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THE WONDER ISLAND BOYS

By ROGER T. FINLAY

A new series of books, each complete in itself, relating the remarkable experiences of two boys and a man, who are cast upon an island in the South Seas with absolutely nothing but the clothing they wore. By the exercise of their ingenuity they succeed in fashioning clothing, tools and weapons and not only do they train nature's forces to work for them but they subdue and finally civilize neighboring savage tribes. The books contain two thousand items of interest that every boy ought to know.

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The Conquest of the Savages

THE WONDER ISLAND BOYS
Adventures on Strange Islands

THE WONDER ISLAND BOYS
Treasures of the Islands

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TREASURES OF THE ISLANDS



"The scout from the rear now came in with a leap"

[See p. 27]

THE WONDER ISLAND BOYS

TREASURES OF THE ISLANDS

BY
ROGER T. FINLAY

ILLUSTRATED



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TREASURES OF THE ISLANDS

CHAPTER I

THE PECULIAR SIGNALS

"Do you remember, Harry, after discovering the treasure and the skeletons of the pirates in the cave near the Cataract, that we heard the doleful sound of some bird while going down the hill?"

"Yes; that cry was something like it. Do you recall the name of the bird, George?"

"It was the Alma Perdita."

"I remember, now; it means the 'Cry of the Lost Soul.'"

"Yes; but I don't think that came from a bird. It is more like an animal of some kind. Don't you hear a sound that seems to be answering it?"

"It does seem so; I think John would know what animal it is; but it is too late to speak to him about it to-night, George."

As Harry ceased speaking, the boys heard a noise, and George arose holding up his hand as a warning. "I think I see something, so we ought to call John."

The boys quietly moved forward, and noted two figures moving about a short distance beyond. The boys crawled over to the place where John was sleeping, and found that the place he occupied, as well as that of Uraso's vacant.

"That must be John and Uraso over there," remarked Harry in a whisper.

They were confirmed in this on approaching the moving figures, and saw that both were armed, and also that they were watching another moving figure beyond.

"Is that a bird or an animal?" asked George.

"An animal," replied John, in an undertone.

"That was my opinion from the first," remarked George, who turned to Harry with a sort of 'I told you so,' expression.

"But it is a two-legged animal," responded John.

"How long have you been up?" asked Harry.

"More than an hour," said Uraso. "Muro is now coming back, and we shall know something more definite."

"Then that is Muro?" asked George, in surprise.

"Yes; he has been stalking the ones making that noise, and was the one who called our attention to it."

Muro disappeared, and the peculiar cries were repeated, then, most startlingly, a sound, similar in character, appeared to come from a point very close to where they were now crouching.

John turned to Uraso in astonishment. The latter did not seem at all perturbed, but after the second cry Uraso imitated the sound, and John smiled.

"Muro has the exact tone now," said John.

"Yes," replied Uraso, "and the cry I gave was an answer, which Uraso understands."

In a few minutes Muro appeared, but he was not smiling. His face was grave, as he said: "We have come upon the terrible Konotos. I feared that when I heard the first cry several hours ago."

"Have you been near them?" asked John.

"Near enough to know that there are quite a number, and what is more, they are now engaged in their regular feast, and if they have any captives, this is the time that they will be sacrificed," said Muro.

"Why do you think this is the time for that?" asked Harry.

"Because it was now nearing the *dark of the moon*, as you call it, and that time is chosen because the Great Spirit, out of anger, is hiding the light."

The boys now understood that this was a rite practiced by some of the tribes on Wonder Island, during that season of the Moon's phase.

"Did you talk with them in that strange language?" asked Harry.

"No; but I tried to find out the key to the language they used."

"Is that their regular language?"

"Oh, no! That is simply the special language which they use on certain occasions," answered Muro.

"The savages here, as everywhere, have a sort of code language, or a species of wireless telegraphy, used by them only when in the presence of enemies," commented John.

"Harry and I thought it might be the Alma Perdita, that we heard at the cave near Cataract."

"No; but it shows the ingenuity of the savages, when I explain that their most favored method is to assume the cry of some bird or animal, and in so doing make it difficult for the enemy to distinguish the assumed from the real."

"But on Wonder Island we had several methods of talking to each other," remarked Uraso. "For instance, we would perfectly imitate the cries of a number of birds, and also of certain animals, and of the wood insects. Thus, a nightingale would mean *watchfulness*; the chirrup of a cricket would be the signal that the enemy was not dangerous, or that there were not many of them; the cry of the Lost Soul bird would indicate that there was great danger, and so on with the birds and animals that make noises."

"But I have discovered another thing," remarked Muro.

"And what is that?" said John.

"The natives here are cannibals."

"That merely confirms my knowledge of the matter," said John.

The boys looked at John in amazement. How did John know there were cannibals on the island?

"When did you learn that?" asked Harry.

"Yesterday," was his reply.

"What did you find that makes you believe that?"

"I discovered a bone which was once part of a human body."

"But how would that be any indication that the people here are cannibals?"

"When you see a bone that has on it the unmistakable markings of human teeth, it is pretty safe to infer that the animal which scratched the bone was a cannibal."

From the report of Muro it was evident that there was a large number of people on the island, and, if Muro's observations were correct, they now had some captives, or, at least, were preparing to celebrate a feast in which human beings were to be the victims.

"That satisfies me of one thing," said Harry.

"And what is that?" asked John.

"Why, that there must be other tribes on the island," he answered.

"Why do you infer that?"

"Well, where would they get the victims?"

"From their own people," answered John.

"What! eat their own people?" asked George.

"That is not at all strange. Many people are known to sacrifice their own, and among the most degraded, they are known to kill and eat their own."

"That is the first time I have heard of such a thing."

"Don't you remember that the Bible tells about Abraham about to offer up his own son as a sacrifice?"

"Yes; but not to eat him."

"Of course not; but it is not an uncommon thing for tribes in Africa to sell their own children for this purpose. One of the greatest sacrificial rites of the ancient Mexicans, was to offer up the most handsome youth each year, as a propitiation to the gods."

"So they do not always depend on their enemies to furnish the feast?"

"By no means. Many of the tribes have a superstition that if they eat a brave enemy it will impart to them his spirit of valor, and the fact that they are to have sacrifices here does not mean that there are various tribes on the island; but that is something we shall have to investigate. It is my opinion that we shall find other tribes, but that, I am inclined to think, depends upon the size of the island."

The preceding volume, "Adventures Among Strange Islands," states the conditions under which the two boys, Harry and George, found themselves on a strange island, in the southern Pacific. Accompanying them were John L. Varney, and about sixty natives from Wonder Island, together with the two Chiefs Uraso and Muro.

Nearly three years previously the boys, George Mayfield and Harry Crandall, who were members of the crew of a school-ship, the *Investigator* sailed from New York, and while on board, met a professor, who, when the ship was

blown up at sea, became their companion in the life boat in which they sought refuge. Together they finally were stranded upon an unknown island, less than a hundred miles from the island which was the scene of the adventures with which we are now concerned.

On this island they discovered five or six savage tribes, from some of which they rescued seven of their former boy companions. Here also they met Mr. Varney, who had escaped from the savages. The Professor succeeded in reconciling all the warring tribes, and the natives were now engaged in agriculture, and in various other pursuits, and the boys had the great pleasure and satisfaction of being able to build their own vessel and return home. The trip to the Wonderful island, with which this volume deals, was for a double purpose, as will presently be shown.

John, as Mr. Varney was familiarly known to them, was not only a well educated man, but a great adventurer, and had traveled all over the world in pursuit of scientific knowledge. He was particularly interested in the history of the men who first went to the western world, and scattered civilization to the benighted countries.

Like many men of his character, he did not consider the question of money. He tried to acquire knowledge and information for the love of the quest, and in order to be of service to his fellow man, so it was purely by accident that he became a member of a crew that sailed for the southern seas at the same time that the boys left New York on their trip.

While his companions undertook the mission solely for the sake of the money which might be acquired, John engaged thinking it might offer the means of laying bare many of the early legends and vague historical accounts with which that region of the South Seas abounds, and he knew that if any records were in existence, they could be preserved only in such secure places as caverns, which the Spanish buccaneers invariably selected as the safest places to conceal their treasures.

While the boys, together with the Professor and John, had found a vast amount of treasure, as stated in the first six volumes containing the history of Wonder Island, they found not a single scrap of historical value, excepting a few traces, which have been referred to, and certain inscriptions which all pointed to the same depository, somewhere in the South Seas.

The last inscription was found by John, shortly before they left Wonder Island, and which, though its full meaning was wrapt in mystery, pointed, as did the others, to another island than the one on which it was found. What made the matter still more interesting, was the knowledge that some one, by the name of Walters, either had prepared the inscription, or had some knowledge of what it meant.

This man was not known to any of the party, and what made it the more remarkable was the information, lately obtained, that while Walters, apparently, knew one of the companions who accompanied John on his wrecked vessel, that man did not know Walters, at least not by that name.

These circumstances, together with numerous other incidents, which the boys could not understand, or unravel, made such an impression on them, that they were determined to devote their energies to ferret out the inexplicable things, and the earnestness of John was a great incentive in the undertaking.

Up to this time the boys did not know the real motive in the mind of John. To them this quest on his part was to find out where the Treasure islands were for the material value that might be obtained.

His long silence about the real design had been purposely concealed by him, as he felt that merely to delve into the hidden recesses of the islands would not be understood by them in its real sense, because as boys they could not appreciate that real knowledge always must be disassociated from the idea of material or commercial gain.

It was with a great deal of anxiety that the boys waited for the morning sun. They had but a comparatively small force to deal with the situation. True, they were equipped with fire-arms, and they knew that the *Pioneer*, their vessel, would return within a week, still, within that time the large number of natives might be able to surround them, and unless they could get some word to the ship, and by that means enable their friends to send reinforcements, they would be starved out.

As soon as the camp was astir there was a consultation. John had fully matured a plan in his mind, but it was always a pleasure, as it had been with the Professor, to present any complications to the boys, so that they could take a hand in the developments which might follow.

"Harry and I have been considering the matter," said George. "We think it would be well to leave this place, and go back to the landing and wait for the *Pioneer*. We will then be ready, with reinforcements to meet them with more

than an even chance."

"But," remarked John; "are you willing to go back, and permit the devils here to destroy the captives they may have, or, to prevent them from sacrificing their own people?"

The boys had not thought of this. "I know the feast days, during which these events will take place, will occur within the next four days," added Muro.

"If that is so," said Harry, "I am willing to do my share in keeping them from it. What do you suggest?"

"We must try to get into communication with them, and if we fail then I am in favor of taking some stringent measures to divert them from their purpose," answered John.

"Then you may be assured we are with you to the end," said George.

"After talking with Uraso and Muro, we have agreed on a plan that may be successful, and it will at any rate, for the time, prevent them from carrying out their festival scheme." As John said this Muro appeared, and stated that he had discovered the arrival of at least a hundred natives on the hill beyond the second ravine, and that he saw smoke on the third hill beyond that, and was of the opinion that the village must not be far away.

This intelligence added interest to the situation. As nearly as could be estimated they were at least fifteen miles from the landing place selected when the *Pioneer* sailed.

"Unless I am very much mistaken the ridge on which we now are is the backbone of the island, and I also believe that it is narrow and we should be able to find the sea much nearer by going east from this place," remarked John.

"But if we do that it will be necessary for some one to go to the place selected for the landing of the *Pioneer*, and tell them of our plans, and what we have learned," said Harry.

"That is what I have in mind. But before doing that we must investigate this portion of the island more carefully. My plan is as follows: Along this ridge, further to the east, is a sheltered spot, or a place where the rocks form a sort of cove, and which can be easily defended. If the natives have not reached that quarter it will make an ideal retreat for us, and where we can defend ourselves for an indefinite time."

"But why should we take up time to find a place like that if you intend to take steps toward meeting the natives?"

"It will be used to fall back upon."

"Oh, then you intend to take measures against them at once?"

"Not for the first day, at least. As soon as we are established there we will investigate the region to the east, and if we find the shore line closer on the eastern shore, we can then send a runner with a message to the landing place, giving them the information."

The boys now understood. It was evident that it would have been bad policy to retreat in face of the enemy, if such he should prove to be. Something must be done to divert the natives for the time being. This would give them time to communicate with their vessel.

"There is one thing that must be remembered. The savages know of our presence here. They are now on the alert, and we are being watched with the greatest vigilance. If they think there is an opportunity for fresh victims it will stimulate them to the greatest exertions."

"I agree with you in that view," said Uraso, as John finished speaking.

CHAPTER II

THE SAVAGES ON THE HILL

AFTER a hurried breakfast the party marched along the southern crest of the hill, keeping as much out of view of the watchers on the northern side as possible. The course adopted was one well calculated to deceive the natives, for while the main bulk of the party silently left the camping place, a half dozen of their companions were left behind, and they were particular to remain exposed at intervals, so that the departure of the main party would not be discovered.

To those left behind, John said: "Remain here until you hear firing. In that event you will know that we have met them, and that fact will be sufficient notice that your duty here is at an end. Uraso has begged the privilege of being with you, and you know that is an assurance of your safety in any event."

The place suggested by John was not over two miles distant. Muro went ahead with one of the most reliable men of his tribe, and at intervals this runner was sent back with the information that the course was clear.

Everything pointed to the success of the scheme, until they were within sight of the place, when the runner came back hurriedly with the information that Muro had seen the first of the natives, and he felt certain that they were at the place selected for their fort.

The party halted. The runner returned, and John sent back a messenger to Uraso, advising him to come forward at once. Within fifteen minutes the messenger returned with the startling information that the natives were between them and Uraso.

This was, indeed, surprising. Either they were experts at stalking enemies, or they had been fortunate enough to bring up a force in such a position as to make Uraso's escape a most hazardous one.

"We must make the best of the situation," said John. "Let us prepare to receive them, if they are determined to attack us."

"But what shall we do about Uraso?" asked Harry, in some consternation.

"I think Uraso knows how to take care of the situation. He is shrewd enough to outwit them, and if there is any danger from that quarter, he will let us know."

"But how can he let us know if his messenger cannot get through?"

John smiled, as he looked at George, and responded: "You have evidently forgotten that Uraso has the best signaling instrument in the world, the gun."

"Certainly; I had forgotten that. But what shall we do if—" His voice was cut short by a shot from the direction of Uraso's position.

"There it is," said Harry. "Two more shots!"

The scout from the rear now came in on a leap. "They are coming this way," he hurriedly informed John.

"Who are coming?" asked John.

"The natives."

"Lie down!" he commanded. "No one must fire until I give the command. Oto, go to Muro at once, and tell him to come back immediately."

In the distance to the west could be seen little squads of natives coming directly toward them. In the different groups were fully fifteen men, all armed with spears and bows and arrows.

"Uraso is driving them this way; I am sure of that," remarked John, as he watched their maneuvers.

