying :

“Your Worship’s humble and loyal Postmaster of Homecliff regrets that he was unable to hand in the despatches from Woodstead and Sydney before this morning, for they did not arrive before late last night.”

Mother and I burst into roars of laughter at this fooling; but I replied presently, with haughty dignity :

“Well, sir, and what news has reached our capital? Inform us what tidings you have received from our distant subjects and friends.”

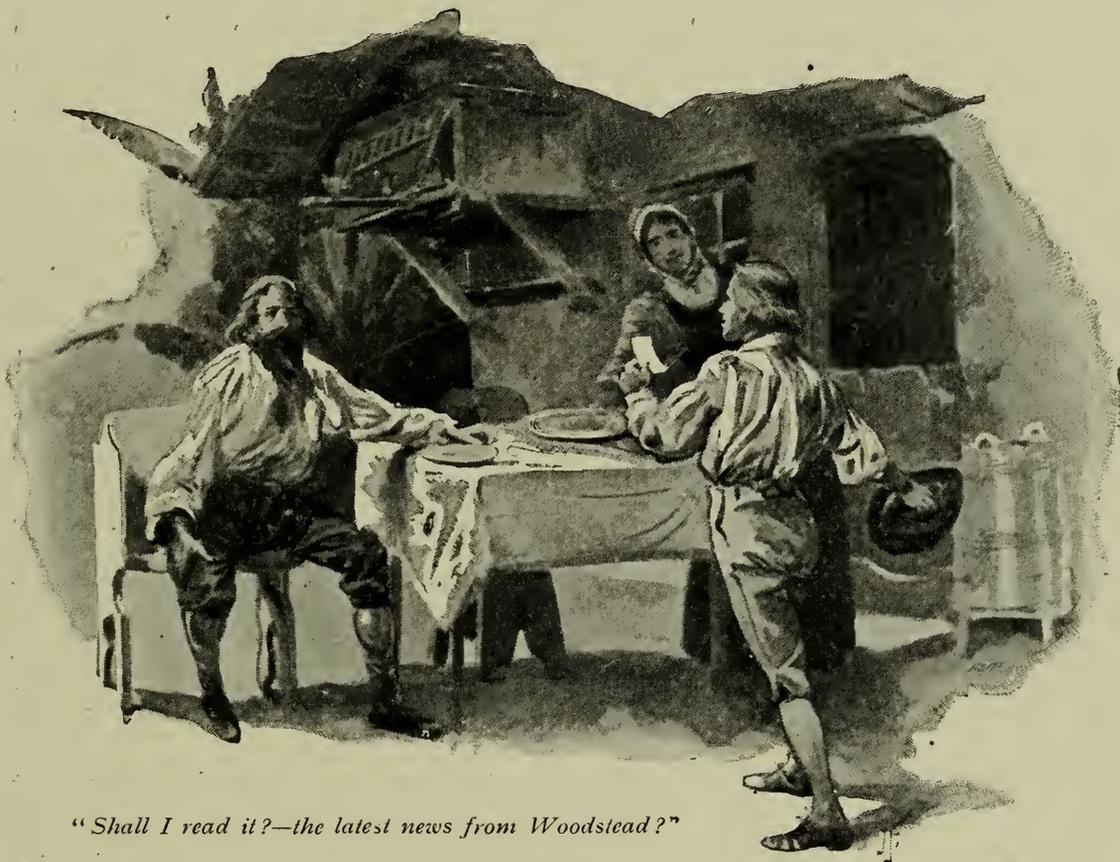
Ernest thereupon unfolded an official-looking paper, and read the following :

"The Governor-General of New South Wales to the Governor of Homecliff, Falconeyrie, Woodstead, and Highpeak.

"SIR,—

"I have been informed that about thirty men have left your colony to maraud and plunder the neighbourhood, which cannot fail to affect prejudicially the best interests of the province.

"I am also informed that dangerous and harmful wild animals



"Shall I read it?—the latest news from Woodstead?"

known as hyenas have broken into your district, and caused much damage and destruction to the flocks and herds of the colonists.

"I must therefore request you to call back the aforesaid marauders, and to take such measures for the prevention of the depredations of the wild animals as may be effective and necessary.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your humble and obedient Servant,

"PHILIP PHILIPSON, *Governor-General.*"

Ernest seemed very pleased with himself as he read out this ridiculous epistle. But he now produced a much smaller missive, and

said : " I believe you will find this a more trustworthy communication. Shall I read it?—the latest news from Woodstead? "

" What nonsense! " I said. " Leave off this foolish mummery. How could you have received news from Woodstead? "

" Don't you remember the pigeon, father? It was a carrier pigeon, and brought this letter from Woodstead. "

" That was a brilliant idea, and may lead to something. But how about the hyena?—was that an invention of Sir Philip's? "

" You shall hear, " Ernest replied, and proceeded to read :

" DEAREST PARENTS AND ERNEST,—

" An enormous hyena has torn two sheep and a ram to pieces ; but our dogs attacked it, and Frank wounded it, and it was finally killed. We have spent nearly the whole day in skinning the animal. Our pemmican is no good.

" I trust you are as well as we are

" Your affectionate Son,

" *Woodstead, 15th inst.*

" FRED."

" Ha, ha! " I laughed : " a regular sportsman's letter! Thank God they have the pluck to cope with a hyena! But how did it get there? It must have made its way through the Causeway recently ; otherwise it would have devoured all our flocks. "

" I hope the boys will be careful, " said mother. " I wish we could call them back. Is it better to go after them at once, or to wait a little? "

" I think, dear mother, you had better wait, " said Ernest ; " for we shall have another ' post ' to-night, and then we shall know what had best be done. "

" Yes! " I exclaimed, " I think that is sound advice ; for we might lose the boys altogether if we started precipitately. "

Towards evening, sure enough, a second carrier pigeon came in, and Ernest went up to the dovecote and detached a piece of paper from under its wing. He read out the following telegraphic despatch :

" Night quiet—morning bright—cajak trip on lake—caught a splendid heron—cranes and new birds—saw strange swamp bird in flight—Highpeak to-morrow. Farewell.

" Yours,

" FRED, JACK, FRANK. "

This letter reassured mother and me not a little ; for as it reported a quiet night, we could assume that no more hyenas had cropped up.

The rest of the epistle was somewhat vague and incomprehensible ; but when I saw the boys again they explained it to me.

It appears that they had formed the ambitious design of mapping out the whole of the lake, and especially of ascertaining the points at which it was possible to approach the water without sinking in the swamp. For this purpose Fred had got into his cajak, and had paddled round the borders of the lake, while his brothers kept in line with him on land and stepped out to the border whenever Fred signalled to them, when they would erect a sign of some sort to indicate the spot as being safe to walk on.

Fred at the same time thought he would like to catch a few swans alive, and for this purpose he attached to a long piece of bamboo a sling of brass wire. He managed to get fairly close up to the swans, for they were not so shy as he had expected, and at last he succeeded in capturing three young swans ; for he did not care to go for the old ones, who seemed ready to defend themselves with their wings. These birds were brought back to Homecliff without any difficulty whatever, when we sprained the joints of their wings, so that they were unable to fly away.

Fred had scarcely brought these captives into security when he saw a splendid neck with a beautifully crowned head peeping curiously out of the reeds, and at once recognised it as that of a king heron. He therefore threw the sling over the incautious bird, and ran his cajak aground in order to get a purchase for his feet in the struggle with his captive, who tried hard to escape. But the tightening of the string round its neck, which nearly choked it, made the bird most submissive, and Fred was able to bandage its eyes and secure its wings and tie the bird to his cajak until he was able to hand it to his brothers.

While they all stood admiring this beautiful creature on the border of the lake, an enormous brute jumped up out of the reeds and frightened them not a little. From their description I fancy it must have been a tapir ; for they compared it to a half-grown horse, and not unlike a young rhinoceros, although it had no horn in its snout, and a long, thin, protruding upper lip—a harmless denizen of the swamp, found principally on the banks of South American rivers. Before the boys could call up their dogs the animal was gone, for it swam capitably.

As Jack and Frank could not get any farther, owing to the swampy nature of the ground, they returned to Woodstead with the swans and heron, while Fred tried to give the animal chase.

Meantime a considerable flight of cranes passed over him from a great distance, and settled in the rice swamp just as Jack and Frank

were going by. They instantly produced their bows and arrows, and managed to shoot down at least four or five of these beautiful birds, amongst which there were also a couple of so-called Numidian "maidens," who had joined the flight.

Fred now came up, and beheld enviously the splendid bag his brothers had made. His jealousy and ambition gave him no peace : so he took his gun, his eagle, and the dogs, and started off into the guava wood to see what he could get.

After a quarter of an hour's walk the dogs started some birds resembling pheasants, who flew off to some distance, and then



"Anxious to preserve its beautiful tail, I cut it off."

perched upon the lowermost branches of some trees and began to inspect Fred curiously. He immediately liberated his eagle, at whose appearance the birds dropped from the branches and proceeded to hide in the surrounding long grass. Nevertheless the eagle captured one of them, and another, transfixed with terror, was caught alive by Fred. It was a particularly beautiful bird, with a tail about two feet long with a variety of many coloured feathers, some broad, and some long and curved, red, orange and black, with one long black feather curved at the end.

The bird seemed to be something between a bird of Paradise and a pheasant, and I recognised it as the Australian *mænura superba*, the smaller and less handsome bird being its mate. Anxious to preserve its beautiful tail, I cut it off.

The boys lived a simple life : their fare consisting principally of cold stuff, smoked peccary hams, cassava cakes, fruit—especially guava and cinnamon apples—and potatoes. The pemmican they discarded from the first, and kept only for the dogs.

That night they collected a supply of rice and a bag of cotton wool. With these they intended to proceed to Highpeak, where they

were going to stay. Fred had, besides, taken some cocoanuts and palm wine as a bait for the monkeys, which he meant to catch with euphorbia gum.

But now I will leave Fred to tell his own story in his own words.

“We broke up for the woodman’s hut at Highpeak early in the morning, and arrived there before noon. On our way we were unexpectedly attacked by a tribe of monkeys, who were waiting for us in the sweet pine wood and received us with a bombardment of sweet pines. We did not mind this, for the fruit was ripe. But we soon got tired of their attentions; so we loaded our guns with small shot and blazed away at our enemies, killing about four or five. The others fled to the tops of the trees and hid themselves in the leaves.

“On the border of the wood we came upon a field of dhurra—that is at least what I think it was; the stalks stood about eight feet high, were half an inch thick, and carried large red berries, just like the pictures of the dhurra in your botany book, father. The plantation extended as far as Sugartop; but I was surprised to see that it had in parts been so crushed and trampled on that it looked as though a hail storm had passed over it. Our country villa of Highpeak was also in a very dilapidated condition. The monkeys had made frightful devastations.

“It took us the entire afternoon to clean the place out and prepare it for our quarters that night; and then we set to work to lay traps for the monkeys with the euphorbia gum.

“Just as we were going to lie down to sleep we could see the surface of the water illuminated, and presently beheld the moon rising out of the sea, as it were. It was a beautiful sight! But our raptures were interrupted by all sorts of uncanny sounds. We heard chattering and snoring, screeching and squealing; the barking of jackals in the distance; then the neighing of a horse, which seemed to come from the Causeway. But above all there was a deep roaring, which drowned the rest every now and then, and made us fancy that elephants or lions were at hand.

“We jumped up and reconnoitred, and came to the conclusion that the noise proceeded from an advancing tribe of monkeys; so we secured our dogs and tried to go to sleep. But we spent a terrible night—what with the barking of the dogs and the row the monkeys kicked up. Towards morning things got more peaceful, until a beautiful calm began to reign, and we proceeded to inspect the deadly work of the euphorbia gum. It was indeed a terrible sight! There were so many dead monkeys that we

shuddered. But we soon set to work to clear away the bodies as quickly as we could, and carried them off to sea, burning the cocoanut shells and gourds which had contained the deadly poison.

"We now had time to despatch a third carrier pigeon with a missive from Jack, conceived in an Oriental, flowery style."

This is the letter, and I will here interrupt Fred's narrative :

"Highpeak, the 8th, 9th, or 10th inst.

"The caravansary of Highpeak has been cleaned, and its



"There were so many dead monkeys that we shuddered."

beauty restored. This has cost us sweat and labour and the polluters their blood. Nemesis overtook the brood of the destroyer with a poisoned chalice, and the ocean has engulfed in its depths the perpetrators of iniquity. The sun above our heads beholds us ready for our journey, and when it sets it will find us at the Causeway, if not beyond it. *Valete!*"

This letter reached us at Homecliff in the morning ; and although the mythological Nemesis with the unmythological poisoned chalice puzzled us not a little, still we concluded that the boys were well.

Another despatch, which arrived in the afternoon, produced a totally different impression and filled us with anxiety. It ran as follows :

"The passage of the Causeway has been broken through and stormed. Everything has been destroyed as far as Sugartop. The smoke hut is in ruins. The sugar-canes have been torn up, and the fields are devastated. Large footprints are on the ground. Hasten! dear father, to our assistance: we are afraid of moving."

This announcement agitated us beyond measure. I immediately saddled Lightfoot, instructed the wife to join me next day at the Causeway, with Ernest, in the cart, with the cow and Rapid, and equipped for a lengthy sojourn; and then I was off.

I made the journey which usually took six hours in a very much shorter time, and my unexpected arrival was greeted with cheers. I could see all around me evidences of the terrible havoc that had been wrought. The stout beams with which we had barred the pass of the Causeway lay snapped like matchwood. The ravages in the sugar plantations were especially great, and I began to suspect that a herd of elephants, followed by hippopotami, had been holding their revels here.

I carefully examined the ground to see whether I could discover any traces of large animals: but all I could find were the footprints of a kind of large dog or wolf, which led towards the sea, but of whose return there were no indications; so I concluded that the traces were those of the hyena. I therefore made several large fires as a protection against the elephants, and we all went to sleep.

Mother arrived next day at noon, with Ernest, the cart, the cow and Rapid, and we immediately began to make arrangements for a protracted stay.

Our first care was to repair and strengthen the fortifications of the Causeway: this kept us employed for nearly a month, with intervals.

When that was completed we had further to construct a permanent dwelling in the neighbourhood, and so we carried out Fred's idea of building a Kamtchatkan summer residence. We found four tall and upright trees growing conveniently in a fairly regular square at intervals of about twelve to thirteen feet from each other: these we selected for pillars.

At an elevation of about twenty feet the trees were connected by means of beams of bamboo, upon which we laid our floor, which was shut in on all four sides with a thin wall of split bamboos to a height of eight feet, leaving a couple of narrow loopholes looking towards the Causeway. The roof was made slanting and covered with the bark of trees, so as to be watertight. By way of staircase we erected a beam, on each side of which we cut deep broad notches

for steps. By means of a second beam and a cogwheel this staircase could be raised through a trap-door in the floor and another in the roof, so that we could ascend to the roof or descend to the ground as we wished. Under this floor the trees were connected by means of wooden supports about four or five feet high; and in the space thus enclosed we were able to house our cattle and poultry, for which purpose we erected a rack and a trough near the entrance. We then constructed latticework walls of bamboos, which we placed above the supports and under the floor. We added a few carved ornamentations in the Chinese style, and as we had left the tops of the trees intact, we thus obtained a very handsome sort of arbour or hut. It proved of the greatest use to us, and served as a capital shelter for our poultry.

In their numerous excursions the boys made many new discoveries. One day Fred brought us from the banks of the East River a number of large and small cucumbers, as he thought—and the larger ones turned out to be cocoa, whereas the smaller ones were bananas. We did not at first relish this fruit at all.

“It is curious,” I exclaimed, “that these fruits do not taste agreeably! On the French islands cocoa cream is regarded as a great delicacy, although sugar is added to it. The seeds form the staple of the much prized chocloate. It is the same with bananas, which are so relished in the Indies.”

“I will take care of them,” said mother; “and perhaps may succeed in making them palatable, and in planting them.”

“That would not be of much use,” I replied, “for the cocoa beans should be planted moist from the fruit if they are to grow. But before we start on our return journey Fred must get us some more for this purpose.”

This Fred accomplished, using his cajak in the expedition, and bringing with him a heavy bag besides, which he secreted with the aid of Jack, and of which we learned the contents later. Fred also brought a big bird with him, whose head, legs and wings he had securely fastened. It was the sultan cock—a splendid waterfowl. Its legs and feet and a spot on its head were red, the rest of the body being of a bright violet, although the back was green and the throat brown—a very pretty and tractable bird, which we hoped to be able to tame with ease. Mother grew alarmed at the continued additions made to the poultry, but the beauty of the new arrival pacified her.

Fred now told us what he had seen in his expedition, and of the remarkable fertility of the soil on the opposite bank, and of the majesty of the dense forests he had passed. Turkeys, guineafowls,

peacocks and other birds abounded. He had gone above the buffalo swamp beyond the Causeway, and there he had caught the sultan cock with his brass sling. He had come across a forest of mimosa trees, where he had seen a herd of elephants—ten or twenty—who had pulled down enormous branches and shoved great bundles of them into their jaws. Some rolled about in the swamp, and some stood up to their bellies in water, sporting in it, and squirting at each other out of their trunks like animated fire engines. They took no notice of Fred and his cajak. In another spot he had seen beautiful panthers, who slaked their thirst, and whose beautiful skins looked dazzling in the glowing sun.

“I had a great desire,” he said, “to shoot one of them; but I thought the game too risky, being all by myself, and so I got very frightened and turned back as quickly as I could. Just as I was returning I saw at some distance from where I was, in a shallow part of the stream, a mighty foaming, as though a hot spring was bubbling up. All at once a dark brown horrible animal rose out of the water, yawned at me with a terrific noise, and, opening its jaws, displayed most formidable teeth. You should have seen how I paddled away from it! I did not stop till I had lost sight of the monster. For the present I have had quite enough natural history.”

This, briefly, was Fred's account of his experiences, and it gave us ample food for reflection, for it proved to us that we had in our neighbourhood numerous dangerous wild beasts. From Fred's description I at once concluded that the monster he had seen was a hippopotamus.

During Fred's absence we had been busy making preparations for our departure. Fred begged to be allowed to return by water in his cajak, and to this I readily agreed, for I wanted to learn something of the promontory and its navigation.

Early next morning we started on our way. Fred reached the promontory, which looked wild and inhospitable, with steep rocks full of crevices and caves, in which birds of prey and waterfowl seemed to have their homes in large numbers. Among the cliffs he saw a curious kind of plant, which occurred in great abundance and filled the air with its fragrance. Its blossoms were small and white, tinged with red, and occasionally tipped with green; the leaves were heart-shaped and provided with thorns. He also found a number of small white blossoms, with long narrow leaves like those of cherry trees. Fred brought me specimens of both: and I thought the latter was a kind of tea; and the first, caper bushes.

Jack had preceded us, and had successfully lowered the draw-bridge and had ridden on, bestriding his ostrich, to the Goose Swamp,

when he put the mysterious bag which Fred had given him into the water. Fred did not turn up until some time later, owing to the circuitous route he had taken round the Cape of Disappointed Hope.

We arrived without having encountered any adventures, and commenced unpacking. The great number of our poultry now awakened our solicitude, and we grew afraid lest they might become dangerous to our crops. I therefore ordered them to be distributed between our two islands, although I kept some at Homecliff.

Towards evening, as we were comfortably sitting on our verandah and listening to Fred's account of his adventures by flood and field, we were suddenly startled by a terrific roaring which proceeded from the direction of the Goose Swamp, and sounded like a thunderstorm. The dogs jumped up fearfully and howled.

I instantly told Jack to bring me my gun. Mother, Ernest and Frank were in a state of abject funk, but Fred remained perfectly calm and smiled scarcely perceptibly.

This damped my ardour, and I sat down again, remarking that the noise was probably being made by some bittern or other denizen of the marshes.

"Or perhaps," said Fred, "by Jack's giant frog."

"Aha!" I cried; "now I have solved the mystery of your bag! But I mean to be revenged on Jack. Let us all pretend to be frightened."

When Jack returned he found the household in a state of panic, and Fred called out:

"Oh! what a monster!"

"What? what?" cried Jack.

"A horrible cugar! How he roared! and how he jumped!"

"Where? where?" cried Jack, looking very pale.

"Out of the swamp," said Fred. "But as soon as he saw the dogs he jumped back again. An awful beast!"

"Let us go for him!" I said. "His skin alone is worth getting."

"But what is a cugar?" asked Jack.

"It is a sort of American tiger. You and Fred go on in front—we will follow."

"Thank you!" cried Jack. "I am off!" and with these words he ran like a hare.

We called to him to return; but nothing would induce him to leave the safe shelter of the grotto, until we burst out laughing and told him he had nothing to fear.

A few days after our expedition mother begged me to take in hand the repairing of Falconeyrie, for she argued that we should not neglect this noble country seat. I fully shared her views, and so we



“ALL AT ONCE A . . . HORRIBLE ANIMAL ROSE OUT OF THE WATER AND YAWNED
AT ME WITH A TERRIFIC NOISE.”

[Page 327.]

started for that place. But before doing so, the boys and I completed our salt trap, by means of which we hoped to be able to capture many an animal.

Everything went well with our aerial castle. We covered the lower roots in the shape of a terrace and coated them with clay: this we covered with rubber, so that the whole was made watertight. The dwelling in the branches we roofed in with the bark of trees, and we fitted the sides with galleries and balustrades, so that the unsightly nest soon developed into a charming residence.

We next carried into execution an idea of Fred's which he had never ceased to urge upon me: it was the construction of a sort of watch tower and the mounting of a four-pounder upon the summit of Shark Island. Of course this was no easy task, and I had great difficulty in devising a means of hoisting the unwieldy ordnance.

We finally succeeded in hauling it up by means of ropes and pulleys and placing it in position. Close behind it we crected a small watch tower, or look-out box, of bamboo and boards; and by the side of this we planted a flagstaff, with a rope for the hoisting of a flag, which was to be white if what was signalled was not dangerous, but red in the opposite case.

On the completion of this work we hoisted our white flag and fired off a salute, which re-echoed most impressively amongst the rocks and cliffs.

CHAPTER XXII.

PEARL FISHING.

AFTER a lapse of about eight years I reopen these pages and look over the chapters already written. History has repeated itself. The eight years have passed away in much the same manner as those already described. Hunting and exploring expeditions, alternated with hard work, new discoveries and disappointments, succeeded each other. Ten years have passed over us—ten years of solitude, of struggle, of peace, of happiness. They have left their traces behind them. My hair is threaded with silver ; my hands are hard and horny. Mother is nearly snow white : she has felt the hardships of this kind of life more than any of us ; her delicate frame has been racked with fever. - But to-day she looks at me with her usual calm cheerfulness.

“Mother,” I say to her, “you look splendid ! Your brown, tanned features and silver locks form a beautiful picture.”

My four boys have grown into four young men. The struggle for existence—no figure of speech with us—has developed their powers and made fine strapping fellows of them. Constant intercourse with nature has made them bright and cheerful, and the presence of their mother has exercised a softening and refining influence on their characters which might otherwise have become rough and coarse. Their affectionate obedience and reverence for their mother was a constant solace to my heart and an earnest that all through life they would retain a noble and chivalrous sentiment for woman.

We owed much to our library, which kept our minds attuned to culture, and in our museum we had collected a number of specimens and curiosities which many a European professor would have envied us.

Far from the strife and turmoil of the world, our boys have grown up without being affected by either its bad or its good influences, but, perhaps for that very reason, with a more than usually deep

and vivid religious sense. Living face to face with nature they have felt themselves more closely drawn to their Creator than would perhaps have been the case had they been reared in one of the dusty and tumultuous cities of Europe. They have not become fine gentlemen, it is true, and would cut a sorry figure in a ballroom. They would be at a loss to supply the indispensable small talk; and as for dancing and paying compliments—well, the less said the better. When they have nothing to say, they are silent: for they have developed into thoroughly healthy and natural young men, although they have retained much of their boyishness. They are stronger and more energetic than they could have become in Europe, but they are also less tractable. The days when they used to ask my permission to make expeditions have long passed away, and now they set out on excursions by themselves, and half the time I do not know where they are.

Ernest has got over his laziness, and is quite as much a man as Fred, who is six-and-twenty, and has a dark beard, brown hair and hazel eyes—a very fine fellow. Ernest is fair, and though two years Fred's junior, has overtaken him in height by several inches; he is of a more elegant figure, but he has quite as much endurance as his brother. Jack, who is twenty-three, is short, like Fred, but has more delicate features, and is more wiry than powerful. Frank is twenty, and combines in his person many of the qualities of mind and body of his brothers; he is the only one who is beardless as yet.

Our agricultural surroundings have remained the same, except that we have greatly improved them. Homecliff is still our winter palace and the seat of government, so to speak, while Falconeyrie continues to be our "summer pleasaunce." We have increased our stables, our dovecotes, our beehives, etc.; and at Homecliff we have introduced many new features. Thus, in front of our residence there is now a handsome roofed gallery supported by a colonnade of fourteen stalwart trunks of trees, round which are trained a variety of creepers. An attempt at a vineyard failed on account of the great heat. We usually spend our evenings, after the day's work is done, on our verandah, at each end of which there is a fountain, from which we can water our plants and irrigate our plantations. Both ends of the verandah have been ornamented with Chinese carvings, and there are steps leading up to it—though at the main entrance, which is in the centre, there is an inclined plane.

The neighbourhood of Tentbourne and Refuge Bay, once an arid desert, has been transformed by hard work, aided by a benign climate, into a veritable Paradise. Shark Island has long ceased

to be the bare rock it was when we first landed on it. Coconut palms and sweet pine trees wave their crested tops in the sea breeze, and the sandy beach is protected from the inroads of the sea by dense mango plantations. The watch tower looks bright and cheerful at the top with its bunting, and supported by its threatening ordnance.

Our fields extend from our grotto to the Jackal and right up to its source, forming a sort of triangle of fertility. In a straight line with our verandah there are a bamboo palisade and a hedgerow of prickly plants, which protect the plantations as far as the Jackal. We grow cotton, sugar-canes and all kinds of European fruit; but our grapes have not been successful. Our avenue of trees from Homecliff to Falconeyrie is particularly fine, though I am bound to say that the climate has not favoured the apples and pears and such European fruit. But in revenge, we have capital oranges, lemons, pineapples, and cinnamon apples. We have also constructed a number of new appliances and tools. Many of these leave much to be desired, from the point of view of workmanship and finish, but they fulfil their purpose.

For instance, we have a sugar press, which we laboriously constructed out of the remains of the wreck, and which is driven by our cattle. Then four copper boilers, which we had at first intended to use for sugar refining, and in which we at one time kept our ammunition, had got empty, and are now securely cemented in our oven. We have also an appliance for rasping and pressing the oil out of our nuts, almonds and olives. Then we have a stone roller for the flax and the cocoa, which moves along a wooden runner: this delivers into a large hollowed soapstone, which was easy to scoop out, and has been dried and hardened in the air and fire. This receptacle has a border nine inches thick, and rests upon an oven built in the ground, which can be heated if desired. Taught by experience, we have covered this in, so that we are independent of the seasons. All our refuse from animal oil, tanning, chandling, etc., is deposited on Whale Island. Our factory for these industries has been constructed in a rock which we excavated, so that there also we can work under shelter.

At Woodstead we have a regular cotton plantation, and we have transformed the rice swamp into a regular rice field. Nor have we neglected Highpeak, which yields us capers, vinegar and pepper. Immediately after the rainy season the tea plants put out their leaves in abundance, which we collect, dry and store. The sugar-canes we reap just before the rainy season.

Occasionally we make an excursion from Highpeak to the

Causeway, in order to ascertain whether elephants or other dangerous animals have broken through our fortifications or have got caught in our snares and traps.

Our domestic animals, and the poultry as well, are in capital condition, and have increased and multiplied. This is particularly true of our pigeons and poultry, who, by crossing with native wild birds, have developed into fine and splendid breeds.

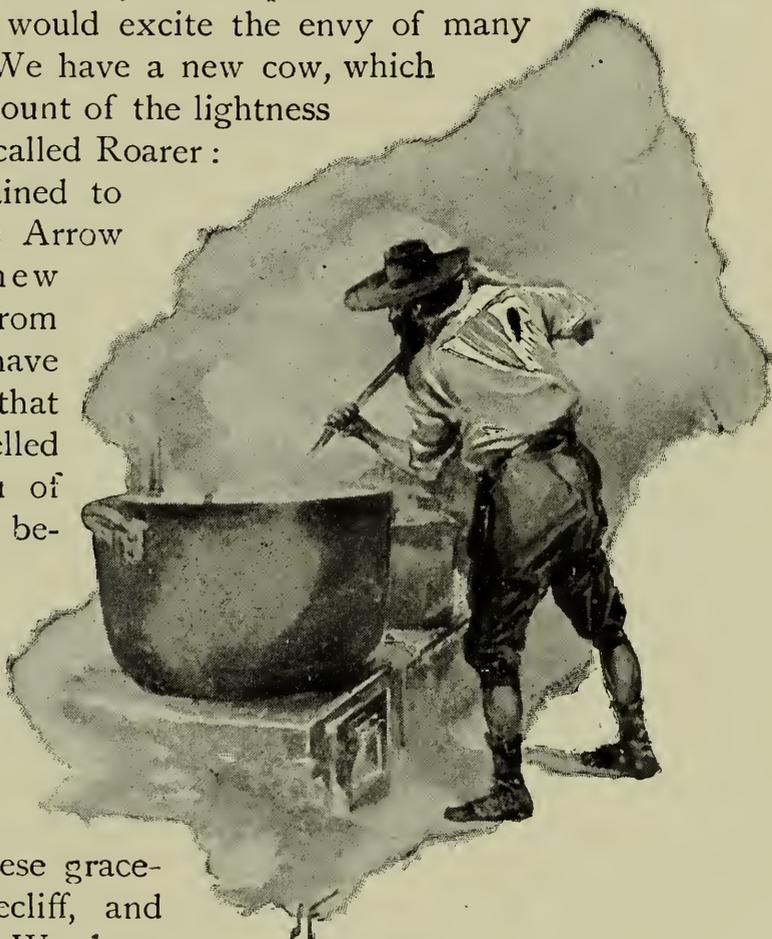
Our dinner table is always well provided with chickens and pigeons, and our eggs would excite the envy of many a European farmer. We have a new cow, which we call Paleface on account of the lightness of its skin, and a bull called Roarer :

both are of course trained to ride and drive, just as Arrow and Fleet — two new donkeys—a present from Rapid. The pigs have increased so greatly that we have been compelled to transport a number of them into the region beyond the Causeway. Our deer have also multiplied, so that we have no lack of venison; but the antelopes increase slowly. Latterly we have domesticated two of these graceful animals at Homecliff, and made pets of them. We have allowed only one of Hunter's offspring to remain alive, and Jack has called him Coco.

And now, having made this rapid survey of our circumstances, I will proceed with the history of our lives.

As I have already hinted, my sons had outgrown my parental authority, and I was in the main pleased that it should be so. They had ceased to be children, and it was necessary that they should learn to be independent. Who could know what the future had in store for us, and how long we—their parents—would be spared to remain with them !

Thus I lost sight of Fred one day from early morn, and it was not until late that we noticed the absence of the cajak, and concluded



Sugar-making.

that he had undertaken an expedition by sea. We went off to Shark Island to see if we could find any trace of our fugitive, and saw that our signal gun was properly loaded and our flag merrily flying in the wind.

Presently we beheld a dark object in the water, and I was soon able to discern the cajak through my spy-glass. Fred was paddling along more slowly than usual towards Homecliff.

"Number one, fire!" cried Ernest, who was officer of the watch; and Jack fired. We then all cheered, and ran down to our boat so as to intercept Fred if possible.



"Presently we beheld a dark object in the water."

He had scarcely entered Refuge Bay when we at once saw the reason of his slackness of speed. He was towing some heavy booty alongside his cajak, the figurehead of which—the walrus—was loaded up with a bundle which looked like a bird's nest; besides this, he was towing a heavy bag behind him.

"Welcome, Fred! welcome!" I cried. "Where have you come from, and what do you bring? You are loaded up like a carrier, you rascal! Well, I am glad you are all right!"

"I have brought great booty and made marvellous discoveries!" said Fred proudly.

The brothers hauled Fred on shore right up to our dwelling, and

then went and fetched his curious trophies : a strange-looking sea monster, and a bag full of big flat shells. We then sat round Fred and made him tell us his adventures.

“ Well, I hope you were not anxious, father,” said Fred, “ at my sudden disappearance ; but, to tell the truth, I had been longing for years for a favourable opportunity to repeat my trip out to sea to the spot where I shot the walrus and to find out what the coast was like. So I made my preparations and started to-day, as I at last thought I could spare the time : besides, it was such a fine day. As I passed the spot where we were wrecked the sea was so clear that I could see to the bottom, and there were lots of cannon and iron bars and all sorts of things from our vessel still lying quite undisturbed. What a pity we are unable to bring them up !