"What makes you think so?" asked George.

"They are simply retreating, thinking, in all probability that they have met our entire band. They do not know we are here."

"Brave Uraso! I hope he will not get into danger," said George. "There they are now; see them on the ridge to—"

A shot from the direction of Muro now awoke them to action. The moment that sound reached the oncoming savages, they halted, and huddled together, evidently in confusion at the meaning of the new alarm.

"Ah! they are puzzled!" Then, after a pause, he continued: "I hope Muro is not in trouble! I do not understand why his messenger has not returned."

Within ten minutes of the report of the gun which has just been referred to, the messenger sent by John, came in and stated that it was impossible for him to reach Muro, as the hill directly to the east was alive with warriors.

It was now Muro's turn to get the sympathy of the boys, and both of them turned to John, who still seemed unperturbed.

"We will march directly to the east," he announced. "Every man must hold his gun ready for instant firing. Move forward quietly, as you have been doing. We must go to the assistance of Muro. Uraso will take care of the rear."

They glided along the crest, directly behind John, and as they passed over the hill, it was evident that the natives were out in force.

"I wonder whether they have captured Muro?" asked Harry.

"No; he is all right. You may depend on it that he will not be taken without a warning shot is given."

"But we heard a shot."

"True; but that was the messenger."

From the manner in which the natives in their front were scurrying to and fro, it was apparent to John's practiced mind, they had no idea of the approach of John and his party. It was plain that they knew of Muro, or, at least of some one beyond the second hill, where John inferred Muro must have gone, because all their energies appeared to be directed toward that point.

"I am afraid they are after Muro, but I am sure if he finds himself in danger he will fire a shot to warn us. In such a situation we must attract their attention. I will detail the first squad to accompany me. All those remaining will conceal themselves, and under no circumstances show yourselves, or let your presence be known, unless you are attacked. We will go to the point beyond the two large trees, and make the demonstration there, thus drawing them away from Muro."

John with the six men designated hurried over the intervening ground, just as two shots, undoubtedly from Muro, broke the quiet, and placed the watchers on the alert. In less than ten minutes the boys heard a volley to the right, and almost instantly the opposite slope was alive with natives running to and fro in all directions, and the most peculiar cries were heard, while in the distance there was a singular rhythmic sound as though drums were being beaten, in regular time.

It sounded very weird and fascinating. The drums, if such they were, had different keys, and their companions did not appear to be able to give any information about them.

While thus waiting for John to appear, the watchers were surprised to see the force which was between Uraso and themselves, rushing alongside the hill, and directly toward their place of concealment. Here was a problem, not contemplated by John, and the boys consulted the men with them.

Harry said: "I will do what has always been our custom, that is first show ourselves, and indicate that we do not wish to be enemies, and try to gain their confidence."

"I think some of the men should try to talk to them. It is possible that they may be acquainted with their language. You remember the one we captured could understand what Muro said," suggested George.

It should be stated that after they landed on the island, four days previously, they had made a short excursion into the interior, where they were attacked by a tribe, of which one of the men was captured, after being wounded, and then taken by the Professor on board the *Pioneer*, and carried to Wonder Island.

The savages came forward apparently without knowing of the existence of our party, and when within two hundred feet Harry, and Tarra, one of the most intelligent of the islanders, stepped forward, and waved their hands.

The natives stopped in astonishment. Tarra spoke to them, but they were mute. Then Tarra turned to Harry, and rubbed his nose, and made a sign of friendship. After some hesitation the leader, who was, from all appearance a chief, answered, that they demanded the delivery to them of the wounded man. After this was interpreted Harry assured him that the man would be restored safe and sound, as soon as he was cured.

At this information the Chief told Tarra that he lied, and that he had been taken for the purpose of being sacrificed. He was assured that such was not the case, as they did not believe in sacrificing human beings.

The Chief then demanded that they leave the island at once, or they would kill all of them. Tarra laughed at this announcement, and his demeanor was such as to astound the natives. "You do not know what you say," said Tarra. "The white people who are with us have fire guns, which kill when they speak," and he held up one of them, and the boys were amused to see how quickly they began to waver and look about for shelter.

"We have not come here to injure you," said Tarra. "We want to be friends."

This appeal did not affect the Chief, but seeing his men disappear he silently withdrew to the north. They had scarcely gone before Uraso and his men appeared in the tall grass beyond, and were most heartily welcomed by the boys.

Uraso laughed as he related their experience. He said that the band came up, after John and the party left, and in order to make as big a showing as possible he and his companions hid in the grass, being separated from each other twenty feet or more, thus making a line over a hundred feet in length.

The savages did not know that the entire line was occupied only by seven men. To all appearances the waving of the grass at the different points along the line, indicated to them the presence of a large force. As a result they started for the east, instead of going to the south, as Uraso had calculated they would do, and which indeed they would have done had they not heard the peculiar savage-made signals of the party which was hunting Muro.

The movement of the band in that direction drove them directly toward the watchers who had been left behind by John, and for them to meet a second party, immediately after they left Uraso, must have been a most astonishing thing to them.

But the savages were still more confounded, when, after leaving the boys, they learned from the signals that a third party (the one with John), was still further to the east.

The first evidence the boys had, that the last party had reached the main band of savages, was the recurrence of the same peculiar sounds that were heard during the night.

"They are telling them that we are all over the island. They are worried about the situation," said Uraso. "John purposely took the men forward in order to create the impression that our people might be found everywhere."

"Did you hear the shots that Muro fired?" asked George.

"Yes; they were on all sides of him, undoubtedly, but I am satisfied he is all right now."

"What makes you think so?"

"For the reason that the natives are retreating, and dare not attack him. The last signs were those indicating danger. They were entirely different from those sent out last night."

The peculiar drum beats ceased. Only occasionally could the plaintive signal cry be heard, and after waiting for more than half hour, the boys were delighted to see John and Muro appear on the distant hill, accompanied by the men who were detailed with him.

Muro's story was an interesting one. He went directly east for a distance of nearly two miles, passing between two different parties, who were, of course, unaware of his presence. He sent the messenger back when he met the first natives, and when this messenger was on his way back he found the savages before him, and they made a rush which he stopped by the shot which John and the boys heard.

After he had passed the second lot of natives he ascended the second hill, and beheld, far in the east, the open sea. This, he knew, was a matter of prime importance to them, as he felt assured it could not be more than five miles distant.

While investigating the shore line, in order to select some particular marking point, by means of which they might be able to direct the *Pioneer*, he was surrounded by the natives. Not that they knew he was at that particular place, but, as he was now near the rocky headland which he was seeking, it occurred to him that they might be going on the same mission, and before he could extricate himself a small band intercepted him.

He told them that they were friends and not enemies, and tried to win them over by promises of reward. For some reason or other they declined to treat with him, and he then had to resort to the rifle to impress them with the invisible power which he possessed.

This was done by the two shots which the boys heard. They were of course awed by the explosion, and by the effect of the shots, and since it did not seem to bring about the desired results, he coolly marched away, and told them that they dared not follow him.

His bravery undoubtedly proved his salvation, for they were too much astounded to move at his audacity. He did not go far, because he knew that his safety lay in keeping himself concealed, since he felt assured that it would not be long before John would resort to some device to attract their attention.

His calculations were justified, for within a quarter of an hour he heard the volley which John ordered, and in an in creditable short space of time the woods were cleared of the watching natives, who, undoubtedly, were on the alert to capture him.

"The boys went with me to the foot of the hill," said John. "I knew Muro would fire three shots if he were in danger. When we were half way up the hill, we saw the natives stealthily moving around the hill, as though trying to encircle the position among the rocks. It was enough to indicate to me that Muro was the one they were stalking.

"We did not shoot at the natives, but intended it merely as a warning. It was sufficient, for they made for cover at once, and within ten minutes we heard Muro's signal, and found him safe."

"But isn't that fine about the sea?" said Harry with enthusiasm.

"Yes; and that means we must now send a message to the landing place. Muro, did you see enough of the shore line to enable you to describe it?" asked John.

"I was not near enough to tell exactly, but I believe it is directly east of our landing place, but, of course, on the opposite side of the island," was his response.

"That will be near enough. Our work is on this side of the island. As soon as we have quieted down a little you will hear some news," said John as he glanced at the boys significantly.

The runner was directed to proceed to the landing place, and to remain there during the night. He was then to return the first thing in the morning, and would find the party camped at the rocky height beyond.

Without waiting for further explanations, and details of experiences, they started for the place where they might find some shelter from the numerous foes, and at which place they might be able to formulate a plan to get into communication with the natives.

It was late in the afternoon when they gained the rocky heights, and saw the wild nature of the surroundings.

"How did you know this place was here?" asked Harry.

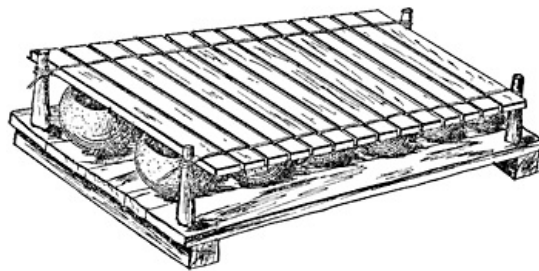


Fig. 1. The Marimba.

"I was here day before yesterday, and it was from this place we started when we heard your first guns in the battle you had with the natives," was John's answer.

"But how does it happen that you did not see the ocean?"

"Well, are you able to see the ocean anywhere from this point?" he was asked.

The question was a natural one, for when Muro came over the last hill to the south the sea was visible, but the rocky point was to the north, and thus out of range.

"Did you hear the singular drum-like sounds this afternoon?"

"They were drums," answered John, "and most peculiar ones, too. I have not seen the ones used by the natives here, but they have the same resonant sounds made by certain African tribes, and also by some South American savages."

"What is it like?" was Harry's next question.

"They are made of flat pieces of wood, very thin, laid over open-topped gourds. The gourds are, of course, dried, and the dryer they are, the more resonant the sound."

"Why, that is something like the Xylophone."

"Exactly so. That instrument is of savage origin. Instead of gourds some tribes use calabashes, which grow to enormous size, and they are highly prized owing to the quality of the sound they produce when used in this way."

"But the ones we heard had different tones."

"They use wooden strips of different lengths, exactly like the Xylophone. They are called Marimbas, balafongs and sansas, by the various tribes."

While George, Harry and Uraso, were scouting to the north they unexpectedly came around the corner of a hill, from which they could see a beautiful valley running to the north, and directly opposite, on a little plateau, was a type of mountain deer, standing like a sentinel near the precipitous

edge, while below were dozens feeding.

The boys dared not shoot at them, but they remembered the place, and made up their minds that as soon as they had made friends of the natives they would have a hunt in this section.

CHAPTER III

CAPTURE OF THE VILLAGE

THE most trying time for all adventurers and explorers, is after night has set in. During the daytime there is always plenty to take up one's attention and energies, but as the sun goes down the world seems to contract into a very small space, and when enemies are near the burden of waiting is a doubly trying one.

The boys had spent many such nights. Whenever John or the Professor were about these hours were always enjoyed, because like all healthy boys, they were ever on the alert to ask questions which happened to be suggested by the experiences of the day.

Now, it is a singular thing, that there is no selfishness in education. True education is charitable. Those who crave it with the most eagerness, are always the foremost in wishing to impart it to others. The honest learner does not resent the listening ear of his fellow pupils.

Uraso and Muro, the two chiefs, who were the first to conceive the advantages of education at the hands of John and the Professor, were always on the alert at the evening meetings, whenever their duties permitted it, and hundreds of the natives of Wonder Island craved the privilege of hearing the conversations which took place on all sorts of topics.

In Unity, the capital of Wonder Island, schools had been established and were flourishing, and all the children were pupils, so that within another generation there would be a tremendous change for the better among those people.

There was nothing more enjoyable to the boys than to see the intense interest manifested by the common natives, when night came on, and they expected one of the treats which they knew would be in store for them.

On these occasions George and Harry were usually the questioners, but many times they saw that some of the men seemed to desire additional information, and by degrees the boys encouraged them to put the questions, and to seek inquiries.

This had a very stimulating effect. John was delighted at the spirit thus developed, and he gave it a still broader range by refusing sometimes to answer the questions, and thus inviting answers from the men themselves.

Thus discussion developed. It taught them to begin to think for themselves. If men know that the ready answer is always at hand, it prevents the mind from expanding. The evenings, therefore, were seasons of enjoyment, alike to the men as well as to the boys.

After they had reached the cove in the rocks, and all the dispositions had been made for the night, John warned the men that while the natives were no doubt, in consternation, the utmost care must be observed to prevent any surprises.

The moon had not yet arisen, but there was a beautiful clear sky. The great Southern Cross hung in the heavens like a giant lantern. On one side, and on line with each other, shone the two brightest stars in the heavens, the first being the Dog Star Sirius, and the next in order, Canopus, the one white, and the other a yellowish white.

Then, on the other side of the Great Cross, sparkled Antares, the brilliant red star, of the first magnitude, while Spica, another star made up a most remarkable combination of heavenly orbs.

George had always been impressed with the appearance and the arrangement of the stars, and he was struck by the intense interest which all savages manifested in astronomy.

"Your observations are correct," said John, when the discussion began. "Almost all of the savage rites, their feasts and religious ceremonials, have something to do with the appearances and the movements of the heavenly bodies."

"I suppose the grouping of the stars, when they named these groups of the planets after animals, and the like, was done by the ancients, and really meant something in a religious way," ventured Harry.

"It is difficult really to determine the origin of what is called the Zodiac. From the evidence attainable it was known to the Babylonians, over 2300 years before the Christian era. They divided the heavens into twelve parts, each cluster of stars representing some fanciful animal or being, such as the Lion, or the Bear, or the Dragon."

"Isn't it funny that the tribes here, as well as some on Wonder Island have an

idea that the dark moon is caused by the Great Spirit trying to hide it in anger?" asked George.

"It is singular when it is considered that the same superstition is found in many, many tribes, on different continents, and it induces the belief that this idea had one common origin, and that the people all sprang from one source, or, that the different peoples worked out the ideas independently of each other."

This statement caused considerable discussion, the natives being of the opinion that the idea was worked out by the different peoples and could not have been spread broadcast by one set of people.

"Why do you think it could not have come from one race?" asked George, as Uraso urged.

"Because," he answered, "how did the people in olden times cross the big ocean? Even now, people like my own, dare not venture on the sea, for any distance from shore."

"But," said John, "the surface of the earth was not originally like it is now. In many places over the earth, new lands have appeared,—that is, they come up out of the sea, and other lands have disappeared. We have records of islands, and parts of continents, hundreds of times larger than Wonder Island, which have disappeared in a single day. One of those, near Japan, sank, and engulfed over 200,000 people."

"You surprise me," said Muro.