“ Then I went round the rocks westwards, among cliffs and straits. Amongst the most inaccessible of the rocks I saw wild birds of all sorts who had selected these places for brooding. But those places less difficult of approach were tenanted by sea monsters, who lay snoring and sleeping in the sun. They were sea bears, sea lions, sea elephants—but especially walruses. It was wonderful to see them draw themselves up the rocks by their tusks. The ground about there is scattered with the bones and teeth of these animals, so that we could go and fetch lots of them for our museum.

“ But I must confess that the neighbourhood of all these wild beasts was not particularly pleasant, and I felt more disposed to slip past them unnoticed than to fight my way through them.

“ Nevertheless, I was more than an hour getting away before I felt quite safe, and was entirely hidden from view in a noble natural arch in the rocks. Here I found quantities of little sand swallows, who kept flying round me and making an unearthly noise. There were thousands of them ; and their nests were all about, and cleverly constructed of feathers, down and fibres. Each was supported on a kind of ledge, which looked like a small spoon or stalk : this was stuck to the rock, and had the appearance of being made of grey wax, which aroused my curiosity. I saw a few deserted nests, and succeeded in detaching them with great care, and found that they were made of a material which resembled fish glue ; but you will be able to ascertain for yourself, for I have brought a lot with me. I wonder whether they are the so-called edible nests of which we have read—the Indian ones, you know ? They look exactly like the pictures of them.”

“ I think you are right. But mother will cook us some of them, and then we will see how the stuff tastes,” I said.

“ I now continued my journey,” Fred proceeded ; “ and as soon as

I had made my way through the natural arch in the rocks, I found myself in a beautiful bay, with a splendid flat shore of enormous extent, covered with fine trees and watered by a splendid stream, beyond which I saw a magnificent cedar wood, which shut out the view.

“While gliding along over the smooth surface of this shore, I came upon a bed of bivalvular shells, like oysters; and as I looked down I could see how they had hairy growths on them, in which they were intertwined. I thought these would prove better eating than our little oysters in Refuge Bay; so I pulled up a few with my boathook, and went on shore at once to see what they were like. The sun burst them open, and I began to cut at the flesh inside with a knife; but it looked so hard and tough that I doubted whether there was any good eating to be got out of it. Presently my knife came upon something hard, and I soon hit upon a number of round balls of about the size of peas and apparently made of mother-of-pearl. I found that all the oysters contained these curious things—some as large as hazel nuts—between the meat and the shell. I have put them all into my bamboo box. Look at them, father! if they are not the finest Oriental pearls, call me a Dutchman!”

“Let us look! let us look!” his brothers cried. “Oh, what a splendid find!”

“Indeed,” I said, “it seems that you have found a real treasure, for which entire nations would envy us if they knew we possessed it. But, my dear boy, of what use are they to us? We shall get more benefit from your edible nests. Still, it would be well to visit this place again: your discovery may lead to others. But go on.”

“Well,” said Fred, “having taken some refreshment, I continued my journey along the strand until I arrived at the stream, although the bag of oysters prevented me from going very fast. The stream had a very slight fall, and was covered with the most beautiful water plants, so that it looked in parts like a meadow, and I saw a lot of waterfowl upon it. Here I took in a supply of drinking water, and soon arrived at the cape, which ended the bay. This bay took me about two hours to paddle round, and I gave it the name of Pearl Bay. The two opposite capes nearly met—a row of rocks running out to meet each other, and thus forming a splendid natural harbour.

“As the tide was coming in, I found it extremely difficult to get out; so I kept along the rocky coast, and then came upon a number of strange animals, of the size of seals, sporting about. I was afraid of shooting for fear of missing them, but very anxious to capture one; so I hid behind a rock and let loose Lightning,

the eagle, who swooped down and blinded one in a twinkling. I instantly jumped out of my cajak and ran up and killed the animal with my boathook, but was surprised to find that all the others were gone."

"But how did you manage to tow the brute along—for it was much too heavy for your little craft?"

"Well, that took some trouble and thought. You see, I had no intention of leaving it behind. While I was looking about for some means of getting out of my difficulty, I was struck by the number of sea birds with which I was surrounded. There were albatrosses, sea mews, gulls and cormorants in every variety, and they kept pestering me so much that I lost my temper and began hitting out with my boathook. I hit one of them fairly and squarely on the head, so that it fell at my feet. It was an albatross. It lay before me with its wings outstretched, and it suddenly occurred to me that its quills could be used to blow out the skin of my prey, and thus make it float. So I pulled out the feathers of its wings and put my idea into execution, which succeeded admirably. Now it was high time to get home. I dragged my cajak across the rocks into the open sea—and here I am!"

This was Fred's story, and immediately the family began to inspect his booty, the animal turning out to be a sea otter. While they were all busily engaged, Fred beckoned me aside, and said:

"Fancy, father, what a curious thing I found on the albatross! While I was overhauling it, I found a linen rag tied to one of its legs. I examined it carefully, and found on it, written in English, in purple, the words, *Save an unhappy Englishwoman from the smoking cliff!*"

"What do you say?" I exclaimed.

Fred seized my arm.

"You can imagine, father, how I felt! I read and re-read the words."

"Good God!" I thought: "can this be true, or is it an illusion? But why should not some other person have suffered shipwreck as well as ourselves?"

"What do you suppose I did?" said Fred. "I tried to bring the albatross to life again, and dipped a feather in the blood of the sea otter, with which I wrote on my handkerchief, *Trust in God—help is near!* I tied this to the albatross with the linen rag, so that the Englishwoman, if she ever should get sight of the albatross again, might see by the two bandages that he had brought her an answer. For I concluded that the poor woman had probably partly trained the bird, and that he would sooner or later return

to the smoking cliff, which I supposed was probably near at hand. I succeeded in reviving the stunned bird with some hydromel. He began to stagger about, lifted his wings, made a few attempts, and then rose in the air and flew off in a westerly direction. I looked after him disappointed, for I had hoped to be able to follow him, but he was speedily out of sight. But now, father, I am



“You were right to entrust this circumstance to nobody but me.”

tormented with the thought that the missive may never reach its destination. Where may she be? Shall I be able to find, and save her?”

“My dear boy,” I replied, “this occurrence is the most remarkable that has yet happened to us, and I am delighted at the cleverness you have displayed. You were right to entrust this circumstance

to nobody but me. The news would only cause a general uneasiness, without doing any good, especially as we do not know how old the writing may have been. The writer may by this time be lost, or she may be so far away as to be beyond our reach; for the albatross is a great traveller, and covers an enormous distance in a few days. Now let us join the others. I have something to say."

I led my son by the hand into the centre of our family circle, and said:

"Here, mother, I bring you your son, and you, boys, your eldest brother, who has displayed so much ability and resourcefulness that I must henceforth treat him as an independent young man and ask you to show him a like respect. From to-day he is our friend and companion, and I herewith formally renounce all parental authority over him."

Fred was quite taken aback. Mother wept, and pressed him to her bosom, kissing him tenderly, and then went about to prepare a banquet for this solemn occasion.

"I wish you joy," said Ernest. "You have now become a Roman citizen, for the *toga virilis* has been awarded you."

Jack laughed, and said:

"I shall now always make Fred responsible for my mistakes; then father will be unable to grumble."

"What a time I shall have to wait," Frank exclaimed, "before I can aspire to such a dignity! I shall have to find many a bird's nest, many an albatross and pearl fishery, before I can hope to be called the friend and counsellor of father!"

The pearls formed the principal interest of the evening. The boys threw the oysters on the fire, and then they proceeded to examine and cut them about. But it was not every oyster which contained pearls.

"How stupid!" said Jack, "to have to waste so much time!"

"Why not boil them?" Fred suggested.

"But," Ernest objected, "in large pearl fisheries the oysters are not boiled, I believe."

"Of course not!" I replied: "that would be an extravagant method. The shells are exposed in the sun until the oysters have rotted and are putrid. There are regular watchmen whose unenviable business it is to keep an eye on the oysters."

Jack now brought two oyster shells containing several large and smaller pearls, and asked whether they were valuable.

"Indeed they are," I replied, "for you can see how clear and pure they are. They look as though they had been covered with

silver; they have, also, the right shape—round, longitudinal and regular.”

“But are not all pearls alike?” Frank asked.

“Far from it, my boy!” I answered. “The purity of pearls is said to depend upon the ground in which the oysters are bedded. Those which are found in marshes are said to be dull, but those which are bedded in sand are bright. The colour also varies. In the Gulf of California all pearls are of a yellowish red, and those on the African coast are blackish.”

“How do these pearls originate?” Frank asked.

“Naturalists say that pearls occur only in oysters which have sustained some injury or other. You see, there are certain marine animals, called pholades, who pierce the shells of oysters in order to prey upon the flesh inside. The oysters that are thus attacked cover with a limelike substance, from the inside, the part of the shell which the pholas is trying to perforate. The oyster is also supposed to cover with a similar lime all stones and pebbles that may get into it: this lime gets hard, and grows into pearl. Pearl fishers are said to bring about the formation of pearls either by imitating the procedure of the pholades or by introducing pebbles.”

“But are pearl oysters always so accessible as those which Fred found?” Frank continued.

“No, my boy, indeed they are not,” I said: “sometimes they are ten and even sixty feet below the surface, and sometimes they are so firmly embedded in the rock that they have to be cut out by divers armed with knives.”

“Why should not we start a pearl fishery of our own?” Ernest remarked. “All we need do is to perforate the oysters that remain and to place them in a shallow part of Refuge Bay.”

“A capital idea!” they all cried; and they rushed off to the workshop and set to work to bore holes in the oysters, after which they carried the unlucky molluscs to the water, where they were carefully immersed, and subsequently carelessly forgotten.

My four hopefuls now begged me to set out at once with them for the pearl fisheries; but I restrained them, and counselled them to provide themselves with useful implements before starting.

So we made a number of hooks and rakes of iron, to which we fitted wooden handles provided with iron rings for ropes, so that we could suspend them from our boat and drag the oyster beds with them.

Ernest, at my suggestion, prepared an instrument, like a tree scraper, with an upright chisel fitted to it, to be used in getting the edible birds' nests.

Jack busied himself with the construction of a ladder of bamboo, to which he fitted an iron hook at the top and an iron spike at the foot.

Frank helped mother to make a number of nets to be attached to the drags, by means of which the oysters could be fished up.

Meanwhile Fred was silently at work in making a second opening in the deck of his cajak, the object of which I had no difficulty in guessing, though the others very naturally thought that he intended to take one of them with him.

We next laid in a stock of provisions, and thus, fully equipped, we started on our expedition on a day when wind and weather seemed favourable, leaving mother and Frank behind. Our animal companions consisted of Snip junior—a young monkey whom we had caught and tamed after his predecessor's death; Jack's aged jackal, Hunter; the somewhat superannuated Bill; and Brown and Tan, who had grown so well in this splendid climate that they could have challenged comparison with the celebrated dog which the Indian king, Porus, is said to have presented to Alexander the Great, and was a match for lions and tigers—nay, they could even have faced an elephant.

Jack insisted on getting into the cajak with Fred and acting as pilot. We followed them closely, and on our journey saw many a tusk, skull and skeleton of walruses which had rotted away. My young companions looked at these remains with longing eyes; but I did not wish to lose time, so we kept on.

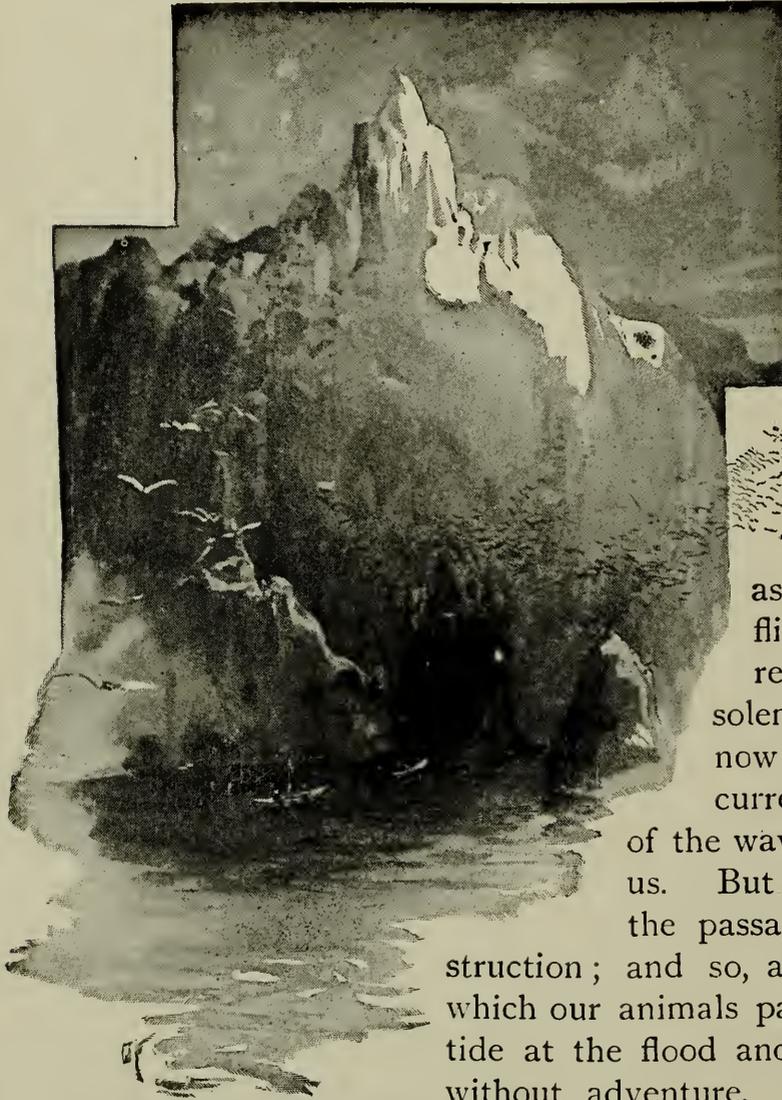
As soon as we got into smooth water we saw several specimens of the nautilus manœuvring about. The crew of the cajak suddenly made a descent upon these, and caught a number with their nets. We were so pleased with the capture that we christened this bay Nautilus Bay.

Presently we came upon a low-lying cape, which we had to sail round, and gave the name of Cape Snubnose. Beyond, though at some distance, we saw another cape, behind which, according to Fred, lay Pearl Bay. There was no occasion to circumnavigate it, for here we found the natural arch of which Fred had spoken. The cape had the appearance of a Gothic cathedral, and so we called it Churchcliff. But the extreme point was named, in honour of Fred's find, Otter Reef. The bay through which we were sailing was called Bird's-Nest Bay, for it was here that the edible birds' nests abounded.

The nearer we got to the arch the more we were astonished at its remarkable formation: it looked like a gigantic Gothic ruin. A perfect army of small swallows flew about the entrance

and gambolled round, their nests hanging to the rocks on every side.

As soon as we reached the arch we forgot our admiration in our eagerness to reap a rich harvest of nests, and we immediately proceeded to put our appliances in requisition. We confined our attention to old and abandoned nests, for we did not wish to destroy the eggs in the new ones. Fred and Jack proved the most active,



"It looked like a gigantic Gothic ruin."

whilst Ernest and I contented ourselves with detaching the most accessible nests. We had brought an enormous bag with us, which we very soon filled, and then we proceeded to make our entrance into the archway. We were a little nervous about this, for the interior was as dark as night. The flight of the swallows re-echoed through the solemn tunnel, and every now and then a mysterious current of air or the rushing of the waves sent a thrill through us. But Fred assured us that the passage was free from obstruction; and so, after a hearty meal, in which our animals participated, we took the tide at the flood and were carried through without adventure. The archway was full of grottoes, cupolas and vaults, and the symmetry of its formation excited our admiration. The Architect of the world seemed to have begun an enormous temple here, and left it uncompleted. Instead of human devotees, it was visited by all manner of birds and marine animals.

We soon found ourselves in a splendid bay—a natural harbour for the navies of the world.

We kept close to the beach till we came to a fairly spacious cove, near the spot where Fred had found the oysters, into which a gurgling

brook poured its transparent waters. Here we landed, and, after a hearty supper, lay down to rest on our bear-skins in our boats.

At break of day we started for the oyster beds immediately after breakfast, and the success which accompanied our efforts led us to spend two days in this delightful spot fishing for oysters, of which we collected a formidable pile.

Every evening we used to make small excursions in the neighbourhood, and generally bagged some sort of fowl or bird for supper.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE BOAR AND THE LION.

ON the last evening of our sojourn in Pearl Bay we had a great mind to penetrate a little more deeply into the adjoining forest, whence we thought we had heard the cries of peacocks and turkeys, and we also hoped to come across some four-footed animal.