"Furthermore, there is pretty conclusive evidence that the continents of Europe and America, were once joined, or that there was an immense continent, called Atlantis between the eastern and western hemispheres."

"I read something on that subject some time ago, in which the writer denied that such a thing was possible," said Harry.

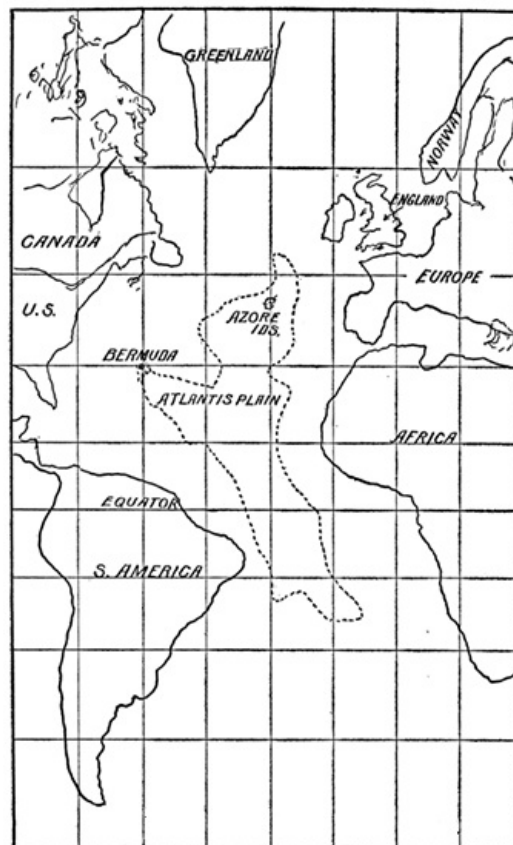


Fig. 2. The Atlantean Plateau.

"I am aware of that, but there are some things which are difficult to explain, unless the two hemispheres were once united, or, at any rate, were close enough together to permit travel from one part to the other."

"What evidence is there on that point?"

"Well, in the first place, the root of the languages in Central America, and in Mexico, are the same as in the corresponding latitude in Europe and Africa. Then the Pyramids of Mexico are built on the same plan, and located, astronomically, the same as those in Egypt."

"But could not the ancients have crossed the seas, and in that way given the same knowledge to both sections?"

"There is absolutely no evidence that the ancients had vessels capable of traversing 2000 miles of ocean."

"But the book I read said that the Western Hemisphere merely broke away from the main body of the land, and that is why the people here knew all that those in Europe had learned."

"That is very plausible, and for the purpose of giving you a fair understanding of the matter, I make a sketch, showing (Fig. 2), the Atlantean theory, in which the western shores of Europe and Africa, and the eastern shores of North and South America are outlined, and between them, in dotted lines, is Atlantis, the only part of that vast continent now being visible being the Azore Islands, at the northern extremity."

"But what evidence is there that such a continent existed? Is it only a theory?"

"It is supported by some evidence, much of which, like the account which the Egyptian priests gave to Solon, would take too long to state; but some years ago, while Darwin was engaged in making the deep sea soundings in the ship *Challenger*, it was found that the bed of the Atlantic showed a raised plateau, where the legendary Atlantis was claimed to be."

"But might it not be possible that the other theory could be correct, also,—that is, that North America merely broke away, and in breaking away, left Atlantis as an island?"

"I do not see how it can be reconciled. In the first sketch (Fig. 2), note the shape of the continent of Atlantis. Now, in the next sketch (Fig. 3), I have brought the two continents close up to each other. The outlines appear similar, and it would be difficult to make them fit together, if Atlantis should be placed there, or left in that space, after the breaking apart."

The discussion was closed for the night and arrangements made for sleep and sentry duty.

Frequently during the night the beating of the singular drums was heard. After the entertainment of the evening both Muro and Uraso undertook some scouting on their own account. The boys were awake early, and then learned of their expeditions.

Three miles north of the rocky point the main village was located. They had crept forward cautiously until close enough to learn that there must be fully five hundred inhabitants. But what was more surprising still, was the evidence they obtained that the tribes believed in the Hoodoos and the witch doctors.



Fig. 3. *The Severed Hemispheres.*

The boys were jubilant at the information, and John was full of smiles as he imparted the information. The difficulty was to get into communication with the natives, as their efforts of the preceding day did not offer much encouragement in that direction.

The fact that the people on the island observed peculiar rites was evidence to John that they must be steeped in the superstitions that are a necessary part of the craft of the witch doctors, and to the boys, as well as to Uraso and

Muro, the opportunity for John to match his intelligence with the crafty Krishnos, was awaited with interest.

It was shown on Wonder Island, that while the people had the most implicit confidence in their medicine men, they were the first to cause their overthrow when it was shown that they maintained their superiority through deceit.

Before nine o'clock the drums began to beat. They were plainly heard, as there was a slight breeze from that direction. John selected fifteen of the warriors, and accompanied by the boys, and Muro and Uraso, started for the village.

"You are to remain here until you get word from us. If you should hear heavy firing it will be the signal for you to come on without delay. In such a case approach cautiously, and rush them, so as to reach us. We do not want to cause the loss of a single life among them, except as a last resort to save our own. Otherwise you are not to leave the cove. One must be sent to the height beyond, to keep a watch for the *Pioneer*.

"If the vessel is sighted send a runner to the shore, and try to get into communication with it, so they may know where we are.

"As soon as Tarra returns, send him forward to us without delay. He should be back before noon to-day." John was thus precise to deliver the instructions, because he did not know what their reception was likely to be at the village.

As stated, his prime object was to prevent the sacrifice of captives, if such there should be, or to put off the rites which he knew would take place that day and the next.

They marched down the hill, taking all precautions on the way, but they met no opposition. Beyond them was a well wooded plain, and at intervals they could see, in the distance, detached huts, and in many places evidences of crude cultivation of the soil.

The huts were unoccupied, but it was evident from their appearance that they had been used up to that very day.

"I cannot understand why no people are living here," remarked George.

"They have gone to the village to attend the sacred rites," responded Uraso.

They were now less than a mile from the village, which could be seen in the distance through the trees. Something unusual was taking place to their left, and more than a mile away. Uraso agreed to go in that direction, and gain the slight elevation, which might afford him an opportunity to discover the cause of the excitement.

There was considerable shouting, and then the beating of the drums, which they had not heard since the early morning. Uraso was gone not to exceed a half hour.

"They are having something unusual in that quarter. A number of natives have just come in, and a hundred, or more, from the village met the visitors. I cannot account for the demonstration," observed one of the boys.

"It is quite likely," suggested John, "that some other tribe has come in to attend the ceremonies."

"I do not think so, because the visitors belong to the same people who live in the village."

John was determined to go on, and they proceeded, reaching the outlying portion of the village, just as the visitors, and those from the village were entering it from the other angle.

"They have a prisoner there," said Muro. "I am sure that man in the first group is being conducted to the village."

"Unquestionably, Muro is correct. It is plain that a party of the villagers have captured the man, and the excitement we heard was caused by that fact." And John began to speculate on the probability of the island containing more than the one tribe.

"That man is a native, I am sure," was Uraso's observation.

"That looks like Tarra," said George, in excitement.

This announcement had an electrical effect on those present. If such should prove to be the case, what likelihood was there that he had delivered the message at the landing? Was he captured going, or coming.

"It looks to me as though he was captured this morning," observed Harry, "because if he had been taken last night, on his way over, they would not wait until to-day to bring him in."

This looked like a reasonable supposition; but they must first make sure that it was Tarra.

"Forward march!" said John.

But before they had time to go far the whole town seemed to be alive. From every part of the village men were running, and forming in the open space

next the first row of huts.

It was a most curious proceeding that the boys now witnessed. In the center of the warriors was a large man, with a curious garb. On each side of him were noticed men with dissimilar clothing, but bedecked with every sort of device, the peculiarities of which could not be distinguished, owing to the distance.

"That large man in the middle, is the Chief, and those about him are the witch doctors. The Chief has brought the witch doctors so as to terrify and destroy us," and John laughed as he remembered some of the wiles of that class on Wonder Island.

To the beating of the drums, the Chief marched forward, his men following, and closing in on his sides to afford him protection. John motioned Uraso and Muro to step forward, and they advanced twenty feet beyond the warriors, and awaited the Chief.

The latter stopped when within hailing distance, and John held up a hand. Uraso then addressed the Chief, telling him that they came as friends, and not as enemies, and desired to be present at the ceremonies about to take place.

He also recited that they came from a neighboring island, where they had a wonderful village, where all the people were happy, and they now wanted to show, their friendship by offering presents.

The Chief was silent, and then said: "Why did you kill my people?"

"We only defended ourselves. Your warriors were the ones who attacked us. We could have killed all of your warriors if we had been enemies."

"You speak lies," answered the Chief. "Why did you take my warrior?"

"Because he was wounded and we are making him well, and will then return him to you so he can tell you that what we say is true."

"You are again speaking lies," he retorted. Notwithstanding the manner in which Uraso had steeled himself, he was visibly affected by the blunt manner in which the savage accused him, but he was judicious enough not to appear disturbed.

"Ask him," said John, "what he wants us to do to prove that we are friends, and not enemies."

The Chief, at this question, drew himself up proudly, and answered: "You are on my dominion, and you have no right to ask any favor from me. You must deliver yourself up as prisoners, and we shall then deal with you as we see fit."

"In what way will you deal with us? Have we committed a wrong? Do you intend to punish us?"

"You had no right to come here. Every one who does so without my permission, must die."

"Then you expect us to surrender so you may kill us?"

"Yes."

"Then our Chief tells you that he has a right to come here, and that you have no right to prevent it, and that if you try to kill us we will have the Great Spirit visit you the same as he visited your warriors the other day," said Uraso.

The Chief was astounded at the audacity of the visitors. He could not understand the presumption of Uraso, and the defiant attitude of the little group behind him.

"Then I command the Korinos to destroy you!" he shouted.

Muro turned to the boys, and smiled as he said: "Do you know what he means? He calls them Korinos. On Wonder Island they are Krishnos. That seems pretty close to the same thing."

Uraso held up a hand, as he said: "I have a Korino here (pointing to John), and he will destroy your Korinos."

The witch doctors then ranged themselves in front of the Chief, and the latter said: "They will sacrifice your friend who came to us to-day."

To the astonishment of all, Tarra was led forward, and ordered to kneel down. Then a great burly man, clothed in the garb so common to the sorceress among savage tribes, followed him with a huge knotted club.

"Tell him that if he raises the club I will order the Korino to die."

This was imparted, but it made no difference to the executioner. He stepped forward, and slowly raised the club, but before it had reached its highest point, a revolver in the hands of John spoke, and the savage dropped the club, and slowly sank to the earth.

It would be impossible to describe the consternation that showed itself at this catastrophe.

"Come here, Tarra," cried John.

Tarra leaped to his feet, and with a few bounds was at Uraso's side, while Harry jumped forward and cut the thongs that bound his hands.

The Chief was bewildered, no less than those around him. No effort was made to prevent Tarra from escaping. The other Korinos did not even go forward to the relief of their slain comrade. He lay there motionless.

"I am sorry," said John. "I must have made a miscalculation, but I am afraid he is dead."

Then one of the Korinos moved toward the fallen man. "Stop!" cried John. "It will be death for any one to touch him now!"

Uraso hurriedly informed the Chief of this new piece of information, which, in reality, caused more terror than the shot itself. What species of sorcery was this that they dared not even touch the victim who disobeyed the white Korino?

CHAPTER IV

RESCUING A WHITE CAPTIVE

"DID you deliver the message at the landing place?" asked George, after Tarra was freed.

"No; they captured me late last night. I tried for hours to get through, but they were within a mile of the landing," answered Tarra.

"But where have you been all this time?"

"They took me north to another village."

But more interesting things were now happening. The witch doctor who was about to go to his fallen companion, hesitated. He turned to the Chief. The latter merely stretched out his hand, and with an impatient gesture appeared to order him on.

"I warn you!" said Uraso. "It will be death to touch him."

If there is one thing, more than another, that is liable to add terror to a low order of human beings, it is noise. It may be said that the most intelligent are not entirely devoid of the feeling of fear at inexplicable noises.

As an example, take the sensations produced by thunder and lightning, one which affects the ear, and the other the eye. During a thunderstorm, the feeling of fear becomes acute only when the roar is heard.

In this case we know what it is that produces the reverberations; but even under those circumstances many people are seriously affected by it. A terrific explosion, of which we do not know the cause, is often the source of great terror.

This is particularly true with all savage people. The drums referred to, evidence this particular feeling of awe, and the louder and more violent, the more intense is it to the untutored mind. It is with this idea in their minds that they exercise the bad spirits by driving them away by making great noises, a practice true of most savage tribes.

When John returned to Wonder Island from the United States he had taken with him several of the well-known Silencers, which, when attached to the muzzle of a gun, will so deaden the sound that no explosion is heard.



Fig. 4. Silencer: Convolute Blades.

For general use, John knew that the unmuffled gun would be far more effective than those equipped with the new invention. Smokeless powder was also used in the guns which John and his company carried. The absence of smoke thus centers the mind of the native on the sound alone, and he sees the effect on the victim.

To the savage the sound and the effect of the shot produce the sensation that there is something more than human in the discharge. It is hard for them to form an idea of the connection between the report and the mission of the bullet. It is some monster which speaks in a loud voice.

But it was more than that to the islanders when they saw the witch doctor fall. There was a white Korino who spoke with a voice of thunder. They were not aware that he held something in his hand like a weapon, and the noise and the result of that noise stunned them.

John also carried a revolver with one of the silencers. When the Korino turned to the Chief, and the latter, determined not to be swayed by the power of the white man, there was but one thing for him to do. He must obey. He knew that if he shrunk from the task it would be a confession that his power was gone.

The man approached the prostrate form. "Stop!" again cried Uraso. "The white Korino will not again speak, but if he touches the body you will die!"

He stood there for a moment, irresolute, and then slowly stooped down, and with hesitation at every motion, finally touched the figure. In the meantime John had leveled the revolver with the silencer, and as the man again rose to an erect position, and glanced at John defiantly, he quickly threw up his hands and fell forward across his former companion with a shot through his arm, as it was not John's intention to kill him if it could by any possibility be avoided.

The white Korino had not spoken, as Uraso predicted, but the results were the same. The savages who were lined up on both sides of the Chief, began to

waver. They were moving to the rear. The Korinos around the Chief, finally broke and fled, and when the people saw this evidence of fear on the part of their Wise Men, they could not be restrained.

The Chief followed them hurriedly. "Now, quickly, boys, fire two rounds. No; not at the natives, but up in the air."

The boys could not understand what John could mean by such an order, but they did not have an opportunity to ask the reason for it.

After the volleys John turned to Muro and Uraso, and remarked: "As soon as the men come up you and Muro must contrive in some way to find out the direction that the Korinos have taken."

They now saw the object of the volleys. It would bring up those of their party who had remained at the rocky cove. The watch for the Korinos was equally plain. The experience on Wonder Island showed that the witch doctors inhabited the caves.

In the excitement they had entirely forgotten this part of their enterprise. They thought of the treasure. John had the treasure of the records in his mind. The hills all about; the limestone formations of the elevations were ample assurance to his mind that some caverns would be found; and while they might, eventually, be able to locate the entrances, it would be better to find out where they were by watching and charting the direction they took on their way to the dark places where they hoped to rest in fancied security.

Within fifteen minutes their rear guard came into sight, rushing over the hills, all expectant to find an enemy in their front. Great was their surprise to see the village beyond, and John and his party bending over the two bodies, one of them moving and the other inert. Apparently, he and his force were unconcerned, although many savages were in the village, and in plain sight.

An examination of the fallen men made John happy, because he feared that his aim had been untrue. Both had been severely wounded, and when an hour afterwards both men were able to move, thanks to the knowledge and care of John, they were carried into the village.

Before this was done, however, John ordered the force to march boldly into the village. On the approach of the party the Chief and his followers, together with the women and children, hurriedly fled to the north.

Among the huts were found a dozen or more sick and injured men and women, and a number of old people who were unable to be carried away. John went to each, and after carefully examining them, administered medicine.

In one place they found two warriors, who had been wounded in the battle four days previously. These were given special attention, the villagers meanwhile looking on the proceeding with a feeling of awe, and wonder. They could not comprehend the care and treatment which was being given them.

John's companions were most eager to render aid, and spoke to the patients freely, telling them that they were friends, and not enemies. During this investigation into every corner of the village, George and Harry were the most active. They found many amusing things, but the care of the sick and the infirm was the first duty, and they had many willing helpers.

While thus engaged they reached a long, low thatched enclosure, so entirely different from the huts scattered about. There was no visible opening. They walked around the enclosure with more and more curiosity. Some of their companions from Wonder Island then drew near.

"We have found it!" cried one of them.

"What is it?" asked Harry.

"This is the place where they keep the captives."

"But how can we get into it?" asked George, then adding, "Get one of the hatchets, quickly."

Several men ran back and opened the packages containing their equipment, and others followed to see the prisoners. Uraso was one of the first to come up, and he was soon followed by John, all in excitement over the news. George was the first one to get a hatchet. He soon chopped a way through, and Uraso was the first to crawl into the enclosure, followed by George.

The latter staggered back, as he saw the scene before him. The enclosure was fully fifteen feet high, and occupied a space, probably, twenty feet each way. It was constructed of a species of bamboo, exceedingly hard, two rows of these paling being driven into the ground close together, so that it was impossible to see through the stockade at any point.

Within there was absolutely nothing but the bare ground, and a mass of indescribable filth, as may be imagined. Here, lying on the earth, were five men, with little or no clothing, covered with dirt and vermin. Two of them were in fairly good condition, an evidence that they had not long been prisoners.



"'Stop!' cried John, 'It will be death for any one to touch him'"

[See p. 52]

The other three were emaciated, and what surprised the boys most was the long, matted and tangled beard of one of the three. The moment John saw that form he turned to the boys and fairly shrieked: "This is a white man. Cut down that fence, so the men can be taken out, and the moment they are removed set fire to this place."

The boys could not understand John's vehement expression.

"Shall we burn the village?" asked Harry.

"Oh, no! Burn only this enclosure, and don't let a vestige of it remain."

His orders were quickly carried out. Meanwhile, not a quarter of a mile away, were the Chief and the owners of the village, who, upon seeing the smoke and the flames, appeared to be frantic. No doubt they regarded it as a sign that the village was doomed, but they were soon reassured by the time the stockade was finally consumed, and the few watchers reported to the Chief that nothing but the prison had been destroyed.

"We have destroyed the Bastille," remarked John, "and must now take care of the prisoners." They found that it was indeed a white man who had been rescued. He was frightfully emaciated, and too weak to talk.

This was also the condition of the two natives. The other two were soon restored, after receiving nourishment, and were ready to tell their story. They had been taken two weeks previously in a battle with the tribe to the north.

Through these men they learned that there were only two tribes on the island, and that this was by far the largest, in point of numbers. There had been continual war between the two people, and the only thing which saved his tribe from extermination was the fact that they lived in the mountain regions, and were thus protected.

This information was very welcome to John and the boys. The mountains seemed to have a fascination for them,—and then, the caves, how could they forget them now?

For three hours the Chief and his people waited in the distance. John did not pay any attention to them, apparently. Shortly thereafter two of his men came in, dragging one of the former patients.

"We saw him trying to steal away," said one of the men.

"Was he going toward his people?" asked John.

"Yes."

"Then let him go, by all means, and tell him that we would be glad to have the Chief and his people return."

The poor fellow was astonished to learn that he was free. He was as much

surprised at this as at the care which they had bestowed to cure him. He passed through the village, looking about him with furtive glances, but, at the command of John, no one paid any attention to him.

When he reached the Chief there was a long consultation, and it was evident that a momentous change was taking place. The Chief could be seen constantly glancing toward the village, and soon the self-imposed messenger returned and approached John.

"The Chief is willing to see you, and will come to you, if you wish it." This was imparted to John, and the latter responded:

"I will go with you."

He called the two chiefs Muro and Uraso, and the boys, and told them he would go with the messenger to the Chief, alone, and that they should have no fear for him.

Accompanied by the messenger, John walked boldly to the Chief, and going up, pressed his nose against him, in token of eternal friendship, and then motioned him to go back to the village.

The Chief was astounded, first, at the bravery of John in thus coming to him, and in then vowing eternal friendship.

There is something very peculiar in the characteristics of savages which forbids them from violating a peace pledge, or a treaty of friendship when entered into with the rites that they acknowledge. The most formal of these rites, is that of rubbing noses together.

How the custom originated, is not known. It is something like the kiss, in so far as it is a visible token of either love, friendship, or esteem. It is seldom that the savage violates the pledge which is thus given. John knew this, and felt assured the great Chief would respect it.

When the latter came into the village, the first sight that met his eyes, was the demolished stockade. He looked at it for a moment, in silence. Then some of the old men came forward, and began to tell him the wondrous tales of kindness.

The Chief went to his own home, and when he saw that everything was untouched, and that none of the people was harmed, he could not understand the actions of the White Chief, and so expressed his astonishment to Uraso and Muro. When he was told that the latter were Chiefs of two tribes on Wonder Island, he was still more surprised.

"Do you not fight each other?" he asked.

Uraso smiled, as he answered: "Why should we fight? There is no pleasure in killing, or in causing suffering. We used to think about those things as you do."

"What made you think otherwise?"

"The White Chief told us it was wrong, and we have found that his words were true."

"Where is this place where your tribe may be found?"

"It is on the other side of the sea, over there," answered Uraso, pointing to the west.

"Will it take long to get there?"

"It takes only one sun, and the White Chief would be so happy to take you there and show you the great village, and to see the people and the Chiefs who live together in happiness, and to learn from the people themselves how they enjoy their homes, and make the many curious things that the White Chief has brought over for you."

The Chief looked about him, and finally said: "I want to see the White Chief."

John had purposely refrained from going to the Chief's home, but Uraso accompanied him at John's request, because he was the more diplomatic, and wielded a stronger influence than Muro, owing to his remarkable personality.

John was glad of the opportunity, and the boys, as usual, were also present. The Chief's eyes followed the two boys, as they entered. He smiled at them, as John came up and greeted him.

Uraso told John what they had talked about, and that the Chief was interested in his story of Wonder Island.

"Our Great Chief will welcome you to Wonder Island," said John.

The Chief looked at John for a moment, and then his eyes wandered to Uraso, as he answered: "Is there still a greater Chief? Is there a man more powerful than this Chief?"

Uraso laughed, as did John. "Tell him," said John, "that our Chief is powerful, because he is wise."

He did not seem to understand this, and asked for more information. Uraso

told him that the white man did not regard the strong man as the greatest, but that the wisest man was always the Chief.

Here was certainly a new philosophy. "But," he inquired, "then how can he rule his people, if he is not strong?"

"The people willingly submit to his will because they know what he says is best for them."

"But does not the Chief sometimes tell them lies, and does he not often deceive them?"

"Yes; but when they do so then the people choose another Chief in his place."

"And after they have killed the first Chief, and have taken another, and he lies, do they also kill him?"

"No; they do not kill the Chiefs, but they only put others in their places."

"Then they are not wise Chiefs?"

"No; they are wise only when they do what is right."

"Do what is right! What do you mean by that? How can the Chief do anything but right?"

"Do you think," asked Uraso, "that the Chief has a right to lie or deceive?"

"Yes, he can do that, but not his people. It is wrong for them to do so."

"But the white man believes that it is just as wrong for the Chief to lie and to deceive, as for the people to do so."

The Chief was silent for a long time, and John purposely permitted him to reflect on the new dispensation. While thus musing on the new theory, a woman carrying a child appeared at the door. John saw her, and, stepping out, took the child from her arms. She permitted it, and when the Chief appeared she fell down and explained that the White Chief had been very kind to her.

John took some medicine from a small vial, and administered it, the Chief meanwhile looking on in astonishment. Here was a great White Chief, looking out for the comfort of one of the poorest of his people.

Uraso knew his thoughts. This woman was the poorest and the lowest in the tribe, and John, without stopping to make any inquiries as to her condition, or position in life, had aided her and her old mother.

Evidently the new doctrine was something so extraordinary, that it was worth investigating. Uraso saw the embarrassment in the mind of the Chief, and after speaking a few words, withdrew.

As they left the Chief's quarters the boys roamed through the village. The stories of the sufferers which John had aided, the scrupulous care with which the men guarded the homes of the villagers while they were absent, had a most telling effect.

The warriors from Wonder Island mingled with the villagers. It was singular that there was not an expression of hatred. They fraternized, and related stories of Wonder Island, and the people told them about their own island.

The boys met many of their own ages, and to them they showed the revolvers, and the marine glasses, and then astounded them by exhibiting the watches which they carried.

CHAPTER V

RETURN OF THE NATIVES

SEVERAL of the packages left at the landing place, contained numerous trinkets, and articles of personal adornment, such as the natives adored. Brightly-colored fabrics, made at the factory on Wonder Island were also among the many articles, which had been intended to be used as presents.

John was gratified to learn, an hour or two after the Chief returned, that the latter had given orders to the villagers to prepare a feast for the visitors.

"But where are the Korinos?" asked George.

True, they had disappeared.

"Let us see John about that," responded Harry.

They had some time in finding him, but later on learned that he was attending to the wounded, and caring for the late prisoners.

"It would not be wise to speak to the Chief about that now," responded John. "The leaven is working well in his mind. Besides, I fear that he will wreak vengeance on them, and we must prevent him from killing them."

As the boys were leaving John they saw fifty of the warriors leave the Chief's home, marching out of the village to the east. Muro entered the hut where John was staying, and announced that the Chief wished to see him.

John continued with his work, after informing Muro that he would soon visit the Chief. The boys later saw John and Muro on their way to the "Palace," as Harry called the royal residence, and begged John's permission to accompany them.

The Chief received them with special marks of attention, and John thanked him for the invitation.

"This is the day which the Wise Men have appointed for the sacrifices, and the people are preparing the feast, in accordance with our custom. It is my wish that you shall be my guests, and take part in our ceremonies," remarked the Chief.

Muro, in behalf of John, thanked him for the invitation, and assured him that they would gladly join in the rites. Then, he continued: "I wish to inform you that we left at the seashore, on the other side of the island, some gifts which I am desirous of presenting to you. If you will order some of your men to accompany my guides they will bring them back."

The Chief's eyes lighted up with pleasure. Immediately, a detail of men were designated, and a half dozen of John's warriors, under the leadership of Muro, were requested to proceed to the landing.

The people saw the company depart with the greatest wonder and curiosity. Muro was instructed to leave a message at the landing, and return with the packages as soon as possible. They reached the landing place within two hours, and were rejoiced to see the *Pioneer* anchored not far from the shore.

Stut was recognized at once, but Sutoto had remained at Wonder Island. The packages were taken to the *Pioneer*, and Muro informed Stut that they would sail around the island and land near the village. The men from the village were awe stricken at the sight of the vessel, and it was difficult to get their consent to embarking but were soon persuaded, when presented with some of the gifts, which Muro knew would be acceptable.

An hour after the last interview in the Chief's home, the boys saw the warriors, who had formerly left the Chief's home, marching down the street of the village, and guarding the Korinos who had formed part of the Chief's escort earlier in the day.

They were quite different now in demeanor, and the boys thought they looked crestfallen. They were ushered into the Chief's presence without any ceremony.

They stood there like criminals, and felt that their doom was sealed. "I have sent for you," he said, "because this is the day you have selected for the ceremonies. Where are the prisoners to be sacrificed?"

They were silent. The Chief continued: "You have told us that the Great Spirit asks for the sacrifices each year when the sun is leaving us, and when the moon is hiding behind the veil. Bring the captives so they may be offered up."

Instantly the Korinos brightened up, and muttered a few words. The Chief gave an order, and they were marched out of the building. Out of curiosity, the boys followed. Their steps were directed to the stockade where the prisoners had been confined.

To their dismay they saw only the ashes, and were staggered at the sight. They stood there with wondering eyes. The boys could see that this was a condition wholly unexpected by them, and it must be said that there was pity in the hearts of Harry and George, as the leader gave the order for them to return to the "Palace."

As they entered John and the Chief were engaged in an animated conversation, and when the latter saw the Korinos, he stood up and asked for the victims.

"They are not there!" was the only response.

The Chief, not affecting to believe, told them that they were lying to him. They fell to their knees, but were mute.

"But the Great Spirit must not be deceived. Great evil will fall upon us if he is not appeased. If you cannot find the victims I will do so."

The Chief's voice was terrible in its anger. Outside of their dark homes the Korinos were subject to the Chief's will. Within the caves they knew no fear. The boys looked at Uraso and John. A slight smile could be seen on Uraso's face, as he returned the gaze of the boys; but John's face was immobile, and did not in the least appear to portray any concern.

"It is my order that you shall be the victims, and must be offered up as the sacrifices to prevent the anger of the Great Spirit."

This doom was pronounced in a voice so full of anger that its significance was instantly divined by the boys, although they could not understand all of the words which he uttered.

They were instantly seized and bound, and being now in a helpless condition, were carried out of the building, and, with the most brutal force conveyed by the guard to a hut not far from the Palace, and literally thrust into the small opening which formed the entrance.

"Do you suppose they will kill them?" asked Harry, as he moved to the side of Uraso.

"I think the Chief means what he says," and Uraso gave a little smile that somewhat assured them.

"No; I don't think John will let the Chief kill them," responded George.