Ernest went on in front with Tan ; Jack did not lag far behind him with Hunter ; while Fred and myself were still completing our arrangements on shore and packing up our tools. Suddenly we heard a shot fired, followed by a scream, and then another shot. Bill and Brown immediately bounded off in the direction of the firing.

Fred was not slow to follow, and let off his eagle at the same time. Presently I heard a pistol shot ; and then, instead of a cry for help as before, a loud and hearty cheering.

Of course I was by this time well under weigh myself and hurrying forward to the assistance of my boys ; but the cheering reassured me, and so I slackened my pace. In less than two minutes I caught sight of Jack, who, supported by Fred and Ernest, came limping towards me.

"Oh !" he cried, "I have been pounded up like peppercorns in a mortar !"

I examined him carefully, but beyond a few bruises found he had sustained no injuries. So I chaffed him, and said :

"A gallant sportsman like you should not kick up such a row over a few trifling bruises ! You are not much of a man !"

"A few bruises !" cried Jack : "it is lucky that your gallant sportsman is alive to tell the tale ! The brute very nearly ripped open my stomach. Fortunately Fred's pistol and the plucky dogs saved me."

"What is it all about ? Speak up ! What brute ?" I asked.

"Oh !" said Ernest ; "it was a horrible African boar, with hideous

flaps of flesh under the eyes and temples, and with tusks half a foot long, and a snout with which it tore up the earth as though it was ploughing !”

“ Well, in that case there was real danger,” I said. “ Let us take the poor fellow back to the boats, and take care of him, and give him something to drink to pick him up ; the fright alone must have upset him.”

I gave him some home-made wine, and rubbed his bruises with it, and stretched him on one of our bear-skins in the boat, and presently he was fast asleep.

I now turned to Ernest, and said to him :

“ Tell me all about this African boar, for I am still very hazy about the whole adventure.”

“ Well, it was like this, you see. I and Tan were the first to enter the forest, when my dog suddenly left me and went for something in the bushes. This is where the brute must have had its lair : for it broke out of the thicket, making a terrific noise, and put me into no end of a funk ! For it was not an inviting looking beast as it stood there, at some distance, sharpening its tusks against a tree. Jack had meantime come up ; and as soon as Hunter saw the brute the jackal went for it, and kept bounding round it with Tan, both barking and howling like mad and looking for a point of attack. I approached the monster cautiously from tree to tree, so as to get within gunshot of it. But Hunter, more precipitate, boldly jumped on the boar, and got badly thrown by a vicious kick from behind. Jack, losing his temper, ran forward and fired, but either missed or only grazed the brute. Of course this enraged the boar, who became frantic, and made a dead set at Jack. Jack immediately turned tail and fled. I fired in support of Jack, but missed my aim, only wounding the brute and increasing its rage. Jack was running like a hare, and would have got clean away if he had not stumbled over a root and fallen down. Just as the boar was going for him, Tan and Hunter seized it from behind, so that it had to defend itself against this fresh attack, and was prevented from doing Jack any serious injury. At this juncture Bill and Brown arrived on the scene and seized the boar by the ears ; the eagle swooped down on it from above, and Fred was able to go quite close up to it and finish it off with his pistol. We now assisted poor Jack, who was groaning, to his feet. In the meantime I noticed that Snip—who had also joined us—and Hunter were eagerly eating something on the spot where the boar had torn up the ground. I drove them away, and picked up a few little roots which I strongly suspect to be truffles. Here they are !”

“ Let me smell them, my boy. If my nose does not deceive me,

you have made a valuable discovery. Yes, indeed, they taste like the finest truffles! But they are still better cooked."

Fred followed my example and tasted them also, remarking that they were much better eating than ordinary potatoes, although they resembled them strongly. But he could find no root fibres or eyes on them.

"At any rate," he said, "these are not the tough bits of leather which are found cut in slices in the sauces of Europe: though they are somewhat dry, they have, nevertheless, a delicate and agreeable flavour."

"You must remember," I said, "that those you have eaten in Europe are cut in slices, hung on a string and dried, and thus lose much of their delicate flavour and aroma. Epicures prefer them fresh, soaked in claret, or stewed in oil with anchovies."

"Are they all imported into Europe? Can't they be grown there?" Fred asked.

"They are found in Europe also, especially in Italy and France—even in Germany. They generally grow in oak forests. People go to look for them with a spade and a dog—sometimes pigs are used to find them. In Italy there are small, ugly-looking dogs who have a very fine scent, and smell the truffles under ground. On such occasions the dogs receive some of the truffles as a reward, in order to encourage them for the future. Pigs may be used instead of dogs; but a ring must be inserted in their snouts, otherwise they will eat up all the truffles themselves."

"Do not the truffles shoot out any kind of leaves or stalks, by means of which they can be recognised?" Fred continued.

"No; they can only be discovered by their smell, which is best detected by pigs and dogs. It is not even known whether they are roots, fungi or fruit; and their culture is quite unknown, as far as I am aware. But it is said that they can be produced in sandy soil, by means of cuttings, like potatoes. They occur in sizes varying from that of peas to that of apples."

"How strange," said Ernest, "that man, who has been able to solve so many of nature's riddles, should have been baffled by these truffles!"

"Well, I think there are certain flies who betray this underground treasure occasionally. They lay their eggs in the truffles, and their larvæ eat them. At certain times, therefore, swarms of these flies may be seen round spots where truffles are hidden. How these flies are to be distinguished from other flies of a similar kind I cannot tell you. Truffles are classed with mushrooms, but I do not know their varieties—in fact, I think there is only one kind of truffles,



“‘JACK IMMEDIATELY TURNED TAIL AND FLED.’”

which, however, varies in size and colour. The skin is generally black or dark brown; but the inside is sometimes white, sometimes pink, sometimes yellow, brown, and even black."

While we were thus discussing them we had eaten up all Ernest's truffles, and presently had our supper and made arrangements for the night. We would have liked to have collected our dogs round us, but they had remained behind over the carcass of the boar, and it was too late to go and fetch them back.

Early next morning we started for the spot where the boar had been slain, in order to inspect the animal and consult as to the best use to which its body could be put. We left Jack in the boat, for the shock he had sustained necessitated rest.

As soon as we approached the forest, Hunter and the three dogs sprang forward joyfully to greet us, showing that they had watched the carcass without danger. We were soon on the spot, and were surprised at the hideousness of the brute. It seemed to me this formidable beast could have faced buffaloes and even lions with impunity.

While I was silently surveying the monster, Fred exclaimed:

"This is a splendid opportunity to indemnify us for the Westphalian hams which we have digested so long ago! We shall get bigger joints too!"

"Yes, and we must not forget the head," said Ernest, "which Jack wants to keep for our museum. But it would be better to get the carcass to the beach, when we could cut it up at our leisure."

"That is easy enough," said Fred.

"All right!" I cried; "but I am afraid a tough old African boar will prove as poor eating as a tough European hog. Let us first get all the truffles we can: mother will thank us more for them than for this dried-up old carcass!"

We immediately proceeded to investigate the ground, but found few leavings—the boar, the monkey and the dogs had devoured all that was worth eating. But Fred's keen eyes soon discovered several swarms of flies dancing over the ground, and this led us to hope that we should find more truffles hidden in the spot over which they were hovering; and in this surmise we were not mistaken.

Fred prepared a sort of sledge of branches, and we cut off the head and haunches of the boar, which we placed on the sledge and made the dogs drag off to the beach. But as soon as they had finished their task, they bolted back to the forest to devour the rest of the boar's carcass.

As we took to pieces the branches of which we had constructed the sledge, we noticed a number of nuts, which contained, instead of kernels, a quantity of yellow fibres resembling cotton in appearance, and I remembered that Nankin or Chinese silk, is obtained from a kind of nut. So we collected all the nuts we could, and determined to return at some future time to fetch an entire cargo of them for mother, and if possible transplant a few saplings.

Fred and Ernest now conceived the idea of preparing a surprise for Jack by roasting the boar's head with the truffles; and for this purpose they dug a deep ditch, and proceeded to kindle a fire, and hung the hams over it so as to singe the bristles.

Jack soon roused himself; and when he saw what his brothers were up to, he immediately offered his assistance, and helped them to clean the boar's head and stuff it with truffles. In the meantime the cleaning of the legs and haunches fell to my share—not a particularly pleasant occupation.

By this time evening had overtaken us, when we were suddenly startled by hearing a terrific roaring. We stood transfixed to the ground. The roaring was repeated, and proceeded from the direction of the forest. We waited a few moments, and the air was again rent by the terrible roaring, which seemed to proceed from some giant lungs.

“It must, it must be a lion!” cried Fred, his eyes flashing fire. He then seized his gun and jumped into his cajak.

“Feed the fire!” he shouted. “Get into your boat! Have your guns ready! I shall paddle round!”

Saying these words, he darted off in his cajak towards the mouth of the brook, and was presently lost to view. Mechanically we followed his instructions as well as we could. We threw as much wood into the fire as we could lay our hands on; then we caught up our guns, buckled on our hunting knives, and jumped into the boat, and lay there breathlessly straining every nerve, and ready to shoot or row away as fast as we could, as the occasion might warrant. And now our dogs, with Hunter and Snip, came at full speed from the forest, and made straight for the fire, behind which the dogs and the jackal, their hair on end, made a stand, barking and howling; while poor little Snip, whining pitcously, tried to join us in our boat, but was afraid of a wetting.

Meanwhile the horrible roaring was repeated at intervals. It came nearer and nearer—clearly from the spot where the boar had been killed. The smell of the carcass must have attracted the invisible king of beasts. Was it really a lion? I dared no longer

doubt it. We had not encountered one for all these years, it is true ; but that voice could belong to no meaner animal.

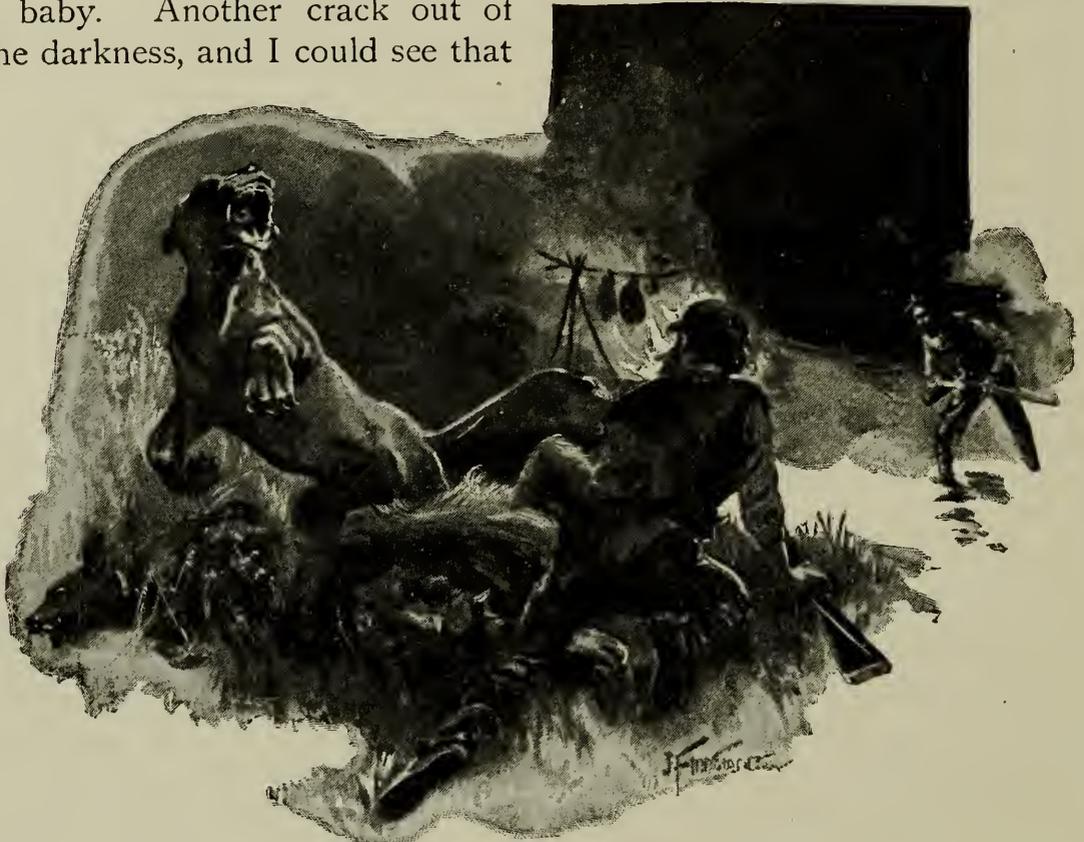
There! What was that at the extreme circumference of our circle of vision? Something stood there which had not been there before, and now—a fresh roar, a roar which shook every bone in our bodies and made us quake with fear ; and then in two or three mighty leaps and bounds there came towards us a powerful beast. It was a lion! A shudder passed through my body. What was going to happen now?

Beyond the fire, at some distance still, it had stopped motionless for a few seconds. Now it dropped down like a cat cowering, while its glistening eyes were continually wandering from the dogs to the hams suspended over the fire. Presently it raised itself again slowly and began with measured pace to walk up and down, stopping every now and then and roaring violently and quickly, and thereupon continuing its circular, catlike movements. Several times it turned sharply to the brook, bounded towards it with a few leaps, drank from it hastily, and returned to its gyrations. At each turn it got nearer and nearer to the fire, and its pace grew more springy. Every fresh roar had a more threatening sound. The dogs stood howling behind the fire, their limbs drawn together. The strain upon our nerves became well-nigh unbearable. I dared not fire, for the uncertain light of the flickering faggots and the uncertain movements of the lion made it impossible to take a quiet aim. Now it suddenly stood still, ducked down, and cowered, lowering its head upon its outstretched fore paws. Its eyes seemed to radiate sparks, its tail thrashed the ground right and left. Drawing a deep breath, I raised my gun. At that moment, in the darkness and in the immediate neighbourhood, I heard the crack of a gun. I jumped up. It was Fred! The lion leapt into the air with a fierce and penetrating roar, stood rigid for a few seconds, swerved, and fell down, remaining motionless on the ground.

“Saved!” I cried, still half choked with excitement. “It seems to have been hit in the heart! A master shot! Remain in the boat and keep your guns ready! There is no knowing! I will jump on shore!”

I sprang into the water, and was soon on shore. The dogs received me with joyful whines ; but immediately looked out into the darkness again, from whence the lion had come. The air was not clear. Danger was still lurking. I stood behind the fire with my gun ready. Sure enough—there it was! Another terrific roar proceeded out of the darkness, and seemed to be coming towards us. With rapid bounds a second powerful animal, not quite so big

as the one which lay stretched on the ground, approached us. It was a lioness. For a moment only she started as she saw the fire, but presently took no notice either of that or of the dogs. She crossed up and down restlessly round the lighted shore, roaring fiercely: she was evidently looking for her mate. How fortunate that they did not both come at once! Now she had discovered him. With two bounds she was at his side, smelt him, licked his bleeding wound; and then she raised herself to her full height, and uttered a prolonged and horrible wail, which made me shake like a baby. Another crack out of the darkness, and I could see that



"A fearful moan followed."

her right fore paw was crushed and broken by the shot. There was no time to lose. I raised my gun to my shoulder, took aim, and fired. Bang! A fearful moan followed. I had shattered her lower jaw. At this moment the dogs rushed upon her like mad, fell on her wounded body, got their teeth well into her flesh, and hung firmly on to her, so that she could not shake them off. A frightful battle ensued. All I could see by the uncertain flicker of the camp fire was a confused mass of jumping, rolling, winding limbs, but the noise was horrible. The roars and howls of the lioness commingled indescribably with the groaning and gasping of the dogs. I dared not shoot again for fear of hurting one of our own animals. As I was watching the combat breathlessly, I saw the lioness deal Bill a fearful

blow with her left paw, and tear open Bill's belly : for Bill had rashly seized the lioness by the throat, and was holding on to her with a grim determination. Beside myself with rage, I rushed up and plunged my hunting-knife into her heart. It was too late ! Too late did Fred jump out of the thicket, his gun in his hand, ready to shoot. The foe was dead, but the victory had been obtained at the expense of a heavy sacrifice.

In response to our shouts Ernest and Jack now came up from the boat. We mutely embraced. We had lived through a terrible half hour.

"Come!" I said ; "bring some firebrands and let us examine the battlefield."

Ernest and Jack obeyed ; but, as was to be expected, we found poor Bill dead, although still obstinately hanging on to the throat of the lioness, and horribly mutilated.

We stood mutely contemplating the sad scene, when Fred broke silence, and said :

"Ernest, you should write an epitaph on poor Bill."

"That I will!" said Ernest : "but how can my poor muse do justice to such heroism ? Besides, I am still in a blue funk. Just look at those fellows, and see how enormous they are, what claws and what jaws they have ! It might have turned out very differently."