After the removal of the Korinos John asked whether it would be possible to defer the ceremonies until the following day, for the reason that he desired to distribute the gifts which the men were bringing from the landing.

"If the White Chief so desires it shall be done."

John manifested his pleasure at the consent thus obtained.

George and Harry now wandered into every part of the village. For the first time they noticed that it was located at the western edge of a beautiful grove, thickly wooded, with tall trees.

Through this they walked, and before they emerged were delighted at the sight of the great ocean beyond. "I wonder if John knows we are so near?"

They ran to the beach, delighted to have an opportunity for a bath, but were surprised to see many along the shore with small bags.

"They are searching for something," remarked Harry. "I wonder what it can be?"

"Possibly clams. Don't you remember the first week when we lived on clams, after we reached Wonder Island? What delightful days we had; and how afraid we were of every noise, and used to start up at every new sound."

"And wasn't it a joy to make the new things, and see every day bring new wonders to us after we moved to the Cataract?"

"I have a love for that old home. We were so happy there. I know I am not happier now when we own all the treasures of the caves, than when we were building the water wheel, and the little shop, and tending the yaks," answered George, as he gazed across the sea, and thought of the glorious times and of their wonderful adventures.

When they saw the streams of people coming from the shore they recalled that the people were preparing for the feast. It was remarkable that clams were an article of food with these people when those on the island they had just left, despised all fish and sea food.

They wandered along the beach, fully a mile south of the village, and quite out of reach of the people, and were soon in the mild surf. After a half hour of this enjoyment they dressed, and ascended a slight elevation from which could be seen the character of the land along the sea.

To the north and south of their position the land was much higher, the northern portion having the appearance of very high hills, if not mountains.

"Do you think John was thinking about the caves when the guards brought in the Korinos?" remarked George, as they were descending the ridge.

"I thought of it," answered Harry. "But I learned from Muro that he knew where they made their homes!"

"Then he must have watched them, as John suggested!"

"No; one of the men told him just before he left."

"What did he say?"

"That they should follow the trail to the north of the grove until they reached the sea."

"Then Muro must know that the sea is near?"

"I think he does."

During the descent from the hill the ocean was visible directly to the east. Both, at the same instant, caught sight of a sail. They gasped in surprise, as they gazed at the unusual spectacle.

"I would like to know who that can be," queried Harry. "Let us tell John and then get something so we can signal it."

They rushed down the hill, and ran hurriedly through the streets of the village, to the surprise of the inhabitants. First going to the Chief's house, without finding him, they went to the improvised hospital where the wounded Korinos were being cared for.

There John was found, together with Uraso and the Chief. "We have seen a sail," shouted George. "We want something to use as a signal." John bounded up, and Uraso rushed out and soon fished out a white cloth, and ran down through the grove after the boys.

Three hundred feet to the right was a slight elevation, which the boys had noticed, and as it was devoid of trees offered the most available place for the signal flag. They scurried around for some pole which would answer, and to this the white cloth was quickly attached.

John was the last to reach the signaling point. He was laughing immoderately, as he noticed the frantic signaling. "Where are your field glasses, George?"

"They are in the village. I forgot about them."

"If you had used them you would not be surprised at the visitor."

The boys stopped signaling for a moment, and then looked at the ship.

"It isn't possible that is the *Pioneer*?"

"Look again, for yourself; don't you know your own work?"

The ship had seen the signal, and now turned. Then they recognized the grand little vessel, that was almost a part of themselves, for they had worked many months to complete her, and had tried to put good luck and best wishes into every plank and spar and sail.

The Chief, too, was coming. The whole village joined to welcome the ship, for when Uraso told the Chief that their own ship was coming, he could not resist the temptation to witness the arrival.

Was it possible that Muro reached the landing place before the ship left? John thought so, but the boys doubted it. Muro left before noon, and it was now past five in the evening.

As the vessel neared the shore the people lined up and the boys crowded close to the shore. They were the first to recognize Muro, to their great delight. He waved his hand to them, and Stut was by his side.

"Good old Stut!" shouted George. "Where is Sutoto?"

"In Wonder Island!" was the response.

They were disappointed at this, but there was too much for them to think about, as the anchor was being swung, and as soon as it dropped, a boat was lowered from each side, and the men began to descend from the short ladder, while the village people watched the proceeding with silent wonderment.

Muro was the first to touch the shore, and then came the villagers who were on the mission with Muro. They were the heroes to their friends. They knew their duty to their Chief, however, and the latter had a most animated conversation with them, and particularly so after he had noticed the array of trinkets which Muro had bestowed on them.

While this was going on the boats returned and bundles and packages were brought out of the ship and deposited in the boats. After they had been taken from the boats, John said: "With your permission I will take these things to your house."

The Chief assented, and on his orders the men in the village gathered up the assortment of gifts and the procession filed along the path to the village.

The feast that evening reminded them of the welcome/ which the Chief Beralsea extended to them the second night after their arrival at Venture Island. Besides the clams referred to there was an abundance of fish, several

varieties, besides game and meats, and the only thing which they seemed to lack, or which was rather meager in quantity, was fruit.

Like all natives of these islands, they were experts at spitting the meats. The most delicious was a species of ground hog, that the boys frequently caught on Wonder Island. The boys had watched the method of roasting these animals.

A strong green tapering stick, about four feet long was selected, and the bark was peeled off, so as to give it a smooth surface. The small end of this was sharpened, and driven through the animal, from end to end, so that it was held firmly on the stick, midway between its ends.



Fig. 5. Spitting the Roast.

Two forked posts were then driven into the ground, about three feet apart, and the stick laid in the forks. A fire of wood, previously built between the posts was permitted to accumulate a quantity of coal, and when a hot fire was thus generated, one of the natives would continuously rotate the stick, so that the heat affected all sides evenly, and the result would be the most tempting roast imaginable. This is a practice common with savages all over the world, varying only in the details of the preparations.

All the vegetables were roasted, in hot coals. In this respect their custom was different from the practice followed in Venture Island, for there they knew how to make stews. Here they knew nothing about pottery, but like all islanders in the South Seas, the wrecks would, occasionally cast cooking utensils, like pots, or pans, ashore, and these highly-prized articles were sure to be taken by the Chiefs, or by the Krishnos themselves, where they could get them by stealth.



Fig. 6. Arialad Fruit. Sarsaparilla.

Unlike the natives of Wonder Island, they had potatoes, the wild variety which the boys found the second day after they were cast ashore. The Taro root, that vegetable which grows in the greatest abundance in every section south of the Equator, to the lower border of the south temperate zone, was the chief dish, and was also roasted in like manner.

What surprised them most was a drink that pleased John, who at once recognized its origin. They called it Arialad, and George declared it was a fine quality of Sarsaparilla.

"You are correct," said John. "Its real botanical name is Arialace. It belongs to the same family as spikenard and ginseng. Very few natives know of its value. It is both a medicine and a refreshing drink."

"If it grows in abundance here it would be a good thing to gather for export," observed Harry.

"A boat load of the roots would be worth a fortune," rejoined John.

There was the utmost good fellowship among all present. In accordance with the custom among most of these people the women did not partake of the food in the presence of the men. They acted as the servants in serving the food, but the men prepared the meal, a sort of well-balanced family arrangement, as George observed.

"But who washes the dishes?" asked Harry with a laugh, in which all joined.

CHAPTER VI

THE SAVAGE CEREMONIALS

THE next day was the one appointed for the ceremonies. The boys were expectant, because during all their experiences in the islands, this was the first time they had an opportunity to witness one of these spectacles.

It was noticed that no preparations were made for a morning meal by the natives. All were specially garbed for the occasion, if the colored decorations counted for anything in the way of additional clothing.

They were adept in the art of weaving cloth, which was made in small sections, and sewn together, similar to the practice in most of these primitive countries. They were not altogether devoid of knowledge pertaining to dyes, the most frequent being blue, which John soon ascertained came from some copper deposits.

The Madder plant was the most common on the island, and this afforded a red color, the most lasting of all dyes, and the most generally in use throughout the civilized world, until the aniline dyes took its place.

For black they resorted to the common method of using carbon which is the stock material in our own country. This was produced by them from burnt wood, and not from any of the coal products.

Their faces were painted a hideous red and blue, principally in the nature of great zig-zag stripes, and the exposed parts, of the bodies were of diverse figures, some of them really artistic. The preparation of these personal decorations consumed the greater portion of the night, as the boys afterwards learned.

When they emerged from their hut in the morning, and saw the grotesque figures all about the village, they could hardly repress a smile; but as every one was smiling and happy, they did not have to make any pretensions, but smiled and laughed as the men and women circled about, because they couldn't help themselves.

The women were not so gaudily attired as the men. Their decorations were expended on clothing, as it was not considered good form to decorate their bodies.

All the men carried spears, and many of them were wicked-looking instruments. What surprised them was the fact that all the spear-points were now covered over, or bound up by colored material, forming a sort of sphere, to which three colored streamers were attached, one white, one red and the other blue.

"My, but they are patriotic!" remarked George, as he saw the design and the streamers.

John smiled, as he observed them. "But do you notice that the point of the spear is covered?"

"I was about to ask the meaning of that," said Harry.

"This is the day of feasting and of sacrifices. The covered point indicates that there is peace; and that no one can commit an injury. I imagine the points will be uncovered quickly enough the moment they are ready for the sacrifices."

"I am more interested in the fact that they use the American colors. I wish we had one of the flags here. That idea has just struck me as being the proper thing." And George danced about at the scheme.

Harry was just as much affected now. "Why not consult Uraso and Muro, and bring over the big flag from the ship?"

John laughed at the idea. "A brilliant idea. The flag will be a big attraction, but I warn you that if you get it I shall have to insist that you must head the procession with it."

"Are we going to have a procession?"

"I believe that is the first thing on the list."

"But where is the procession going? Is it the custom to march along the principal streets and out along the boulevards?"

This idea was so laughable to Harry and Uraso and Muro, that they had a fit of laughter. The two Chiefs were just like boys, and entered in to the spirit of the undertaking with a vim that pleased the boys.

They fairly flew to the landing, and manned the boat. "We have come for the flag," announced George, as Stut was looking on the excitable boys.

"Why not take both of them?" responded Stut.

"Certainly," answered Harry. "I had forgotten about the other. And while we are about it, why not have the band come along?"

This was answered by a shout. One of the new acquisitions of the natives of Wonder Island, was music, and when the boys returned from the States they brought along several fine sets of band instruments, one set of which was always on the vessel, and was used for evening concerts.

"Where is Mano?" asked Harry.

Mano was the leader of the ship's band, but he was not to be found.

"John sent for Mano an hour ago, and he is now in the village."

"Then send for him at once. Tell him he must be here as soon as John is through with him," said George.

While the flags were being wrapped up one of the small boats came from the shore, and Mano stepped out.

Harry ran up and said: "Get the boys and the instruments ready. You must play for us to-day during the ceremonies."

Mano smiled as he answered: "John told me about it last night, and I went over merely to find out what music I should take."

"So John tried to steal a march on us?" remarked Harry. "How soon will you be ready?"

"We are all ready now. I was told at the Chief's house that the procession would start in a half hour."

When the flags were brought out it was Mano's time to stare. "I think," he said, "that will surprise John, but the idea is a proper one."

The band comprised nine musicians and the two drummers. The moment they landed the band formed four abreast, and directly behind were the two boys with the Stars and Stripes. To the tune of "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean," they marched straight to the home of the Chief.

The crashing music, and the magnificent flags brought pandemonium to that savage village. Nothing like it had ever been known before. Long before the band reached the Palace all the inhabitants of the town had rushed down, and at Uraso's and Muro's suggestion the people followed behind, and thus made a procession which was the most unique that it was possible to describe.

"That scheme will make a success of the ceremonies," remarked George, almost too full for utterance. "Why the thing wouldn't be a success without the flags and the music."

"I wonder how the thing will fit in when it comes to the sacrifices this afternoon? I imagine the Korinos ought to feel like dying when they are to have such an unusual funeral procession?" Harry said this with a bit of irony, as he turned to George and grinned at the idea.

John knew what was coming, but the Chief didn't. He and John came out together, when they heard the music. The boys, behind the band could not see the great sights that were taking place in the rear, but John stood there beside the big Chief, and was simply convulsed with laughter.

The natives were not walking. They were dancing, and the Chief, at first astounded at the music, and at the waving flags, soon joined John in laughter as they witnessed this remarkable scene.

Uraso had taken part in numerous celebrations at Unity, and knew what disposition to make of the people when they arrived. The band marched past, and John raised his hand in the form of a salutation, and the Chief noticing this imitated him.

"The old fellow is learning rapidly how to do the correct thing," suggested Harry.

"Yes; John will have him in a swallow-tail coat before night."

The band marched past, and then turned around and came back, and as fast as the people came up Uraso and Muro directed them where to stand, so that when the band stopped they formed a large semi-circle facing the Chief and John.

The boys walked forward so they stood with the flags midway between the band and the Chief. The latter motioned for the band to continue. John understood, and a new tune was struck up. The Chief was fascinated. When that tune was concluded, the Chief wanted another, quite forgetting the importance of the ceremonial rites.

While the last tune was being played the boys saw a tall man, with a huge spear, and a face most hideously painted. His body had characteristic stripes, entirely unlike those of the other people. Behind him marched the Korinos, without a sign or mark on them different from the costumes worn by them on the preceding day.

As they filed along behind the leader, the boys noticed that the first one carried a thong-like rope; the second a knife; the third a sort of vessel, and the fourth a pair of short sticks.

The people paid no attention to them, while the band was playing, but when it ceased, it was evident that they shrunk back from these dreaded men.

John beckoned Uraso and Muro to come forward, and the Chief welcomed them. "As chiefs of your tribes you should be here with us. The White Chief tells me that in his country the band and the flag always go first, and I have asked him to tell us how we should march to the forest."

John then told those present how the procession should form. The band was marched to the front, and George, who had the small flag, was placed directly behind the band. Then the Chief, with Uraso and Muro on either side, and directly behind them Harry took position with the large flag.

After the flag the Korinos, without their tall leader, however, were placed in line. John then motioned to the people to take their places following the Korinos, and the moment the column was thus formed the band struck up a lively marching tune, and John accompanied by the tall fantastic leader, went ahead of the band.

The leader knew, of course, where the procession must go, and he thus wisely made the arrangement for the occasion. The procession wended its way directly to the north, along a well-beaten path, and after ascending a hill, turned to the left, and entered a sort of grove.

The boys were delighted to notice the magnificent Magnolia trees in full bloom, the flowers of which surpassed anything they had ever seen, and the perfume was almost overpowering in its intensity.

To the boys this peculiar procession had something mysterious about it. Neither John, nor the two Chiefs had any idea of its significance. John directed a questioning look toward the articles which the Korinos carried.

When the crest of the hill was reached they made one complete circle, and the head of the column stopped before the most magnificent magnolia tree in the grove. The leader marched along the line and the people soon formed themselves into a circle with the tree in the center.

All chatter had stopped. While ascending the hill, and up to this time, there was a never ending clatter of voices; but now all were quiet, and gazed to the top of the tree. The tall leader, at the nod of the Chief came forward and approached the tree, and with the long spear struck it three times, and then turned to the Korinos, who had now followed him.

Then, he turned again, and struck the tree three times more, and this was repeated the third time. After stepping back he raised the spear, and held it over the head of the Korino who carried the rope. The latter stepped to the tree and with a dextrous throw sent a coil of rope over the first limb and caught the other end of it.

The spear was then laid over the head of the man with the knife, and he sprang forward grasping the rope, and when the spear was poised on high, he gracefully crept hand over hand up the rope.

The instant the man's hand seized the rope the people fell to the ground and covered their faces. The boys did not want to lose this part of the ceremony, you may be sure, but they tried to observe the rites.

A side glance was sufficient to assure them that the Chief did not kneel, nor did either John, Uraso or Muro; but they were privileged characters, so the boys went through the ceremony by peering through their fingers, and at the same time trying to find out whether there were not others trying to do the same.

The man went up and up, and soon emerged from the last spare branches at the top, until his face was near the great white flower which grew on the tip.

"I think that is the flower all the people were looking at," said George in a whisper.

The man raised the knife, and with one slash severed the stem. Then, raising himself up to his full height, so his body could be plainly seen, he waved the flower about his head three times, and the leader at the base of the tree again struck the trunk three times.

Immediately the people arose and placed their hands before them exactly like a bather on a perch about to dive, and with the palms of the hands thus placed against each other, the arms were raised to a vertical position, and lowered three times.

With hands still in their lowered position, and eyes cast on the ground, the Korino in the tree slowly descended, and the one who threw the rope quickly detached it from the tree.

The spear was then placed over the head of the man with the sticks. He crossed his legs and sat down, and with an exceedingly rapid motion, soon caused smoke to arise, and then a tiny flame appeared.

"Why didn't they tell us about it, and we could have let them use some of our

matches," said George dryly, as Harry made a great show of indignation at the irrelevant remark.

A fire was quickly kindled, and the man with the bowl knelt down, after fixing two stones on opposite sides of the fire. From a small receptacle he took a powder, and dropped it into the bowl, and after holding the flower aloft, the man who took it from the tree, dropped it into the smoking bowl.

Instantly the people resumed their natural poses, and began to dance. The Chief spoke a word to Uraso, and the band struck up a lively tune. Then, to the ringing blare of the band, and the shrieks and shouts of the people the dance began. It was one continuous whirl, and many of them became frenzied.

The Chief himself participated in this part of the ceremony, and swung himself around and around in a giddy whirl. During all this time each fellow was for himself. They did not have partners as in the civilized dances.

The tangoing was an individual effort, and each enjoyed it in his own way, but they all kept step to the music, showing the savage characteristic of being able to observe rhythmic effects.

The boys caught the spirit of the occasion, and joined in the wild swirl. Uraso and Muro were at it, and the sole spectator was John, who said that he felt too old to learn the new steps.

When the band stopped the people rested, but there was no disposition to break up the merry party, and when the music again struck up the whole scene was acted over again. It was noon before the grand ball ceased.

Then, at a sign from the Chief the procession reformed, and went back over the trail, the people dancing all the way, and, apparently, without exhibiting any signs of weariness, although it must be stated that the band was nearing collapse, when the people dispersed.

CHAPTER VII

SIGNIFICANCE OF NATIVE RITES

As heretofore stated, there had been no morning meal, and the dancing must have been a trying task, under those conditions.

"It would have been much better if we had something to eat before this part of the ceremony. I am so hungry I could eat anything," remarked George, as they neared the village.

"The natives do not think so. That is part of the ceremony. It must be carried out before a meal is taken," answered John, "or it will not have the proper effect."

Uraso overheard the remark, and he added: "The Chief said they had never known such a scene as took place to-day, and that it was not a part of the regular ceremony to have the dancing at that time, but that the wonderful music seemed to win every one."

"I heard him say it was the first time in years that he had danced. How he enjoyed it," remarked Muro. "I admit that it was the best dance I had since the boys got back. That was a big time at Unity when you returned."

"I think," said Harry, "that was the queerest performance I ever heard of. What a foolish thing to cut a flower from the top of a tree, and go through all that ceremony, using Old Fantastic with his flourishing spear to conduct the ridiculous rites."

"Do you think it is any more foolish than many things which civilized people do?" asked John.

Harry mused a while, and then continued: "Probably not, when I think of it, but with us the ceremonies really mean something; at least, it seems to me that they are intended to."

"Yes, and that is generally so with the native rites. Sometimes the origin is rather obscure, but everything of this character comes from something in the past, of which it is symbolic. Spencer, in his work on 'Evolutions of Ceremonial Forms of Government,' recites a curious instance of this, where he shows that the habit of stroking the mustache is a survival of scalping."

The boys laughed. "That must be pretty well far-fetched," responded George.

"Do you think so?" answered John. "He reasons it in this way. It was, formerly the custom, among most savage tribes, to take the hair of victims, to be used as personal adornment, or to indicate the valor of the warrior. Among some tribes in the Philippines and also in the interior of Africa, the custom is to take the head of an enemy."

"Do you mean the Head hunters?"

"Yes; you have probably heard a great deal about them since we acquired the Philippines. When men began to get a little higher in the scale of civilization, the victor required some token of submission from the conquered, so the latter plucked a wisp of hair from his head and presented it to indicate defeat. During the seventeenth century it was the rule of the Spanish Court that all inferiors, in addressing superiors, must stroke the mustache, and this came from the old idea of the hair token."

"Do you suppose that the taking of the flower has any particular significance?"

"Most assuredly! There must be a flower before there can be fruit. This is the beginning of the season or the beginning of the year, to these people, and the largest-flower, at the top of the greatest tree is the one taken while it is at full bloom, and incinerated."

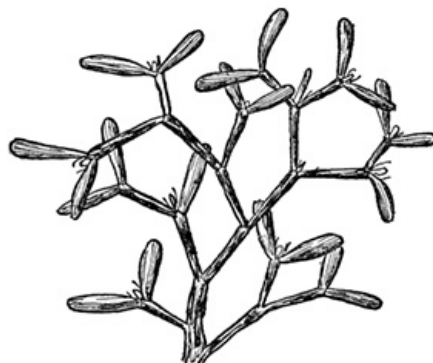


Fig. 7. *The Mistletoe.*

"Is that what they did in that bowl-shaped vessel?"

"Yes, and I imagine they will use the ashes in some part of their rites."

"Did you ever know of other tribes that do anything like that?"

"Yes; very many; in fact most savage tribes have some sort of rites which they scrupulously follow out as a religious duty. Ancient history records many such practices in detail. Thus, the Druids, a peculiar class, or order of priests, which existed among the Celtic races, attributed a sacred or mystic character to plants, and venerated the oak tree."

"I have read that they offered up human sacrifices," said Harry.

"Yes; I was coming to that. But do you know that they regarded the mistletoe as an antidote for all poisons and a cure for all diseases? At certain seasons in the year it would be gathered, and with the greatest ceremonies one of the priests would ascend the tree on which it was found, and cut it off with a golden knife."

"But is the mistletoe found on the Oak?"

"Yes; but it grows more frequently on the Apple tree. The seeds are distributed by birds, and owing to the fact that it is found so infrequently on the oak, the Druids considered it peculiarly sacred on that account."

The delicious odor of the roasted food, which met the people on their return, was a compensation for the lack of the morning breakfast. The Chief had invited John, Uraso, Muro, the two boys, and Stut, to accompany him to his home.

There in the open court, if it might so be called, were the viands in the greatest profusion. They were surprised to see that at each place was a couch, and before every visitor was laid a bountiful supply of food. In all their wanderings George and Harry never ate with a greater relish than on the present occasion.

The meal the previous day, was not at all comparable to this. It would have vied with many a meal set before our civilized gastronomes. The table implements, it is true, were not found in profusion, but the wooden forks, or prongs were good substitutes for the more refined articles, and for plates hollowed bark sections were found serviceable.

The Sarsaparilla drink was the most favored liquid. "I wish we had some ice for it," suggested Harry. "It will be a good thing to bring over some ice for the Chief. I think he would enjoy it."

"By the way, Harry, did you see what they did with the Korinos?"

"No."

"Shut them up in that dark hole back of the house."

"I wonder if they have given them anything to eat?"

"Oh, no!" said Muro. "They are to be sacrificed this afternoon, and it wouldn't do to feed them."

"Poor fellows!" remarked George, as he gazed vacantly before him, lost in contemplation.

"Well, they have been found out, and will now be dealt with in accordance with their law."

"Was that tall fellow one of them?"

"Yes; he is the principal chief of the Korinos. Do you know they tried to escape last night?" exclaimed Uraso.

"Is that so? Where could they go in safety on this island?"

"To their caves, of course," remarked Harry.

"Yes," added Uraso, "the Chief has no authority under ground."

The people gorged; so did the Chief. The meal was a course dinner, at least so far as the time it took to get through with all the dishes, and the boys smiled as they saw the Chief slowly sink down, and pass off into oblivion.

John sat there, gazing on him, and slowly nodding his head at the spectacle. He did not evince disgust, and when George spoke to him about this peculiar savage trait, he remarked: "Is he any worse than many people in our own country, who do the same thing? This is not gluttony with the savage; he knows no better. This is one of the great enjoyments of life which the savage knows. Teach him something better and he will respond."

"When you stop to think of it," replied George, "I really don't see why it is such an awful thing to eat until you are stuffed to sleepiness?"

"The real argument against it is on sanitary grounds," suggested John. "We regard gluttony as bad because it is a selfish exhibition of taste and habits, and in this I quite agree; but among savages the custom of regularity in habits is not one of their understood laws. I have known North American Indians

who could each devour from six to eight pounds of beef, and drink two quarts of coffee at one sitting. But those men would not eat another meal for three days."

During the meal hour there was a continual round of merriment, and every one was enjoying himself to the fullest extent. But now the hum of voices ended. The boys were surprised.

"They are taking their noon-day siestas," said John, laughing.

The boys arose and passed out. It was true, indeed. The men, and women too, were taking naps everywhere, the grotesque figures lying where they had eaten their food.



Fig. 8. *The Jacchus.*

They made a tour. No one appeared to take any notice of them, as they passed through the open places between the huts, because all of the food was eaten in the open, and not within the huts. The village looked like one immense picnic ground.

As they were returning toward the Chief's house they caught sight of the hut in which the Korinos were confined. To their astonishment two of them were crawling out the enclosure, and the leader was particularly noticeable, peering from the side of the hut.

"Shall we give the alarm?" asked Harry.

"No, no! See John; he will know what to do."

As they passed the hut the guards lay in blissful sleep, and seeing this the boys rushed in and excitedly told John of the jail delivery and the advisability of giving the alarm.

He held up his hand, in caution, as he smiled at the announcement. "Do you want the poor fellows to be sacrificed?"

"By no means."

"Then let them go. Possibly the Chief may find some way to get them back."

Two hours later the village took on another aspect. It was now about five o'clock in the afternoon, but in the meantime boy-like they had investigated every part of the surrounding scenery, being particularly interested in the monkeys which were seen in the trees everywhere.

The most amusing to the boys was a small animal that had a "beard all around his face," as George expressed it. It was small, hardly exceeding a foot in height, a sort of olive-gray color, and a round tail twice the length of the body.

"I think I know what you have reference to," suggested John, when appealed to. "It is the Jacchus, and is related to the Marmozets and the Tamarins. They are very active, like squirrels, and live on nuts, seeds, roots and fruit."

The Chief awakened as the boys entered, and within the next half hour was ready for the continuance of the festival.

"I should like to know what the next thing is on the programme? This is a little inconvenient, not knowing just what is going to take place," was George's observation.

"John will know if any one does, but I suppose he is too busy now with his Royal Highness," answered Harry with a laugh.

But the boys were not kept long in suspense. The natives understood, as it appeared, for they were soon congregated around the Palace, and now for the first time the boys noticed a large, imposing-looking native, who carried an immense knotted club. To satisfy the reader's curiosity, it may be well to describe him. He wore a loin cloth, made of the skins of the small animals which were found all over the island, and, to all appearances, at least a half dozen different kinds of pelts were used to make up the garment, the ends, or corners of which hung down in points to form a fringe.

At his ankles were two huge bands, made of cloth, and plentifully decorated

with spangles of shells, and rows of nuts, strung on cords, like beads. Around his neck and trailing down the back was a collar of interwoven leaves, very artistically arranged, if judged from the viewpoint of savage decorations.

The head dress was unique, being made up of a band of coarsely-woven cloth, literally covered with large fish scales, and a pyramidal structure was fastened to this band, and extended up beyond the crown for a foot, or more. At its apex was a mass of streamers, which fluttered around as the breeze floated by.

The weapon was fully five feet long, the head of the club, for such it was, terminated in a gnarled knot, bristling with small points. This the boys recognized to be somewhat similar to the wicked thing that was carried by the Korino when he sought to slay Tarra.

The Chief was also differently attired. He was literally covered with clothing, the different parts being dyed with various colors without any regard to harmony, or design. Like all the others he wore no foot covering, but had bare feet.

The crown was also a cloth band, but this was surrounded by vertically-arranged thorns, huge things that showed their bristling points, and wound, or rather braided around them, were garlands of human hair, of different hues.

The Royal wand was an immense black staff, fully two inches thick, and six feet long, one end of which was pointed, the other end terminating within a large calabash. This wand he held with the pointed end upward.

When he appeared at the doorway the people fell down on their faces, and after a few words all arose, and the man with the club turned toward the hut where the Korinos were confined. Four of the largest warriors accompanied him, while the people looked on in expectancy.

"The fun will now begin," whispered Harry, and it surely did. The club bearer returned with a troubled look, and addressed the Chief.

The people soon learned of what had taken place, and the commotion was evident. They speedily lost all semblance of order, and began to run to and fro. The scowl on the face of the Chief was terrible, nor did he in the least attempt to conceal his anger.

With a vehemence that caused the crowd to shiver, he gave a command, and in a moment three men were brought forward, almost in a state of collapse with terror written in their countenances. They were the unfortunate guards, as the boys quickly saw.

They were unable to answer the indictment of the Chief, because the escape had been as much of a surprise to them as to the Chief. Uraso and Muro were quick to recognize the situation, and they informed John of the progress of the conversation.

The negligent guards had been condemned to take the places of the Korinos, as sacrifices. The rites demanded some victims, and the boys now saw that the escape of the Korinos would not avoid the carrying out of the bloody rites.

The new, victims-to-be were firmly bound, and placed in the center of the crowd, and, strangely enough, it was now noticed that the people expressed the same degree of hatred to the poor unfortunates that they had manifested toward the Korinos an hour before.