"Indeed it might!" I said. "Without Fred's masterful shot there is no knowing what might have happened. All honour to you, my son ! for you have behaved splendidly !"

Fred's face flushed crimson with pleasure.

"To-morrow," he said, "I think we will skin those fellows. But I think Bill should be buried at once."

With these words Fred and Jack immediately proceeded to dig a ditch, while I released Bill's grip from the throat of the lioness, and examined Brown, Tan and Hunter to see whether they had sustained any damage ; but was glad to find that, with the exception of a few slight abrasions, they had got off pretty well.

We now placed our champion in the grave we had dug, and covered it up, promising ourselves to make a fine mound over it some day.

"And now where is the epitaph ?" Fred asked.

"I have it," Ernest replied. "Here it is," and he began :

"Here lies at rest our noble Bill—
Or dog, or warrior, what you will—
A dangerous foe, a gentle friend,
Who came untimely to an end
By laying low, in open fight,
A lioness bold, of fearful might !"

Notwithstanding the solemnity of the occasion, we could not help laughing at these ridiculous doggerels, which seemed so very inadequate ; but as Ernest was our only poet we were compelled to put up with his wares, and we decided to inscribe and erect the epitaph in as durable a manner as possible.

“I think,” said Jack, “that we have been up nearly all night. It seems to me that I can scent the morning air, and I know I am as hungry as any lion myself. Suppose we have a feed. I am sure that boar’s head must be cooked to a mummy !”

Instantly a sensation as of hollowness came over all of us, and we seemed to hear the boar’s head calling to be eaten. We therefore wasted little time in preliminaries, but made straight for the ditch in which we had buried our noble dish. We laid it open, cleaned it out and inspected the longed-for delicacy. But it looked little better than a charred mass, and the youngsters were so disappointed that they had not even the heart to tackle it. Nevertheless I plucked up courage, and penetrated the outer crust of charcoal, when I found it concealed meat of most delicious flavour, to which the truffles had given an extremely agreeable taste—so that we made a most satisfying and dainty meal.

After supper, as there still remained three or four hours until daybreak, we decided to spend them in our boat and to get what sleep we could. The nights are very cold in the tropics, and so we had to wrap ourselves up. It is probably on account of the cold nights that tropical animals have mostly warm, furry skins.

We rose early in the morning in the best of spirits and feeling that we had escaped a great danger. Our first duty was to set to work and skin the lion and the lioness—a task which we accomplished in a couple of hours, thanks to my ingenious air-syringe. Of course we left the carcasses to their fate, and instantly, as though they had been spontaneously generated out of chaos, there swooped down on them a multitude of birds of prey. I was quite unable to distinguish their species, and had little inclination to go out and inspect them.

As the sun gained power the stench of the piled-up oysters increased until the pestilential smell became unbearable, and we were glad to get away.

Jack found that the lion’s skin would make a splendid cloak, and got inside it—so that one of his brothers called him a donkey, and the other compared him ironically to Hercules.

On the return journey Jack showed no inclination to share Fred’s cajak ; for he complained that his hands and shoulders were still sore from paddling, and assured us that the bruises he had sustained from his encounter with the boar had lamed him to such an extent that

he was not much use, so that he preferred a comfortable seat in our sailing boat, where he had nothing to do.

Fred therefore took a supply of provisions and started by himself, refusing all assistance.

Presently we pushed off, taking our animals with us, and proceeded to leave Pearl Bay, which was not so easy as we had supposed. It took us an hour and a half to get to the open sea through the



"Solemnly handed me a letter."

straits in the rocks, Fred showing us the way like a good and faithful pilot. But here he came alongside of us, and solemnly handed me a letter.

I retired into our little cabin and read the missive, from which I gathered that Fred was still full of his romantic idea of rescuing the Englishwoman, whose appeal for succour he had so strangely come across on the leg of the albatross.

I debated in my own mind on the best means of dissuading him from his Quixotic enterprise, and came out of the cabin to discuss

the matter with him, when I found that he was already well away, and was showing us a clean pair of heels in the opposite direction to the course we had to follow. There was nothing to be done, therefore, but to take up my speaking trumpet and shout him a hearty farewell.

“Goodbye, Fred!” I cried. “Be careful, and come back as soon as you can!”

But he did not seem to have heard me—for he made no sign in reply, and was soon lost to view behind the cape on the opposite side of Pearl Bay, facing Churchcliff, which I therefore instantly christened Farewell Cape.

Sad and distressed we continued our course, and arrived home at night, so as not to alarm mother by a too prolonged absence. But the joy of meeting us again was somewhat damped by the absence of Fred and the news of the death of Bill. On the other hand, the hams, truffles, lion-skins and the birds' nests were received with great pleasure. Mother was particularly delighted with the Nankin, and allotted a special bed in the garden to the sowing of this useful seed, for which we gave her our best wishes.

The skins of the lion and the lioness I took in hand myself, and carried off on the following morning to our tanneries at Shark Island, where I duly soaked them carefully, so as to be able to make nice pliable leather of them without taking out the hairs.

CHAPTER XXIV.

KNIGHT ERRANTRY.

FIVE days passed by without our receiving any news of Fred, and at last I proposed we should sail back to Pearl Bay to see whether we could find him—a suggestion which was received with general approval. Even mother offered to come with us when she heard that we intended to go in the pinnace.

We therefore turned up this vessel's bottom, pitched it carefully, and generally got her into an efficient state of repair. It took some days to make everything ready and to victual the pinnace for the expedition; and when all was done, we embarked one fine morning and sailed away with a favouring wind towards Churchcliff. I tried to navigate the straits as safely as possible, but we were suddenly carried by the tide with such force into the bay that I was unable to prevent our running down a large log which was swimming in the open. The shock of the collision sent us all off our feet. We thought ourselves stranded—when suddenly the log and the vessel were both afloat again; and at a distance of about two paces we heard a tremendous noise like the rustling of a storm, and then a great waterspout rose up in the air before our astonished eyes.

“What on earth is that?” cried Jack, who was the first to regain his footing.

“It must be some enormous fish!” I replied, for the log had completely disappeared in the water. I expected it to emerge again presently, however, and told my sons to take up positions at the guns, while I stood ready at the rudder to guide and direct the pinnace as well as I could. Very soon a vague mass bobbed up in the water, and we were able to see it was a monstrous fish. We fired, and the animal, evidently hit, bobbed down again. But it very soon reappeared, agitated the water terribly, and threw up another waterspout. Its movements were now so slow that we were able to get

another shot ready and pour it into it, so that the poor creature became helpless and stranded on a sandbank.

"It has had as much as it can carry!" my sons cried. "What sort of a customer is it, father?"

"I think it must be a spermaceti whale," I answered, "which we probably struck while it was asleep."

Mother's alarm was not easily quieted. But we made straight for the sandbank in order to get a closer view of the leviathan. It was about thirty feet long. As we approached, it seemed to quicken into life again, and thrashed the water with its tail to such good purpose that we all got a thorough wetting: this was probably its death agony, for it soon lay stretched motionless before us.

We were rejoiced at our booty, when our attention was unexpectedly attracted by another object. At a considerable distance I thought I saw a savage in a canoe dodging about among the cliffs. I ordered my sons to stand to their guns, and prepared to receive the enemy warmly.

Soon the canoe reappeared, and its occupant seemed to watch us carefully. I thought it advisable to hoist a white flag, for I did not know but that we might have come across a tribe of savages, and I wanted to make some demonstration of our peaceful intentions. The savage disappeared; but soon a second showed himself from another point of observation. It seemed as though we were being watched by a whole tribe of natives. We drew closer to the spot where we had espied the last savage. I seized the speaking trumpet and shouted a few words in Malay, but without any result; and Jack proposed rapping out an English oath, which perhaps the savage would understand better. This seemed to have the desired effect, for the savage came towards us with a green branch in his hand. A few moments later Jack cried out:

"Why, it is Fred! What is he playing us these tricks for?"

And so indeed it was! We were all of us able to recognise him now as he was rocking about in front of us in his walrus-headed cajak—his face curiously blackened, and his whole person strangely tricked out. He gesticulated and made signs to us "like a madman," as Jack said.

We soon got up to him, and pulled him and his cajak on board. After an interchange of joyous demonstrations, we found ourselves presently getting as black as Fred himself by contact with him, which caused no little amusement.

"Tell me, my boy," I said, "what possessed you to put on this quaint disguise?"

But Fred was too agitated to say much, and merely answered :

“ You shall hear all presently.”

I now took him on one side, and asked him whether he had achieved the object of his expedition.

“ Yes,” he replied, “ I have succeeded perfectly.”

“ Then what does this masquerading mean ? ”

He laughed, and said :

“ Well, I must confess to you that I mistook you for Malay pirates, and intended to mystify you by all sorts of dodges until nightfall, when I meant to escape with the girl to Homecliff.”

Mother cut all further communications short by insisting upon Fred’s washing his face ; and so, after much scrubbing and scraping, the European gradually began to dawn through the savage. Now Fred asked us what we meant by cannonading Pearl Bay as we did. He said it frightened him considerably, especially as he never thought of the pinnace.

I told him our adventure with the whale, which was still lying on the sandbank. But we had no time to lose, for before the flood drove us irresistibly on shore it was imperative to find anchorage. Fred recommended the island upon which he had sheltered his charge ; and so, getting into his canoe and being shoved out to sea again, he preceded us, and piloted our pinnace to a romantic little island in the bay, which afforded excellent anchorage.

Fred jumped on shore, and without wasting a moment on us, ran off into an adjacent wood, where we beheld a kind of Hottentot hut under the palms. Of course we followed him, and presently recognised a fireplace, in the centre of which, instead of a pot or a pan, we saw a beautiful shell of great size.

Without noticing that we had followed him, Fred began to halloo and shout with all his might. Presently a graceful youth, dressed in the garb of a sailor, slid down from a neighbouring tree. Fred turned round, saw us, and blushed crimson. The youthful figure remained motionless at the foot of the tree.

We could scarcely believe our eyes. A human being ! Actually a human being—after all these years ! Fred now raised his hat, and cried :

“ Long live Lord Montrose of the Smoking Rock ! May he be welcome as a friend and brother in our family circle ! ”

At this the stranger was surrounded by my youngsters, who began to cheer lustily ; but I managed to restrain their ardour, for I had gathered that Fred did not wish to betray the newcomer’s sex as yet. So I took her by the hand and led her to mother, who received her

with open arms, and embraced her, smiling through her tears. It was an affecting scene.

I immediately created a diversion by telling the boys to prepare some food for the new member of our family and ourselves: and so off they went to the pinnacle to fetch such provisions as they had; and presently, with mother's aid, a really splendid banquet was prepared, at which there was no lack of wine.

The boys chaffed their new companion after the manner of their kind, and we spent a very pleasant evening—until mother suggested we should retire for the night. At this the alleged "Lord Montrose"



"May he be welcome as a friend and brother in our family circle!"

was for climbing up into the tree again; but mother would not hear of it, and insisted upon "his lordship's" accompanying her on board the pinnacle, whilst the boys and I remained on shore.

Left to ourselves, we began to question Fred about his adventures, and the boys very soon rallied him about "his lordship," and showed they had not been so completely taken in by the disguise as Fred had supposed. Very soon he quite naturally substituted plain "Miss Jenny" for the more high-sounding title. He told us how she had slept in the branches of trees, while he had spent the night in the hut; and what a rough time they had had dodging wild beasts, and living as best they could.

Next morning the youngsters greeted "his lordship" joyously and cheerfully as "Miss Jenny," much to that young lady's confusion. She blushed very much, but held out her hand and received their congratulations with becoming modesty,

It was now necessary to tackle the whale and collect the spermaceti—although how this was to be done exercised my mind not a little.

Miss Jenny advised the use of sacks of hemp, for she said that in England this material was used for the hose of fire engines.

We acted on this brilliant suggestion, and prepared a number of the sacks in our possession by wetting them carefully and introducing a number of twigs inside them, so as to give them the appearance of tubs. This took up a few hours; but the tide had not turned when we started, with Brown, Tan and Hunter, for the sandbank, leaving the ladies under the protection of Turk. We put off in a dingey and the cajak, leaving the larger pinnace at anchor.

As soon as we arrived at the sandbank our dogs went for the carcass, and we ran after them as quickly as we could, when our ears were greeted by a strange growling and barking, which proceeded from behind the carcass and indicated that a terrific combat was going on.

In fact, it turned out that a pack of black wolves had eaten their way into the body of the whale, and were fighting fiercely with our dogs. They had been joined by jackals. Two of the wolves were already biting the sand; but two others, who could not get away from Brown and Tan, were fighting, whilst the others had been put to flight. A few jackals also lay vanquished on the ground. Suddenly Hunter's natural wild instincts got the upper hand, and the animal went off after its brethren, much to Jack's disgust. Fred was for putting some lead into the wolves; but I restrained him for fear of frightening the ladies with the report of his gun, for they would have thought we were in danger.

Meantime the other two wolves had been overpowered; but they had proved themselves no mean opponents of the dogs, who had sustained considerable injuries.

I now proceeded to tackle the whale; took one of the sacks, rested it against the whale's body, keeping it open by means of a stick; while Fred climbed the slippery summit of this mountain of fat, cracked open its skull, and ladled out the spermaceti into the sack.

We now returned to the island, which we had christened the Isle of Gladness, because it was here that we had found Miss Jenny, and brought the wolves' skins with us. We had a capital dinner, after which Fred complained of the loss of Hunter. Miss Jenny

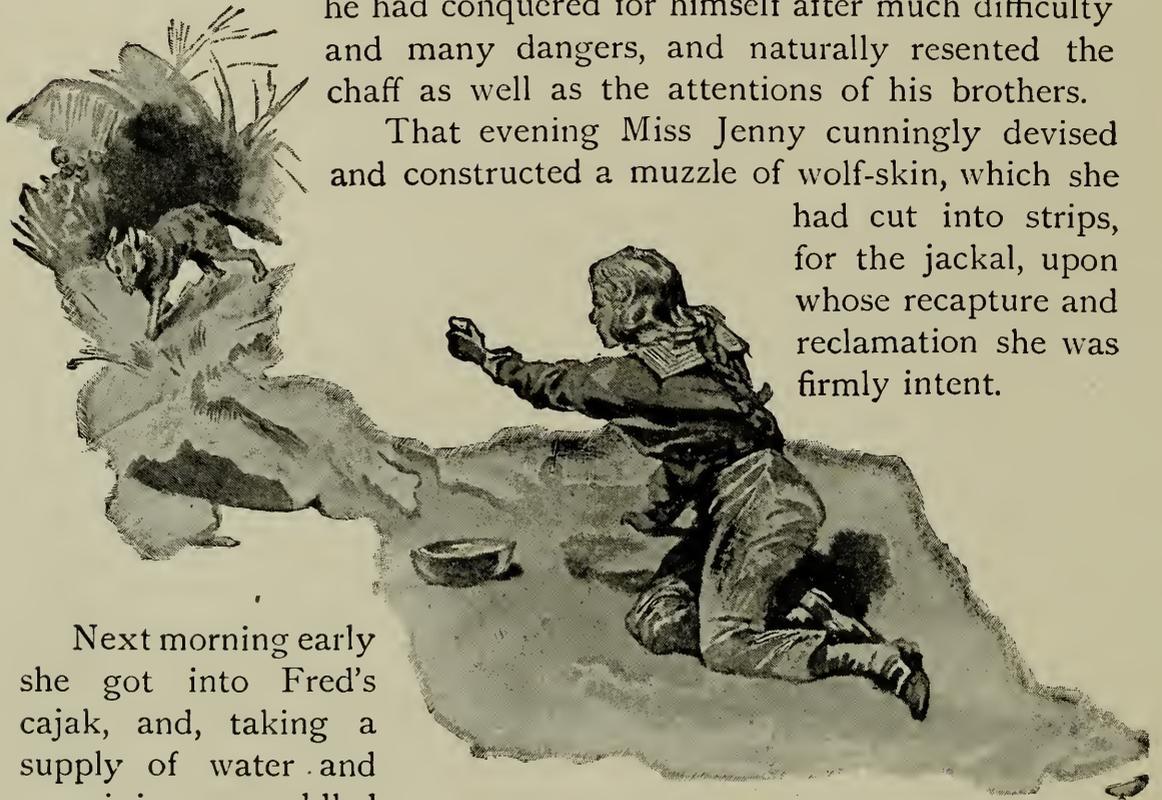
immediately offered to go and fetch him, much to the amusement of the boys, who rather pooh-poohed her, now that they knew she was a girl.