The Chief was now at the head of the procession, which, instead of going to the north, passed alongside the slight elevation that led north of the grove, and toward the high elevation which the boys had noticed the day before.

The march was but a short one, and when the upper level was reached the boys were astounded to see that beyond, and next to the hill, on the north, was an open space, the floor of which was of solid rock. This space covered nearly an acre, and near the center was a flat rocky table, fully ten feet in diameter and about four feet high, with a huge boulder in the center of the table.

The Chief and the victims marched directly to the stone table, the executioner tramping with a measured tread immediately ahead of the victims. The people did not go near the rocky shelf, but circled about at a respectful distance.

CHAPTER VIII

HYPNOTISM ON SAVAGES

ALL those with the Chief's party, approached the table, upon which the executioner mounted the rock, and stood there, as though inviting the admiration of the crowd.

John spoke a few words to Uraso, and the latter addressed the Chief as follows: "The White Chief says that to offer these men as a sacrifice will be against the wishes of the Great Spirit, if they are destroyed by the weapon which is now in the hands of the one on the rock."

The Chief quickly turned. "What would the White Chief have me do? I cannot free these culprits, because it is the law that they shall die in place of those who are appointed to be the victims."

"The White Chief does not ask for their lives, but only that the manner of their death shall be changed."

"That shall be done. What is the White Chief's wish?"

"He will be the executioner."

The Chief threw his arms around Uraso's neck, in raptures of joy, and turning to the man on the table, ordered him to descend. John quietly conferred with Uraso, and the latter mounted the table, and the prisoners were led up until they faced him.

Uraso, addressing them, said: "You have been condemned by your Chief to die because you have deceived his people and brought sorrow on all. The Great White Chief has seen the misery you have caused by allowing the Korinos to escape, and you must now take their places as the victims to appease the Great Spirit."

"The White Chief has asked to be permitted to offer you up as sacrifices to his God, as well, and the White Man's death is a terrible one. When you die it will not cause you to go out of the world forgetting all that you may suffer, but you will always know and suffer through all time, and you will never know a day that is free from misery."

"Your dying will be like a thousand deaths, and your living hours will be like fire that always burns and never consumes."

Thus Uraso went on, and as he spoke the poor victims' eyes grew greater and greater, and the terror more pronounced. He ceased for a moment and John slowly walked to the table, and mounting it, said quietly to Uraso: "Tell them that when I raise my hands over my head the ends of their living death will begin."

When this was imparted, the agony on their faces was pitiful to see. John advanced, and spread out his palms toward them, and quickly drew his hands toward him, and this was repeated three times.

It is a curious thing that most savages believe in the mysticism of some particular number. In Africa some tribes, if they hear an animal cry four times, will brave any danger, as it is a sign that the bird has knowledge of safety to his person.

Others watch with great care the repetition of an insect's call, and particularly the number of times an unusual noise occurs, and the belief is somewhat analogous to the views which white people have about the cricket. Milton, Byron, Southey, and Dickens have written stories about them, so it is not to be wondered at that the poor benighted savages should have some belief about such things.

After the rites at the tree in the forest, it was evident that three was the cryptic, or mysterious number, and John used it on this occasion, for in all the peculiar signs that he had previously employed, three was the number that impressed itself on the minds of the people, and it doubtless had its effect on the condemned.

Slowly John moved from side to side, and he now saw the intense expression, as their eyes followed his every motion. His motions grew less and less rapid; he moved toward them, and then suddenly retreated, and through all these evolutions the three men's faces became more and more tense, and finally the muscles of their faces relaxed, their eyes stared with a blank expression, and the motions of John almost ceased.

The boys looked about them. They, too, had a spell woven about them which they could not understand. It was the most remarkable feeling they had ever experienced. The multitude did not stir a limb. The Chief was rigid, his face colorless, lips parted, and eyes fixed at what he saw before him.

Suddenly, John sprang forward, and raised both arms high above his head,

and instantly the three men fell back and lay rigid, full length on the rock. John turned, but while there were forms before him, there was no sound. Hundreds of eyes gazed, but they stared mutely.

"I feel awfully funny," said Harry.

"Do you know what John has been doing?" asked George.

"I know; he has hypnotized the men!"

"Yes; and everybody else!"

When John turned, he waved his hand, the audience relaxed its tension, and witnessed the death (?) of the three men, an act performed by the White Chief without having touched them. The Chief slowly walked forward, and Uraso led him to the platform, while John pointed to the mute victims.

John motioned to Uraso to raise the first man by lifting his feet while he grasped the shoulders, and when the body was lifted up it was perfectly rigid. The same exhibition was performed with the two others. That they were dead, was apparent to the Chief and the people.

The people surged to and fro. John was a Korino now, in the eyes of the people. When the people pressed forward John spoke to Uraso, and he turned to the people.

"The White Chief says that there will be no more sacrifices, because the Great Spirit wills it otherwise. The Korinos must be brought from the caves—"

Uraso could get no further. The people were aroused. Their voices could be heard uttering threats against the witch doctors.

John saw that they were determined to wreak vengeance upon them, but he counseled them to be wise and obey their Chief, and that the Korinos would acknowledge their own error.

The wives and children of the three guards were present, as they were compelled to be, and, as may well be imagined, their grief was terrible to behold.

Uraso again spoke to the people, and said: "The White Chief intends to show that the Great Spirit does not wish sacrifices, and will give back the guards to their families."

When he ceased speaking John stooped forward, and waved his hands three times, the motion being formed by throwing his hands forward, palms downward, and then slowly raising them up, and with an upward and an outward swing, bringing them down again.

Then he advanced forward a few feet and held out his arms horizontally, with the palms uppermost, and speaking a few words, the arms were impressively raised. As he did so the three men slightly turned, and then almost simultaneously raised themselves to a sitting posture, and glanced about wildly.

The consternation on the part of the natives at this sight was beyond all description. They were awe stricken, and dumbfounded. Not the slightest sound could be heard, as the men arose to their feet.

The only ones who were joyously affected were the wives of the men who, at the words of Uraso, sprang forward and were about to ascend the rock, but at the command of John they leaped from the table, and the children gathered about them.

The Chief did not utter a word of protest. He remained there utterly speechless. When John asked him what was the next thing to be done to carry out the rites, he remained standing for some time without answering.

When he had gathered together his faculties he turned to the people and said: "The Great White Chief has shown his power, and proven to us that our Korinos have lied to us. They must be destroyed. Let the people return to the village, and proceed with the feast. We shall be guided by the White Chief."

This was, indeed, the effect that John wished to produce, but he did not also anticipate that the Chief would insist upon the destruction of the Korinos.

The feast that afternoon was a repetition on a larger scale, of the feast of the day before. Indeed, this was now the third day of feasting.

"I don't know whether I can eat any more for a few days," said Harry, as they neared the village, and saw the preparations going on.

George laughed, as he responded: "We shall have to go through with this thing, whatever the cost. Have you forgotten that they believe in *three* for everything? Didn't John make three passes to kill them; and three more to bring them to life again? We have had two feasts, and must now have one more. I don't know what the result will be if I eat half as much even, as I did yesterday."

John laughed heartily, as he added: "That is correct, too, about the feasts. Notice from this time on that about everything they do will be measured by

threes."

As the boys afterwards remarked, they never knew how they got through the feast that day, but they tried to imitate John in partaking of the good things in moderation.

It was late in the night when the natives ceased the dancing, which was the signal for the end of the festival, although in many respects it was entirely different from the previous ceremonies, as Uraso and Muro learned in talking with the natives.

The next day was ushered in with a rainstorm, the first that was experienced on the island, and there was no opportunity to make any excursions. It had been John's intention to settle the fate of the Korinos, as he felt that this was a matter that should have his attention before they left on the further explorations of the island.

Since it was impossible to venture out far from the village, John spent the most of the day attending to the wounded and the sick, although they had not been neglected in the meantime, not even during the ceremonies of the past three days.

The first visit was made to the quarters of the white man who was found in the stockade when they took possession of the village. It was evident from the greeting that he and John had had several conversations previous to this visit, but of this the latter did not advise the boys.

When they came into the room he was sitting up, and he greeted John and the boys. He could speak, but it was with a weak voice, and the boys ranged themselves on one side while John seated himself on the other.

"You told me yesterday," began John, "that when you were shipwrecked you were cast ashore on another island. How many companions had you?"

"Three," he answered. "One of them was a large man, with brown hair and piercing eyes, who was formerly an officer in the navy, and was at that time engaged in an exploring capacity, and on his way to Australia."

"Did he walk with a limp?" asked John.

The old man, as well as the boys, looked at John in surprise. He quickly answered: "Yes; did you know him?"

"No," he replied; "but we found him less than a month ago."

The old man leaned forward in his eagerness. "Where is he?" he asked.

"He is dead," answered John, gravely.

"Dead!" he exclaimed. "Dead! and do you know his name?"

"No, but we found his remains, together with the boat to which he had been tied, on the shore of an island south of this."

"Then it is true, after all!" he muttered.

"Did you know about it?" asked John, who was the interested one now.

"No, this is sad news to me. His name was Clifford,—Ralph S. Clifford, and when he and Walter undertook,—"

The boys were all impatience now, as George cried out: "Walter! did you know Walter?"

"Yes; he was my companion for a time. He and I were making explorations on the island on which we were wrecked, and when the two undertook to go on a search, to ascertain what the island was like, I was too ill to go with them. Walter returned, and told me of meeting with a band of savages on the western side of the mountain, and of the capture of Clifford by the natives."

"Did you know a man by the name of Wright?"

"No, I never heard of any one by that name in this section of the globe."

"Do you know what became of Walter?"

"I was about to say, that we went north along the shore, and camped near the beach, and there found a boat, rather crudely made, with which we proposed sailing around the island. Before we could complete our arrangements, Walter disappeared."

"Did he take the boat with him?"

"No; the boat and all his effects were still with me. I was still very ill, and I concluded to remain there until my strength returned, but four days afterwards, when I was able to move about, I found that the boat had disappeared."

The strain of the conversation appeared to affect him, and the three visitors stated they would call on him later for further information.

When the boys returned to their huts, with John, the latter was quiet and very much reserved. The boys were so much interested in the story of the old man, that they could not wait until they were seated before they began to question him.

"What do you think of his story?" asked Harry.

John did not answer promptly, as was his habit. Instead, he reflected for some time, and at last said slowly: "The story may be true. Clifford was, in my opinion, tied to the boat and set adrift, and his death was due to that, unquestionably."

"Do you think this man had anything to do with it?" asked George.

"So far, I have no direct reason for thinking so, but there are several very curious things about the story."

"What in particular do you have in mind?"

"He said the boat was found on the seashore, and that Walter left without taking it with him, but that when he recovered the boat was gone."

"Is it an unreasonable story?"

"That is not at all improbable. The tide might have washed it away, but, if it was our boat, and it was provided with the peculiar rope and the strange oars, that were found in it when it was recovered by you, it would be interesting to know whether he or Walter put them there."

"Why is that so interesting to know?"

"Because the rope found in that boat, is the same as the rope we took from Clifford's body, which you discovered on Venture Island."

"If we could only find Walter now it would solve that mystery," said Harry. "I don't like to think that this man was instrumental in the Clifford tragedy."

"Nor do I," responded John. "It is evident there is some connection between that boat and the skeleton, and that our boat played a part in it." This ended the conversation on this point.

It will be remembered that two of the men rescued from the prison stockade, were natives of another tribe, who had been captured some weeks before. Upon inquiry John found that they had disappeared the day before.

The two others, in a very emaciated condition, were still under John's care, and rapidly improving. No attempts had been made to question them, and as it was the intention of the boys to commence the trip to the north, as soon as John had settled the matter with the Korinos, they were anxious to get some information from them concerning their tribe.

Accompanying Uraso, and through him, they first learned that the people they were now living with were called Malosos, and that the Chief was named Ta Babeda, which meant the *strong man*. He was not so large as Beralsea, the Chief of Venture Island, but his muscles were more active, thus the boys could see that he rightly acquired the sceptre of chief ruler, as did Beralsea, because of the strength he possessed, and there was no one on the island to question his king-ship.

While rambling about the boys and Uraso were informed that John wished to see them at the Chief's house, and they went over without delay. Entering the house, they were surprised to see that the different packages containing the presents had been opened, and were about to be distributed.

The Chief and his household were first provided for. The articles consisted of coats, and different articles of wear for the Chief, together with a watch, a revolver, and a camera.

"This will give both of you boys an opportunity to give the Chief some lessons in these instruments," said John.

The articles for the women were received with screams of delight that pleased the Chief beyond measure. Bits of lace, the like of which had never been seen on the island, cotton fabric, beads, articles of ornamentation, and finally full-fledged dresses, were only parts of the gifts which went to the women and children.

"With your permission," said John, to the Chief, "I will offer gifts to your people, and you may state that during the afternoon the articles will be arranged in packages so that all will receive presents of like value."

The boys, as well as Uraso and Muro, were busy making up the gifts for distribution. During the remaining portion of the day they were busily engaged in this work, which brought the greatest joy and happiness to the natives.

It may well be imagined that Uraso and Muro were not slow in imparting the news of Wonder Island to the natives. John had a long conference with the Chief on the same subject.

"But how can we get these articles?" he asked, as John told him how they made the wonderful things.

"You can make them here," he answered.

"But we cannot make them if we do not have the tools."

"Then you can buy them," responded John.

"But what have we that you want?" he asked, as he eagerly scanned John's face.

"Your land is full of things that the people in Wonder Island want, and the whole world will buy them of you."

"Will you tell me what they want and how we shall get them ready for you?"

"It will give us pleasure to send our people over who can tell you what spices, and nuts, and coffee, and other things which you have in abundance, can be prepared, and what they are worth, and it will be the means of giving the people work, and peace and contentment."

"But if we do not have any more fighting with our enemy there will be no need of a strong Chief," he remarked, thinking of his new relation to the scheme as outlined.

"There will be a much greater need of a strong man like you, who can mete out equal justice to the people," remarked John.

CHAPTER IX

THE REMARKABLE CAVE EXPLORATIONS

BUT the time was now at hand, when it became necessary for the exploring expedition to the north. The rescued prisoners stated that their people, while not so numerous, were very warlike, and by degrees, John learned that they were the cannibals of whom they had heard.

The tribe was known as the Umbolos, and the Chief was a frightful man, unlike any other in the tribe, or, at any rate, from the description, he was not formed like them. He was known as Rumisses, which in their tongue meant *thunder*.

It was remarkable that Uraso and Muro understood most of the words of the language used by the natives here and also on Venture Island. On Wonder Island, there were only two tongues, or dialects, and the people on this island, as well as on Venture Island, spoke the dialect belonging to the Illyas, Kurabus and the Tuolos, the tribes that were the fiercest and the most difficult to subdue.