Fred was much annoyed at this, and began to scold his brothers ; whereupon Miss Jenny rose, and said :

“ I will go to mother : I know she will take care of me ! ” at which they all laughed.

Fred certainly regarded Miss Jenny as his own property, which he had conquered for himself after much difficulty and many dangers, and naturally resented the chaff as well as the attentions of his brothers.

That evening Miss Jenny cunningly devised and constructed a muzzle of wolf-skin, which she had cut into strips, for the jackal, upon whose recapture and reclamation she was firmly intent.



“ The animal slunk up.”

Next morning early she got into Fred’s cajak, and, taking a supply of water and provisions, paddled gaily to the sandbank,

and accomplished her purpose with admirable discretion. Sitting down on a convenient spot, she proceeded to eat her provisions, throwing purposely several broken meats about her. This attracted Hunter, who was, as she had supposed, in the neighbourhood, and half starved by this time. The animal slunk up, gnawed at the bits of food, and presently allowed her to give it some water out of a gourd bowl : that settled the matter. While Hunter was drinking, she slipped a rope round the jackal’s neck, and then fitted the muzzle over its head, and the capture was effected.

When Miss Jenny returned in the cajak she had wickedly wrapped the jackal in a blanket and put a hat on its head, so that it looked like a man. It was amusing to see Fred’s jealousy as she arrived thus escorted ; but as soon as he discovered who it was, he burst into roars of laughter, and the prodigal Hunter was received with

triumphant rejoicings, while Miss Jenny smiled pleasantly, proud of her achievement.

We now discussed the feasibility of returning to Homecliff, where we wanted to instal Jenny, whose goods and chattels were contained in a kind of trough which Fred had constructed for them. By the aid of a knife, which she had fortunately had with her, she had managed to make for herself during the long period of solitude a number of useful articles. She had made use of the feathers, bones, beaks and claws of the birds she had succeeded in entrapping, and had constructed fishhooks of mother-of-pearl, which she had attached to fine strings woven from her own hair. She had clothed herself in the skins of animals. Shells had served her as utensils, and of one she had made a lamp. She had even constructed a delicate paint brush of seal-hair, which she had used for writing, for which purpose she had also some beautiful purple pigment.

Next morning when we awoke, having spent the previous day in preparing for our departure, we found that Jenny had another surprise in store for us; for she produced a tame cormorant, which she had secured by means of a rope, and kept concealed in some bushes, on account of the stench it emitted. She had trained this ugly bird to catch fish for her.

At last we got ready, and started in our pinnace for Pearl Bay, which we intended to pay a visit before returning to Homecliff.

Fred in his cajak acted as our pilot, and we were safely conducted to the spot where we had left our pearls, whose stench had now departed. The bones of the lion and lioness were clean and bleached on the shore, but everything was just as we had left it.

Our first care was to pitch a tent which should protect us against the sun by day and the cold by night; and then we set to work on our pearls, whose beauty elicited cries of joy. But what, after all, was the use of this wealth to us? Miss Jenny seemed to show more wisdom in collecting carefully the long and shining threads which were contained in the oyster shells.

"We shall have fish for luncheon," she said to mother, "and fowls for supper."

Mother smiled incredulously; but Jenny, nothing daunted, jumped into the cajak, took the cormorant with her, and paddled away into the open sea. She slipped a ring over the throat of the cormorant, so as to prevent it from swallowing the fish it caught, and liberated it. It was quite a treat to see how the nimble bird dived into the water and reappeared with a fish in its beak, which it deposited by the side of its mistress, to dive down again and bring up some more. In a very short time Miss Jenny had collected enough fish for

two abundant meals. She now took off the bird's ring, and threw the bird a few of the fishes which it had caught, and then returned to shore.

"Well," said mother, looking at the harvest of the sea at her feet, "we have got a regular fairy in you!"

After luncheon Miss Jenny proposed to provide the supper if we would allow her to have Hunter.

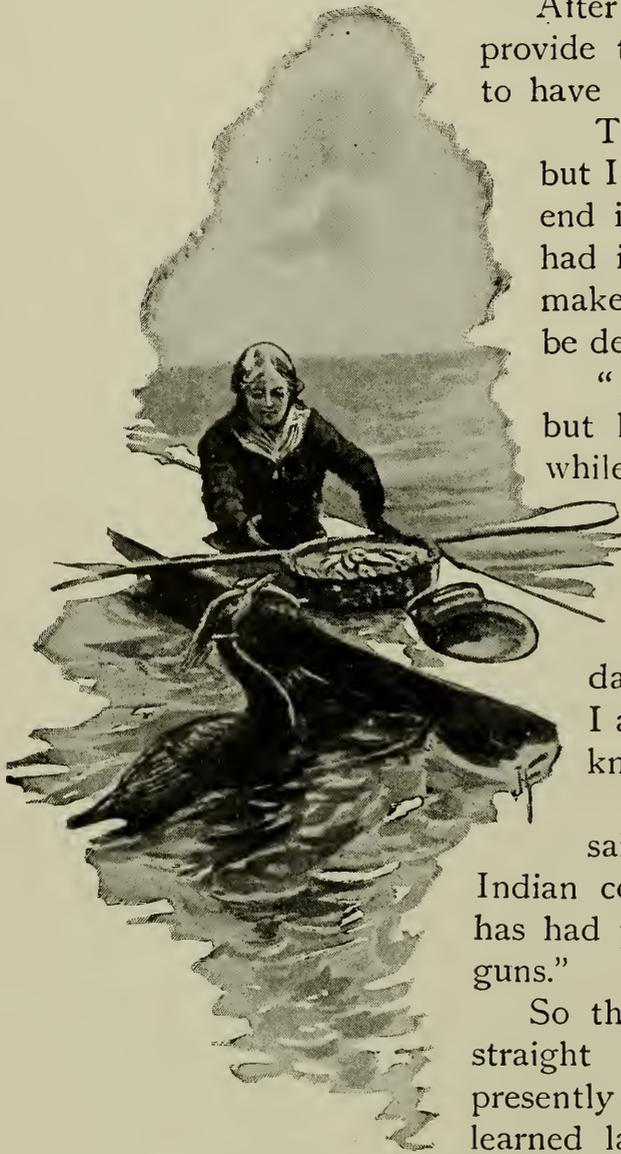
To this Jack made no objections; but I complained that Miss Jenny would end in carrying off my assistants, for I had intended to burn a lot of clay and make soda. Jenny, however, was not to be deterred from her purpose, and said:

"Burn as much clay as you like, but let me have Fred and Jack for a while, and give me a fowlingpiece and ammunition."

"All right," I replied; "I can refuse you nothing. But have a care, my boys, for there are dangerous wild beasts about; besides, I am afraid that young ladies do not know much about guns."

"Do not let that distress you," said Jenny. "The daughter of an Indian colonel and of a skilled sportsman has had plenty of opportunities of handling guns."

So the small band departed and made straight for the forest, from whence we presently heard the crack of a gun; and we learned later that Miss Jenny had brought down a bird on the wing—a kind of snipe—and had thus at once inspired the greatest respect and emulation. A regular battue ensued, and Hunter had plenty of work in retrieving their game. Jenny's next care was to make me casks for the clay. For this purpose she carefully peeled the barks of big trees, so that they had only to be joined together again on one side and provided with boards at both ends to make capital casks. She prepared six of these, each about five feet high; but wisely left them overnight in the forest, after nailing them into the shape in which they were wanted.



"The nimble bird dived into the water and reappeared with a fish in its beak."

She had a number of creepers cut down besides, which she suggested should be made into hoops; and so, loaded with truffles and game, the party returned without misadventure.

We now all set to work and prepared supper. Before this was ready we offered Miss Jenny, in reward for what she had done, some of the finest of the pearls. But these she graciously declined, advising us to store them up and keep them against the time when we should be restored to civilisation.

After supper I called on Fred to relate his adventures, at which Miss Jenny suddenly jumped up, asked mother to be allowed to retire for the night, and was gone.

Fred now commenced his story.

“When I left you in my cajak that time I paddled off as hard as I could, wondering whether I should succeed in my enterprise or get lost.

“At first I paddled along rapidly; but a strong wind warned me of the danger of being blown away, and I had not left Pearl Bay far behind me before a violent storm arose, and I was in some danger of being dashed against the rocks. But towards evening the wind went down; and so, fearing to spend the night on the mainland lest I might encounter more lions, I selected a fairly large rock about a quarter of a mile out to sea, and there found a nook or crevice in which I was able to place my cajak in safety and spend the night.

“Next morning I started refreshed on my voyage of discovery in search of the Smoking Cliff. The coast now became flat and sandy, with fine forests in the distance.

“Presently the sea was devoid of cliffs altogether, and a beautiful gulf stretched before my eyes, making me believe that it was an arm of the sea. I soon discovered, however, that it was really the mouth of a noble river, which, nevertheless, I could not help ascending, for it looked so very inviting. Suddenly I came upon a dark mass in the water, which plunged, snorting and groaning, out of the reeds. It was a hippopotamus with its young. In a moment I had bolted, and was out in the open sea again. The hippopotamus was evidently quite as frightened as I, for it bolted in the opposite direction. I soon came upon a rock, where I passed my second night, making a supper off some oysters which I found close at hand.

“The following day I continued my journey along the coast, and came upon some really beautiful scenery, with waterfalls and every variety of charming effects. Here I saw a number of animals resembling llamas, or vicuñas, which, I think, would be worth while trying to catch some day. I also got sight of some duck-like birds,

of which I managed to bag a brace. I therefore landed to roast them, and lighted a fire for the purpose. While I was engaged in this operation and cooking my ducks, I suddenly noticed two very suspicious looking heads in the bushes which seemed to be watching me attentively. Very much disconcerted, I got into my cajak as quickly as I could, leaving my ducks behind me. As soon as I had put out to sea a couple of ourang-outangs emerged from the bushes and began to inspect the ducks and the fire, but did not touch them. They remained until the fire had gone out, and then disappeared. I now returned to land, but found the ducks completely spoiled, and so had to catch some more. After a hearty meal I returned to my cajak, and looked round for another rocky island on which to spend the night. I soon came upon one with a splendid grotto, in which I determined to take up my abode, when upon entering it I was greeted by the flapping of the wings of some strange birds. Fearing to become the prey of some carrion bird or other, I fired a charge of small shot into the grotto, when I was startled to see emerging from it the most repulsive looking creatures, which I at once identified as blood-sucking vampires. Needless to say, I passed a restless and anxious night, and was glad to get away early next morning.

“The coast now became barren and inhospitable, and I was therefore much surprised to come upon a small tribe of elephants who were sporting in the mud on the bank of a small river, up which I paddled. Farther up I saw rhinoceroses at play in cactus bushes, and even some giraffes. But presently I got heartily sick of this remarkable river; for as I was paddling along I suddenly came upon a crocodile, who opened his jaws as I approached, and seemed ready to swallow me up, cajak and all. In the confusion of the moment I hit him over the snout with my paddle, and this unexpected salutation seemed to unsettle the monster, for he bobbed under and disappeared. Of course I followed his example, though in an opposite direction, until I again reached the sea. I spent that night on a bank of rocks on the coast, having previously harpooned some very good salmon for supper. All night I dreamt I was fighting alligators and crocodiles, and I was glad indeed when the morning put an end to my terrors, and I continued my journey, keeping at a safe distance from the coast.

“Feeling rather peckish, I landed near a group of trees, in which I hoped to find a bird or two which my eagle might catch for me. Here a couple of parrots fell a prey to him, and I looked on while he devoured them for his breakfast.

“While I was standing and watching my eagle enjoying himself

I heard a strange rustling noise in the sand behind me, and, looking round, I beheld—just fancy, father!—an enormous tiger crouching before me at a distance of scarcely fifteen paces!

“I was dumfounded and unable to move. Fortunately the eagle came to my rescue, and began circling round the tiger’s head, trying to peck at his eyes. This annoyed the tiger and diverted his attention. But he soon made a jump, seized the eagle in his powerful claws and tore him to pieces. I stood aghast; but my turn would have come next if I had not acted promptly. I had dropped my musket in my fright, and so I quickly took a pistol out of my belt and poured its contents into the tiger’s open jaw. He fell to the ground, and I was just on the point of giving him the happy despatch with my knife when he suddenly jumped up again and was off. Baulked of my booty, though much relieved, I stood my ground, with my gun in my hand, to see whether an attack was threatened from the tiger’s mate; but as no signs of other animals were visible, I picked up the dead body of my poor eagle and mournfully returned to my cajak.

“Paddling along dejectedly, mourning over my departed friend and companion, I saw in the distance a couple of cliffs, and out of them I perceived a column of smoke ascending to the sky. I could hardly trust my eyes! I had indeed found the Smoking Cliff! There it was! I thought of the heroes of fairy tales, and wondered what further adventures were in store for me. Of one thing I felt absolutely convinced at once—I knew I had found the shipwrecked Englishwoman! It never occurred to me that the cliff might just as well be the abode of savages or pirates.

“I paddled along as fast as I could until at last I got close to the cliff and within sight of anybody had there been a human being about. But I could see no one. Nothing daunted, I went on shore. A few stones, heaped one upon the other, evidently by human agency, formed a sort of staircase, by which I ascended till I came to a turn in the rocks, and presently saw below, in the hollow of the rock, so to speak, stooping over a fire, a human figure, clad in man’s attire, but with a long flaxen plait of hair down the back. I had sufficient presence of mind to keep quiet, for a shout might have produced just the opposite effect to the one I intended. So I gently kicked a small stone, which rolled slowly down from where I stood and stopped at her feet. The figure looked at the stone and then looked round to see whence it had come. By this time I was convinced it was the girl I was looking for. Her gaze met mine. She turned deadly pale, made a little jump, and then remained perfectly still, looking fixedly at

me. I descended slowly until I was within a few paces of her, when I managed to say :

“‘I have come to rescue you!’ (My voice was tremulous, as you can imagine.) ‘I caught the albatross,’ I continued. ‘I read your letter. I have now found the Smoking Cliff!’

“She stretched out both hands towards me, and cried, while her face was perfectly crimson, ‘Welcome!’ weeping and laughing in the same breath.

“My English is not of the best, but she had understood me, although later she often had difficulty in making sense of what I said.

“We did not think of food, or of my boat, or of anything, but spent the time in questions and answers and telling each other our respective adventures. But Jenny was the first to return to mundane affairs, and busied herself about supper, while I kept chattering as best I could in my broken English.

“After supper she retired into the back of the grotto, where she had constructed a kind of curtain of reeds and grass; while I lay down to rest in the front part of the grotto, where I spent the night like a paladin keeping guard over the tent of his princess.

“At daybreak, when nature had asserted her claims and I had gone off to sleep, Miss Jenny popped out and prepared breakfast; when she woke me, laughing.

“That day we spent in packing up Miss Jenny’s goods and chattels, for I had persuaded her to accompany me. I was surprised at the industry and skill with which she had managed to construct so many useful articles, although she insisted that any girl would have been able in Europe to do double as much in the time with proper appliances.

“Miss Jenny’s adventures, her journey to India as a child, her return to Europe, interrupted by shipwreck, and her extraordinary experiences, would make a big book. However, we at last got everything ready—and here I am!”

It was midnight before Fred finished his yarn, and so I sent my sons to bed. As for myself I felt little inclination for sleep. The possibilities of my colony and its unexpected increase kept me awake thinking.

We spent a couple more days at Pearl Bay, and this gave Miss Jenny plenty of time to tell us her history.

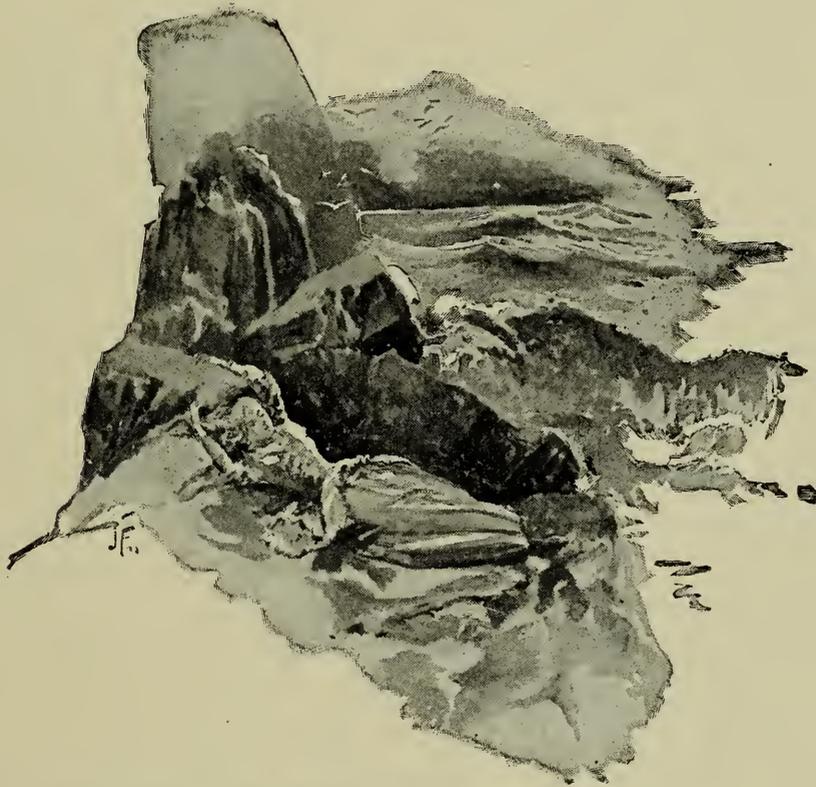
It appears that Miss Jenny had lost her mother at a very early age, and had been obliged to leave her smiling country residence in England to accompany her father—a Major Montrose—when she was seven. She was an only child, and consequently her father, who was, it seemed, a remarkably accomplished man, had given her



"THE EAGLE CAME TO MY RESCUE."

all his spare time, and she had had the advantage of his great learning, so that she knew very much more than the ordinary run of girls. Travelling about from one station to another in India, she would have become a perfect Amazon had she not been fortunate in the possession of a maid or nurse who—a gentlewoman in reduced circumstances—had taught her all those feminine accomplishments which are regarded as indispensable for a lady to possess: so that she combined in one and the same person all the courage and resolution of a boy with the gentleness and amiability of a girl.

Major Montrose—now a colonel—after many years' brilliant



"She remained unconscious for some time."

services, was sent back to Europe with a draft of troops on board a man-of-war; and so he confided his daughter and her companion to the care of a Captain Greenfield, in whose fast sailing vessel they started also for Europe.

Miss Jenny was about seventeen when she went on board the *Dorcas*, and left the mouth of the Ganges a few days before her father. But terrible storms and the predatory attentions of a French frigate—for England and France were at war—had driven the *Dorcas* so far east that she was eventually compelled to put up at Batavia. From thence the vessel was about to proceed to the coast of New Guinea when it was overtaken by a storm, and finally wrecked on an unknown shore.

The men got the boats out as smartly as possible, and Miss Jenny succeeded in getting into one of them ; but a tremendous wave capsized the boat, and the girl was the only person saved. She was washed ashore, and thrown upon the ledge of a rock, where she remained unconscious for some time. What happened to the other boat Miss Jenny could not say.

Stretched on this rock, Miss Jenny remained in a semi-conscious state for about a couple of days, subsisting on a few birds' eggs which she found near her.

On the third day, when the storm had subsided, she at last fully realised her utter loneliness. She had donned the garb of a sailor before taking to the boat, and had provided herself with a knife and steel and flint, so that she was able to make a fire, which she managed to keep alight with the spars from the wreck which had been washed ashore. But beyond a cask of "salt-horse" and a cask of beer, she had not managed to salvage any provisions. She found some nails in some of the boards that were washed ashore, and that was practically her entire outfit. But with a rare inventiveness she soon began to make the best of things, and to turn all that came in her way to the best account. On her long hunting expeditions with her father she had learned to rough it, and so she was not quite at so great a disadvantage as she might otherwise have been.

In this place, and fully occupied, she lost all count of time ; but she estimated that she had been about two and a half years a cast-away on the Smoking Cliff. She found much pleasure and amusement in the training of birds. But something had always occurred to deprive her of their companionship : they had generally got away. This had been the case with the albatross which Fred had wounded.

"I wonder where that bird is flying about now?" she said, laughing. "How I should have rejoiced if I had received your answer. But all has come about very well, all the same," she said, looking into Fred's eyes and grasping his hand.

"Let me welcome you once more !" I cried. "God has been indeed good to us, and I hope we shall all live together in love and happiness!"

CHAPTER XXV.

NEW SWITZERLAND.

AT last our lime-burning was finished, and the bark casks and soda plants were all ready, and we were able to start for Homecliff. Jenny was burning with curiosity to see our house in the rocks, our castle in the air, and our villas, summer residences and pleasaunces.

We made a halt at Highpeak on our return journey, while I sent Fred and Frank on to Homecliff in the cajak to make ready for our reception.

Miss Jenny was highly delighted with the beautiful appearance of our little villa, which must indeed have contrasted favourably with the barren Smoking Cliff. She was as pleased as a child with the animals and fowls, among whom she jumped about like a schoolgirl at play.

As I wished to reserve to Fred the pleasure of showing her the beauties of Woodstead and Falconeyrie, I started for Homecliff by sea on the following day. Nevertheless we paid a visit to Whale Island in passing, and rejoiced the heart of Miss Jenny by the sight of the rabbits.

It is unnecessary to say that Fred and Frank did all in their power to give solemnity to our entrance into Refuge Bay. As we sailed in we received a salute of twelve guns from the battery near the watch tower. But Ernest was annoyed that there were not thirteen, for he had an idea that salutes should always be of an odd number. He immediately proposed replying from the pinnace, and with the aid of Jack he fired eleven shots in reply.

As soon as we had passed Shark Island we beheld Fred letting himself down from the precipitous rocks by a rope, whereat Miss Jenny betrayed her feelings by a little scream of terror. But Fred was instantly in his cajak and, with a few strokes of his paddle, by our side—when he announced himself as the officer on duty in charge of the harbour, and welcomed us solemnly in the name of the entire colony of Homecliff. He added that he hoped to wait upon us on

shore as soon as his duties permitted it. Then he paddled back to Shark Island to fetch Frank, and with him returned to Homecliff. Throughout this performance he displayed so military a demeanour that we were all intensely amused.

As soon as we had landed and proceeded towards our pretty-looking dwelling, Miss Jenny was filled with admiration. All she could say was, "How beautiful!"

On the cool and shady verandah we now saw a table laid as for a banquet, and loaded with all the magnificence which we were able to boast of. The birds of the museum had been called into requisition to add to the magnificence of the display, and were grouped or suspended by ropes round the table, over which was hung a tablet, garlanded with flowers, bearing the inscription :

*"Long live Miss Jenny Montrose!
God bless her entrance into the cave of the Swiss Robinson!"*

On a closer inspection we found the banquet a substantial one. There were mead and canary, and splendid milk; fruit of all sorts—the fig, the orange, and the pineapple; a smoking dish of fish, and a goodly roast.

Miss Jenny was assigned the place of honour between mother and me, and Ernest and Jack also took their seats at the table; but Fred and Frank insisted on waiting upon us with the adroitness of experienced butlers.

The afternoon was spent in "showing off" the sights to Miss Jenny, who was nearly torn to pieces by my sons—one shouting, "Miss Jenny, let me show you this!" another, "Miss Jenny, have you seen this?" and so on.

Finally Miss Jenny asked mother to show her the kitchen, and thus got rid of their attentions.

On the following day we started for Falconeyrie; but as our various mounts and draught animals were all over there grazing, we had to proceed on foot, with the exception of Jack, who caracoled and curvetted in front of us on his ostrich, thereby causing great amusement to our guest. Presently he bolted, however; but soon returned, driving our various mounts in front of him. Miss Jenny politely declined the offer of one of them; but Fred sprang eagerly on Lightfoot, glad of an opportunity of showing off his horsemanship.

We found that the condition of Falconeyrie left much to be desired; so we set to work manfully to repair this our principal summer residence, and were consequently kept an entire week there, whiling away the evenings by listening to the recital of Miss Jenny's adventures and telling her our own.

This new companionship did us all an incalculable amount of good. Mother compared notes in housekeeping. Fred developed a tenderness that was quite astonishing. Ernest was never tired of listening to Miss Jenny's experiences. Jack's humour and larkiness grew more refined. Frank seemed to be most impressed by the practical side of Miss Jenny's character. While on me her pleasant, cheerful and innocent society exercised a soothing influence. She was like a good fairy in our little household.

From Falconeyrie we went on to Woodstead for the rice harvest. It was a stately procession of carts and animals, and during the journey we repeated many a story of our former experiences. There



"Plaiting rushes and reeds."

was an indescribable charm in looking back on our eventful past, and it was pleasant to look forward confidently towards the future. Those who have done nothing and had no experiences in their lives, who have made no beginnings and have no aspirations, are not to be congratulated. The present can be made enjoyable only by memory and hope. Of our life in Europe we preferred not to speak, for between us and the rest of mankind there seemed to be a great gulf fixed, and we felt it was better for our contentment to concentrate our minds on the efforts and experiences connected with our present surroundings. Thus we looked back with pleasure on the ten years that had glided by—on our labours and the success which had crowned them; and during our recital it was pleasant

to have a sympathetic listener to whom our entire life was fresh and new, and who interrupted us only to express her amazement or admiration.

As the rainy season was now approaching we had to make preparations for a long period of seclusion, and collect such materials as we might require. Miss Jenny's remarkable skill in plaiting rushes and reeds made us reproach ourselves for our neglect of that branch of industry, and we consequently determined to lay up a good store of rushes and employ our time during the rainy season in making curtains, carpets, mats, tapestries and similar articles; whilst I was specially requested to find and prepare colours with which these industrial products could afterwards be embellished.

In short, we felt less dread for the dull period of wet which we knew was upon us than we had ever experienced before. Especially did we look forward to the long evenings in which Miss Jenny promised to teach us to pronounce and speak English more correctly than we did.

Thus the rainy season passed away much more rapidly than we had expected, so that we were quite astounded at the quickness of the return of spring. We crawled out of our hiding place like dormice, jumped about in our garden, looked up into the smiling blue heavens, and felt as happy as little children.

I do not know what possessed Fred to suggest going to Shark Island and taking a look round to see whether the wintry weather had driven anything worthy of attention within "the sphere of our influence." But he did so, accompanied by Jack.

I was on the beach working, and kept looking across every now and then while my sons were away, and was delighted to observe the smartness with which they climbed up the rock by means of the rope ladder. As usual, they fired two rounds as a signal to any vessel that might be passing. I watched with amusement the joyousness with which they fulfilled this customary duty. While I was looking at them—their figures stood out clear and sharp in the splendid blue of the sky—I suddenly noticed signs of an unusual emotion. They jumped and danced about as though they were possessed; waved their arms wildly, and finally embraced each other. Something was up! I wondered what it was. But they did not leave me long in suspense, for they came down that rope ladder at a terrific pace, got into the *cajak*, and were presently by my side.

"What on earth is the matter?" I cried.

"Did not you hear, father?"

"Well, I heard your shots, of course!"

"But did not you hear the answer? There was a reply."

“What nonsense! Only an echo!” I said.

“But, father, we can distinguish between an echo and a reply to our shot. We have fired ever so often from there. But this was no echo: it came much too late. Besides, there were three shots to our two.”

“Could you see nothing—no vessel, no boat, no smoke?”

“No—nothing! That is just it!—the sound seemed to come west of our bay: but then, sound is deceptive. What had we better do, father?”

I was quite at a loss; for the whole affair had taken me by surprise. Although we had always hoped to meet human beings, we had never decided upon a plan of action in the event of our attracting the attention of a passing vessel. Who were they? Were they Europeans? Were they Malay pirates? Were they unfortunate refugees or lucky discoverers? Should we reveal ourselves, or keep carefully in the background and await events? I collected my household, and held a council of war.

Meanwhile darkness overtook our deliberations; and so I decided for the present to retire for the night, whilst arranging that my three eldest sons should alternately do “sentry go” on the gallery outside Homecliff.

The night did not pass off so silently as we had expected, for we were visited by a terrific thunderstorm, which prevented us from hearing anything but the fury of the elements.

The storm lasted for two days and two nights, and gave us no opportunity of making further discoveries.

It was not until the third day, although the sea was still very agitated and the sky obscured by the clouds which chased each other across it, that a possibility arose to make observations.

On this occasion I proceeded to the watch tower myself, taking Jack with me, and a sail which I intended to use as a signal for the others. Should I wave this improvised flag three times, and dash it to the ground, the others were to flee at once to Falconeyrie; but if I waved it only twice, and then planted it by the side of the watch tower, that was to be a favourable signal.

The others watched our movements with bated breath from the shore, while we proceeded to Shark Island and ascended the rock. We looked about us, but were unable to see anything unusual. I therefore determined to fire off three shots from our signal gun to see whether we should get an answer. To my astonishment my three signals were replied to by seven shots, following each other in quick succession.

I immediately waved the flag twice and planted it, though

instantly afterwards I reproached myself for having been so absurdly sanguine as to imagine that all danger was over.

I now loaded our gun once more, waited an hour, and then gave Jack the word to fire as soon as he saw a vessel, whilst I returned to Homecliff.

I found the household in the greatest excitement.

Fred came jumping up to me, and asked :

“Where are they? Who are they? Are they English?”

They had not heard the seven answering shots; probably the rocks had kept out the sound.

I now determined to take Fred with me in my boat and paddle round the coast, so as to see whether I could discover any vessel hidden behind the rocks. Miss Jenny seemed to have quite lost her head, and ran about singing with joy, and expressed her conviction that her father had come to fetch her.

Profiting by Fred's example of last year, I got together all kinds of skins and feathers, and Fred and I disguised ourselves as savages, by which ruse we thought to attract less attention, and possibly excite little desire on the part of possible pirates to follow us to our home. I told Jack and Frank to get the animals ready for flight to Falconeyrie, and mother and Jenny to assume the attire of sailors and make preparations for departure.

At noon Fred and I got into the cajak and went off. Mother wept, but Jenny laughed at the two savages. We were well armed; but we concealed our guns and pistols, and carried our harpoons as lances. We had arranged that if we should be spoken, we would reply in the roughest Swiss dialect we could muster.

Silently we rounded a small promontory at the end of the duck swamp, which we had called Duck Point, beyond which we had never explored, for the rocks made investigation dangerous, and the generally inhospitable appearance of the country had made us feel little inclination to get better acquainted with it. This I now regretted, for if we had known the coast well we should have had less difficulty in eluding the vigilance of possible enemies; still, it was no use lamenting over this.

We kept coasting for a little over an hour, and presently came to another promontory which ran out farther to sea than Duck Point. We kept along till we reached nearly the extreme point, and then landed and cautiously proceeded across the tongue of land, when we suddenly espied, comfortably sheltered in a small bay not unlike Refuge Bay, a European vessel, which was flying the English flag, and from which a boat was just putting off.

Fred was for going towards the vessel at once; but I pointed out



"WE SUDDENLY ESPIED, COMFORTABLY SHELTERED IN A SMALL BAY . . . A EUROPEAN VESSEL . . . FLYING THE ENGLISH FLAG."

that we had as yet no guarantee that this vessel had not been captured by pirates, who might still be flying the English flag as a dodge.

So we climbed the rocks and directed our glasses at the vessel. She looked like a yacht, and was lightly equipped, though she carried about eight or ten fairly formidable guns. She was lying at anchor, and on the distant shore we could see three tents and some clouds of smoke, which indicated that a meal was being prepared. To judge by appearances, the crew was not a large one: nor did the ship look aggressive, although the guns were trained ready for every eventuality, and we could see that the watch was being kept by a couple of men on deck.

I now thought that we might safely risk showing ourselves, although I determined to keep to the *cajak* and maintain an attitude of reserve and caution.

We must have afforded a diverting spectacle as we dodged about in the water and approached the vessel coyly.

An officer appeared on deck, and Fred said:

“He has a white European face, and is probably the captain, for he looks dignified and imperious.”

I proposed to sing a Swiss song, and then to shout out a few words of broken English. So we paddled slowly nearer, and began such a doleful caterwauling that nobody could have recognised a European word in it.

The captain and a few individuals standing by his side looked at us, and beckoned us with their handkerchiefs, showing their empty hands, as though to demonstrate that they were unarmed.

What helped to reassure me was that the boat, which we had previously noticed, continued its course to the shore and did not show any signs of going for us. So we paddled round the vessel, and saw on the other side that extensive repairs were in progress, which convinced me that we need not fear a descent on Homecliff for some time to come.

The captain now shouted at us through a speaking trumpet, and asked who we were and what the name of the coast was. I only replied, “Englishmen, good men!” although we kept getting nearer, so as to have a good look round.

The men seemed to treat the captain with every respect, and there were no evidences of insubordination or mutiny, but everything seemed to be in apple-pie order. As we got nearer we were shown axes, nails, red cloth and other objects of barter; but we held up our harpoons and shook our heads, intending to convey to them that we were in need of nothing and quite content with what we had. At

last the officers asked us for potatoes, cocoanuts, figs and other products ; whereat I replied :

“ Yes, yes : plenty, plenty ! ”

Fred could scarcely contain himself. But I whispered to him : “ Let us get back quickly. ” So we made all sorts of farewell gestures and darted off, shouting :

“ Englishmen ! Englishmen ! ”

When we were well out of sight we had time to breathe. Was it possible ? Human beings ! A vessel ! Europeans ! Friends ! Deliverance ! Home !

“ Father, you are crying ! ” said Fred, although the tears were standing in his eyes also.

“ Let us get back as soon as we can. What will mother say to the news ? ”

It did not take us long to reach Homecliff and tell our story. Miss Jenny was not particularly pleased. She was so certain that her father was on board the vessel that she seemed to think all we needed to have done was to announce her presence at Homecliff. But mother took a different view, and commended our caution, besides observing that our arrival in force in the pinnace would be much more imposing than our appearance as a couple of pitiful shipwrecked castaways in a miserable *cajak*. So we agreed to go out in our pinnace and introduce ourselves to the new arrivals in proper form.

The wildest plans were now formed by the youngsters for our return to Europe with all our goods and chattels ; but while these day dreams were voiced mother looked at me inquiringly to know whether I approved them.

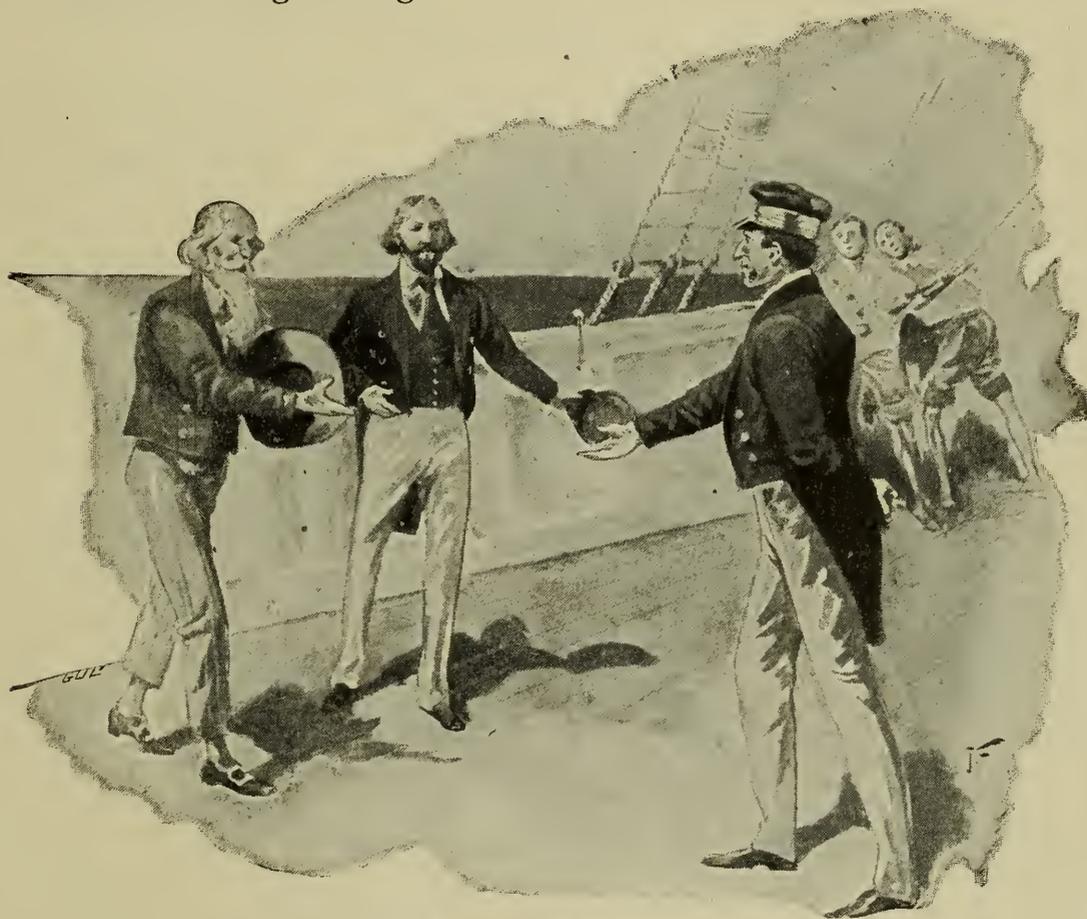
Frankly, my heart was torn by two conflicting emotions. While on the one hand I was drawn by love of country to Europe, I nevertheless felt loath to leave the pleasant home which we had founded toilsomely with the work of our own hands. Besides, while I could not but wish to see my sons drawn into the life of the great world, I nevertheless felt that there they would be exposed to influences from which they were here absolutely safe. Of course I was perfectly aware of the foolishness of such thoughts. Man is a gregarious animal, and intended to live in community with others. How is a stone to lose its corners unless they are rubbed off ? But I put an end to these troublesome reflections by remembering that they were premature. We had at present no knowledge that the strangers on the vessel would manifest the least desire to take us with them.

We now set to work to get our pinnace ready, and to make ourselves presentable as regards clothes and weapons. We also

prepared a goodly quantity of fruit and vegetables for the captain. All this occupied a whole day.

It was not until the noon of the next day that we were ready to start. Fred preceded us in his cajak, but this time in the uniform of a naval officer. We were all dressed more or less in nautical costume ; our guns were loaded, and we had plenty of ammunition and fruit and vegetables on board ; and, thus equipped, we set out.

As soon as we got in sight of the yacht, Fred came on board, and we hoisted the English flag.



"He received us . . . with a sailor's frankness."

We completely surprised the new arrivals, who stood on deck looking at us in amazement as we majestically sailed into the bay. If we had been pirates I believe the vessel would have been an easy prey. We lay to at some distance from the yacht, and raised a mighty cheer, which was heartily re-echoed from the yacht and the shore. Fred and I then got into our small boat, which we had had in tow, and, mounting a white flag, we made straight for the yacht in order to pay the captain a visit of ceremony.

He received us on his quarter-deck with a sailor's frankness, invited us into his cabin, gave us some sherry, and told us how pleased he was to catch sight of the Union Jack in this inhospitable region.

I told him as much as I thought advisable about ourselves, and then mentioned Miss Jenny Montrose, for I naturally supposed that an English sailor would take a greater interest in the daughter of an English colonel than in a family of shipwrecked Swiss people.

I was not mistaken. The captain told me that when he was last in England he had heard of the safe arrival of Colonel Montrose from India. He himself was called Littlestone, was a lieutenant in the British navy, and was carrying despatches from New South Wales to the Cape of Good Hope on board the despatch boat *Unicorn*; and he also stated that he had been instructed to keep a look out for the wreck of the *Dorcas*, which had been lost about three years ago: for three sailors had succeeded, after extraordinary adventures, in getting to Sydney, and had given a full report of the wreck.

Lieutenant Littlestone was delighted to have found one of the survivors in Miss Jenny, and then told us his own adventures: how he had been driven about by the storm along this rocky coast, and how he had heard our signals, which had led him to hope that he had come across the survivors of the *Dorcas*. He was on the point of exploring the coast when the fresh outbreak of bad weather had made all such attempts useless.

Our later signals had also given great joy; but his men were so tired and worn out with work and sickness that he had been unable to undertake any explorations. The sick had been landed and placed under canvas: amongst them was a Mr. Wolston, a remarkably clever engineer, with his wife and two daughters, who were so ill that they would have to be kept quiet for at least a week before the *Unicorn* could proceed on its voyage.

I now invited Lieutenant Littlestone on board the pinnace in order to introduce him to the ladies; and this invitation he instantly accepted, asking me courteously to proceed before him and announce his arrival.

So I returned with Fred to my own people, who were expecting us rather anxiously, and got the guns ready in order to fire off a salute the moment Lieutenant Littlestone showed himself.

In about half an hour he boarded us, attended by Midshipman Dunsley and his coxswain, Willis, and was given as grand a reception as we could afford. He immediately invited us to go on shore and visit poor Wolston, and ordered three new tents to be pitched and hammocks to be slung for our accommodation, so that we might spend the night on shore.

We were delighted with Wolston, whose charming wife and very pretty daughters quite took our hearts by storm. Jenny and the two girls got very friendly.

An extremely pleasant evening was spent, and the agreeable interchange of ideas with thoroughly genuine and upright people did us all a world of good.

It was late before we went to bed, and later still before my wife and I got to sleep, for we lay awake deliberating upon what course we should pursue. Lieutenant Littlestone seemed to await some proposal from us ; and we, on the other hand, did not like to force ourselves upon him. But the more we discussed the situation the more convinced did we become that, as far as we old folks were concerned, we had no desire whatever to return to the restless tumult of Europe, or to leave our new and peaceful home. What had we in our old age to expect from the world outside?

During the long years of our solitude every tree of the country, every stone, had become a friend and companion. My wife expressed her preference for ending her days in peace in our settlement, which we had already mentally called New Switzerland. Of course she wished me to remain with her, and to retain the companionship of at least two of her sons, while she would cheerfully allow the other two to return to Europe and find settlers for our new colony.

I heartily endorsed these views, and determined on the following day to lay my case before Lieutenant Littlestone, and to place our settlement under the protection of England. But which of our sons could we spare? That was a difficult question ; for we loved them all equally, and could not tell which of them would consent to leave us. But there was the question of Jenny. We shrewdly suspected that she would not care to part with Fred, and we felt quite certain that Fred would find parting with her extremely hard.

At last we decided to wait a couple of days more, and to endeavour to arrange matters so that two of our sons should voluntarily offer to remain with us, and two to go to Europe, if Lieutenant Littlestone should be willing to take them. But the whole thing was settled for us on the very next day.

At breakfast it was decided to take the suffering engineer and his family to Homecliff ; and Lieutenant Littlestone, his coxswain and the midshipman were invited to accompany them.

Our return journey was most enjoyable, for we were all full of hope and expectation. Fred and Jack preceded us in the cajak in order to prepare for our reception.

But how can I describe the astonishment of our guests as we doubled Duck Point and came into our beautiful Refuge Bay, which was gloriously lighted up by the morning sun? But when we approached Shark Island, and could see the Union Jack waving in

the air, and were greeted by a salute of eleven guns, their delight became boundless.

“It is good to live here!” cried the sick Wolston. “Here let us settle and build cottages!” and his face lighted up with a pleasurable anticipation which seemed to bring back to the poor fellow his former health.

“Happy, happy people!” cried his wife.

“Mother, this must have been the place where Paradise was!” the youngest girl exclaimed.

“Was?” said her mother: “it is Paradise!”

As soon as we got on shore the raptures increased. Our animals all came in for a full share of admiration, whilst the coxswain and I carried poor Wolston into my room, where a camp bedstead was erected for Mrs. Wolston, so that she could nurse him.

We made rather a short luncheon, for we wanted to go on to Falconeyrie that same day. The young people ran about and made enough row for double their number; and when language failed—for our English was still far from perfect—signs took its place.

Towards evening quietness set in again, and Wolston asked me to be allowed to remain at Homecliff till he had recovered his health and to retain his eldest daughter, who was rather delicate. The youngest he wanted to proceed to Capetown, where he had a brother living, with whom she could return to fetch him. He said he liked Homecliff immensely, and thought, as he was an engineer, he might be able to be of use to us and give some excellent advice.

“It is fortunate,” he said, “that I am a mechanic, and not a piano player!”

I cordially agreed to his proposal, and told him how my wife and I had no wish ever to leave New Switzerland.

“New Switzerland! New Switzerland!” they all shouted in chorus, as they raised their glasses. “Long live New Switzerland! Hip, hip, hurrah!”

“And long live those who will remain and die here!” cried Ernest, to my surprise, clinking glasses with me, mother, Wolston, and finally with Miss Betty Wolston, who seemed to reply with much good will.

“And how about those who want to go?” asked Miss Jenny: “for while I feel drawn to remain here,” she said, blushing, “I am also drawn towards Europe. What shall I do?”

“May you live long and happily whatever you do!” cried Fred, “and always remain the same!” There was a slight tremor in his voice.

“Well,” said I, coming to the rescue, “I think Fred had better

go. It is only right that he should restore the daughter to her father, seeing that it is he who found her. He will not suffer her out of his keeping until he has handed her to her proper destination. Ernest, however, will stay here, and will become the first eminent man of science, the professor, of New Switzerland. But how about Jack? I suppose you will go to Europe, where you can go on the stage?"

"Jack will remain here!" the youngster replied, to my astonishment. "No Europe for me! Why, they are capable of clapping me into a school over there! No, thank you! Here—after Fred—I am the best shot and the best horseman in the place; and I am ambitious, I can tell you!"

"As for going to school," said Frank, "that is just what I should like. I want to go to a good school. Besides, in a large place there is more scope for one's ambitions than in a society of Robinson Crusoes. But in all things I wish to be guided by father's advice."

"Well said!" I replied. "You may go, my boy, and God bless you and all of us! Wherever you are useful and able to do good, that is your country. The question now is whether Lieutenant Littlestone can see his way to comply with our wishes."

All were silent, and signs of embarrassment could be seen on every face. At length Lieutenant Littlestone courteously spoke:

"In all this I can see the finger of Providence! I had orders to look for castaways, and have found them, although not quite those I expected. I am asked to leave three individuals behind me who are desirous of remaining, and are free to do so; and three others wish to come with me, and are also free to do so. My ship could not afford accommodation for very many, nor have I sufficient provisions for a large number of passengers. Everything fits in beautifully! In short, I am ready to take with me whomsoever this worthy Swiss clergyman recommends to my care, and to become thus the instrument of Providence to restore a good family to humanity, and perhaps to lay the foundation of a happy and prosperous colony for my country! Long live New Switzerland!"

Deeply moved, we all rose to our feet. Mother embraced the two sons who had decided to leave her, and I felt as though a mountain of difficulty had been removed from my breast.

What more remains to tell? Who cannot picture to himself how the days were spent in preparing for departure? Lieutenant Littlestone urged us to be quick, for his vessel was now seaworthy, and he had lost many days in repairs. He brought his ship into Refuge Bay to save time, but did not allow his crew to land, so that we might not be disturbed in our work. There was a good deal of rivalry in generosity between those of us who were

leaving and those who were remaining as to what was to be taken away and what was to be left.

I had to act as arbiter and decide. Of course Miss Jenny took all her things with her. I took care that Fred and Frank should do us credit in Europe, and mother fitted them out. Of course I gave them a good proportion of worldly goods--such as pearls, corals,



The departure.

nutmegs, vanilla, and a number of curiosities. I also obtained from Lieutenant Littlestone, in exchange for natural products, as many guns and as much powder as he could spare. For my part I made him such presents of nautical objects which I had saved from the wreck as I could spare, and gave him the papers of the captain of the wreck, as well as a short description of it.

I took leave of my boys with becoming solemnity, and impressed

upon Fred the importance of losing no time in finding out Colonel Montrose, and of waiting for his blessing before he completed his happiness by marrying Miss Jenny.

On the night before the departure we invited Lieutenant Littlestone and his officers to supper ; and on this occasion I handed Fred the diary of our sojourn in New Switzerland in order to have it printed in Europe.

I hope that the experiences of myself and my family may prove of some use to the world at large, if placed before the youth of my country. What I have noted down for the instruction of my boys may be instructive to the boys of Europe. I shall be glad to think that the perusal of this book may show the benefits of doing what is right : thoughtful reflection, the collection of knowledge, persevering industry, and hearty co-operation in obedience and love. Perhaps occasionally a father or mother will sympathise with us in our loneliness, and derive hope and consolation from our experience. I have not written as a learned pedantic preceptor, but have simply and faithfully recorded what actually occurred. There is no special course of instruction connected with this book : we were in a position in which regular scholarly preparation was impossible. But I think I may say that three things helped us principally in our difficult life : the first was a loving trustfulness in God ; the second, constant activity ; and the third, varied knowledge. It is all very well to say, What is the good of knowing this or that ? but you never can tell how useful such knowledge may be.

As for you, children, who may read this book, all I have to say is : " Learn, learn ! Knowledge is power ; knowledge is freedom ; knowledge is happiness ! Keep your eyes open, and look around you in this beautiful world. You have no idea what lots of things find their way into a young head by means of a couple of bright observant eyes ! And if you wish to enjoy life you must work, and say to yourselves every morning, ' To-day I mean to be a fine fellow ! ' Children who will follow this advice will be the joy and pride of their parents ! "

* * * * *

But it is late ! To-morrow morning I shall hand this chapter to my eldest son. God, without Whom we can do nothing, be with him and with all of us ! To thee, Europe, I send greeting ! God bless Switzerland ! May New Switzerland grow up as strong and as happy as thou, my country !

THE END.

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY



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