It was hoped that the escape of the two Umbolos, and the return to their people would be sufficient to give them the entree to that part of the country, but after the questionings of John on this point, it was very doubtful whether this would impress itself on their minds.

The natives had been accustomed for so long a period to regard every other people as an enemy, and consequently absolutely removed from any possibility of friendship, that it was questionable whether the messengers could persuade the Chief to receive them.

Arrangements for the departure were decided upon, and they planned to start early in the morning. John visited the Chief, and suggested that he should consider it a favor if the Chief would permit him to take the Korinos with him.

The Chief opened his eyes in astonishment. "Why do you wish to be burdened with men who will live by deceiving?" he inquired.

"But they have lived to the best of their knowledge. They do not know any better. They believe what they have been taught, and think it is a duty to carry out and practice their rites. They do not wish to deceive you."

The Chief pondered for a long time, and then replied: "What will you do with them?"

"I want to teach them the white man's ways, and tell them to come back and teach your children the things which we believe are right and for the good of the people."

The lessons which John imparted were sources of wonder and amazement to the ruler, who, five days before, thought he was the only one appointed to make and to execute laws.

When he finally gave his consent, he said: "You must take it upon yourself to get the Korinos, because they will not come out of their caves."

"But how can they find food there? If you prevent them from getting food they will be compelled to come out or starve."

"They will starve before they will permit themselves to be taken."

"Then," answered John, "why do you not order your warriors to enter the cave and take them by force?"

"But who dares to go in?"

"I dare to go in, but you must order me to do so," answered John.

The Chief jumped up in an instant. "And will you go?" he asked in the greatest delight.

"By all means. You must go with me to the cave, and there command me to enter and bring them forth."

The Chief's eyes danced with delight, and he could hardly await the hour for starting on the mission.

The boys and the two companion chiefs, were in their glory upon hearing of the decision to get the Korinos. Before leaving the Chief John questioned him very closely on the location of the cave, and whether there were not other caves on the island to the north.

"I have heard that there is another one to the north, that was used in olden times by the Korinos who lived when my father was Chief. I also know that far to the north where the false and treacherous Umbolos live, are great caves which no man may enter."

"Do they have Korinos in the Umbolo tribe?"

"No; they do not believe in a Great Spirit."

"Then, if they have no Korinos, why do they not dare to enter the caverns?"

"Because they have been told that it is death to go into the dark."

"Do you know why they think so?"

"Because, a long time ago, the only man who ever returned from the dark caves, brought out the bones of men who had died there."

"But it did not kill that man who brought them out?"

"Yes; he died. And now no one dares enter those places."

It may be imagined how this intelligence stirred up the boys. It was impossible to keep them from talking about it. To John it was like a magic wand; it seemed to wave before his eyes and to talk to him. What if they had really found the great cave on which John's heart was so keenly bent?

But the Korinos must be freed. That afternoon, just before starting, the boys were surprised to see the band coming up the street. How they laughed, as they scented John's little ruse. It would, indeed, be a treat to bring the Korinos out of their dark resorts to some good old marching tune.

The band struck up a familiar air, and to its lively tones the procession, with the three Chiefs and John at the head, marched across the open, and up the hill past the grove, on its way to the cave on the eastern slope of the high hill which rose from the shore of the ocean.

There was jest and laughter, the Chief enjoying the treat that would be the greatest pleasure of his life, namely, the bringing of the Korinos out of the cave.

After ascending the great hill, so that they overlooked the ocean, the Chief informed John that the entrance was a third of the way down the hill, and the narrow path was followed which led around to the north, shutting out the sight of the sea.

After a few hundred feet, the path led to a cleft portion of the rocks, where the light of the sun was completely hidden. The walls of the rocks, at the entrance of the cleft portion, were fully fifty feet high, and were at least twenty feet apart, but as they went on the walls drew nearer together and the path ascended a slight incline.

A sharp turn was reached, and they found themselves in a little cove, to the left of which was a dark entrance, toward which the Chief nodded, as he shrank back.

John motioned to the Chief, and the latter sternly commanded John to bring forth the Korinos. John said a few words to Uraso and Muro, and also invited the boys to accompany them.

"I suppose you are all armed?" said John.

The boys and the chiefs had come well prepared, so this point was taken care of.

"But where are the lights?" asked George.

"I have them," said John, "but we shall not use them now, for reasons which will be explained later." Together they entered the cave, the darkness of which was appalling. After going in fully a hundred and fifty feet, John stopped and said: "It would have been a sign of weakness to go in with a light. When we have gone far enough to be free from the mouth of the cave, we can use our flash lights. For the present we shall move on to ascertain whether the Korinos are provided with lights, which will show where they are, and we may thus be guided to them."

The distance traveled must have been fully a thousand feet, when John again spoke: "I shall now throw the light directly ahead, and you must keep your eyes open to detect anything moving."

The light flashed, and was then moved slowly to the left, until it reached a cove at the extreme eastern side, where there was an evident assemblage of articles, not a hundred feet in advance of them, but there was not a sign of living beings within the scope of the light beams.

The company moved over to the spot indicated. A moment's examination satisfied them that it was really the abode of the Korinos, but they had disappeared.

The debris, the half eaten portions of food, some still warm, were sufficient to indicate that they had fled, but where? Uraso, Muro and John, all three, flashed their lights, and, after examining the walls critically, Muro was the first to find the opening from the chamber in which they were standing.

The outlet from the chamber was to the north, and toward it the explorers ran hurriedly, and passed along the contracted path, which soon turned to the left. After following its many windings, and scrambling over the broken and rocky floor, they saw ahead a streak of daylight, which gladdened the hearts

of the boys.

"Ah! they have gone," exclaimed John, as he emerged, and glanced across the ravine, and along the walls which extended up from the shore of a little stream below. "They have gone to the north, and have, probably, tried to seek safety in the other cave."

"How are we going to get back?" asked George.

"Do you think there will be any trouble in that?" asked John.

"We shall have to go clear over the mountain for that, I'm afraid."

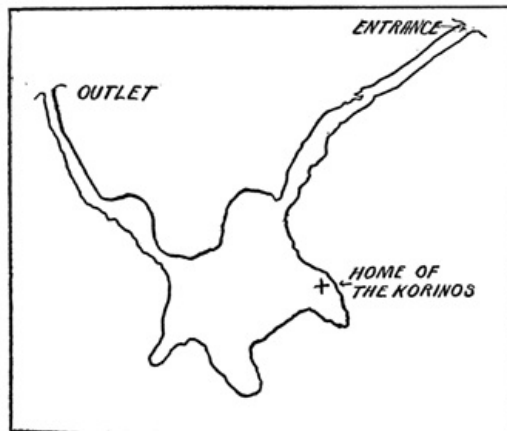


Fig. 9. The Cave on Rescue Island.

"We are not far from the entrance," said John, "and if we intend to catch up with the Korinos, we must not delay for a moment."

The party made a hurried trip around the hill, and the Chief was surprised to learn that there was another entrance, or an outlet to the cave on the northern side. None of his warriors was aware of this, however.

John was now in a quandary. He was exceedingly anxious to secure the Korinos, but at the same time there was some things in the appearance of the cave that he wished to investigate. This was confided to Uraso and Muro, and the latter suggested that he and Uraso would undertake to follow the fleeing men, and return to the village, while John and the boys made the desired investigation.

This was readily assented to, and they at once made their way across the hill, while John informed the Chief of the action which they had decided to take. One of the principal men of the village, in whom the Chief had confidence, and who knew the location of the upper caves, accompanied Uraso and Muro.

The Chief, and those with him returned to the village, while John remained behind under the pretense that he wished to stay at the cave entrance until they returned from the pursuit after the Korinos.

The boys first secured the flash lights which the two chiefs had brought, and when all had departed the boys and John entered the cave and marched directly to the location of their interior home.

Every part of the habitation was well investigated. Almost every kind of tool and implement was found here in profusion, but singularly, none of them appeared to be used. Several flint lock guns, all rusted, and with decayed stocks, were among the articles discovered, but the Korinos had not used them.

The inevitable copper vessels, entirely unlike those of modern manufacture, were the first things to claim the attention of the boys, as they recalled similar articles found in the caves thitherto investigated by them.

"This begins to look as though we are to have the same experience we had at the cave at the Cataract," said George. "These vessels, no doubt, were brought here by the buccaneers, and I'll be surprised if we don't find a few more of their belongings somewhere in this place."

After all the recesses in this vicinity had been investigated they scanned the side walls to the right, carefully going into the little recesses which were found all along the jagged sides.

A hundred feet south of the living part of the cave they came, unexpectedly upon a large extension, not noticed before in their pursuit of the Korinos. The chamber extended in a southerly direction, and narrowed at the extreme opposite end.

"This has the appearance of leading to another outlet, which would take us to the southern side of the hill. It would be remarkable, indeed, if such should be the case," said John, as he eagerly pressed forward, until they had passed four chambers.

The walls were coming closer and closer, until there was now barely room for them to pass through, but they went in unhesitatingly, John in the lead. The passage was not straight, so that the light did not aid much in looking ahead, but suddenly the flash threw a beam ahead, which showed that they were at the entrance of a chamber.

John stopped and directed the search light to all parts of the cavern. It appeared to be nearly round, with a perfectly smooth floor. It was unoccupied, but in the exact center of the chamber was a raised object, like a mound.

Throughout the entire cave could be found the calcareous deposit so common in caves formed in limestone rocks, and the stalactite hangings on the ceilings and walls, and the stalagmites on the floors made the scene a weird one.

John glanced upwardly to view the ceiling, above the mound, and said: "That does not seem to be a natural formation. Let us examine it first."

With the small pick which John always carried, and by means of which he was always careful to examine rocks and geological formations, while on these tours, the top parts of the stalagmites were chipped off. This was an exceedingly simple matter, since they are generally soft.

After the top layer was removed, the part beneath readily yielded, but before they had an opportunity to dig into it very deeply the pick struck something which gave forth a metallic sound. John stopped as though paralyzed.

The pick was again driven in. Again the plain contact with some hard substance. The digging was now feverish, and when the broken parts were cleared away, a small metallic box, about twelve inches square across the top, and about ten inches deep, was exposed to view.

The dent made by the pick was clearly visible, and the fresh mark showed that the metal was red.

"It is copper!" said John.

Every part of the material around the box was removed, and this enabled them to remove it from its resting place. John grasped it and securing a good hold, finally raised it.

"No, it is not any heavier than I thought it would be," he remarked as he lay it down.

"Did you expect to find this?" asked George in amazement.

"No; this is a surprise to me as it is to you."

"Then why did you make that remark?"

"Because I believe that this box contains treasure of untold value. I should have been surprised if it weighed very much."

"Could it not have contained treasure if it had been heavy?" asked Harry.

John laughed, a peculiar exultant chuckle, as he responded: "Not the kind of treasure I have had in contemplation."

The box was turned over and over. There was not the sign of any lid, or crack which showed the cover or means of opening it. "We must take this out and open it at our leisure," remarked John, "but before doing so it would be well to examine the other outlets to this chamber, if it has any."

The chamber was found, on measurement, to be thirty feet in diameter, and the vaulted ceiling fully thirty feet high, singularly uniform in the domed formation, and not rough or jagged like the ceiling of the other chamber which they had just left.

The walls were absolutely solid on all sides, the only entrance being by way of the narrow little passageway through which they had come. Harry picked up the box, and swung it up to his shoulder, and, John leading the way, they filed out and passed through the chamber, quickly making their way to the opening through which they first entered the cave.

Within an hour they were back in the village, and found Muro there awaiting their arrival. "We have found their trail, and they have not gone to the upper cave. They are heading straight for the tribe in the northern end of the island."

"I am surprised at that," said John. "We must consult the Chief about this," and without another word, he hurriedly went over to the Chief, who was as much astounded as John could be at the peculiar significance of their actions.

CHAPTER X

THE TRIBE TO THE NORTH

INSTEAD of conveying the copper box to the village it was carried to the landing place and taken to the vessel, where it could be examined later, when they had more time. It was now of more importance to keep in touch with Muro and Uraso, the former of whom had gone to the north as soon as he had given the report mentioned in the last chapter.

On the return to the village they discussed the affairs of the previous day, which John had abstained from mentioning.

"What is it that really makes the people act that way when they are hypnotized!" asked George. "I have heard it said that there isn't any truth in mesmerism."

"Mesmerism is the old term used to designate certain phenomena, which, originally, was supposed to be a force that emanated from the mesmerist. It is now known that hypnotism may be regarded as artificial catalepsy."

"But what is catalepsy?"

"It is an affection produced by hysteria, during which the patient's body becomes rigid. It is claimed by some that somnambulism is one phase of the hypnotic condition."

"But in what way do your motions act on the one who is being hypnotized?"

"The motions have nothing whatever to do with producing the condition. That is for effect, merely. Those who are able to bring about a mesmeric condition, try to concentrate the mind on some particular thing, and by making gentle motions, or passes, this is more forcibly impressed on them."

"What was the object of Uraso telling them that the White Man's death was a terrible one, and trying to frighten them?"

"Merely to make them concentrate their minds on one thing alone. Terror, or great fear, is one of the things which tends to a cataleptic condition. Great excitement, and sometimes excessive joy, have been known to do the same thing."

"Then the object is merely to bring the mind under the control of the operator?"

"Yes; what was originally considered as a power flowing from the hypnotist, is nothing more than his mental action or control which prevents the subject from exercising his own volition."

A few hours after they returned to the village Uraso and Muro returned, with the information that the Korinos were now within the territory of the tribe to the north, and they wisely concluded it would not be good policy to pursue them further, and their prudence was commended by John.

The natives were supremely happy in displaying their gifts, and the Chief, while much annoyed at the escape of the Korinos, was content to be relieved of their presence, when, after numerous conversations with John, he realized that they were of no use to him and his people.

John announced that he intended to visit the tribe to the north, and purposed starting the following day. The Chief advised him to take with him all the warriors in the village, because he felt sure they would have a hostile reception.

"It seems to me," replied John, "that would be the wrong thing to do. I do not wish him to think that my mission is a warlike one, and a large force will be in the nature of an invasion of his territory."

"Perhaps you are right; but we have found him a difficult Chief to deal with. He is not like a man. He cannot stand up straight, as we do, and he kills and eats all who fall into his hands."

This information was regarded by John as one of the imagination, purely, so it did not weigh heavily on his mind. What seemed to impress him most was the fate of the poor fellows who had voluntarily sought the protection of the cannibal Chief.

"I would like to have your opinion as to the course which the Chief will take when the Korinos fall into his hands?" asked John.

The Chief mused for a while, and then said: "They have no Korinos and do not believe in them, but they may tell the Chief that we tried to offer them as sacrifices, and he may use them with his people to stir up feelings of revenge against us."

"But," replied John, "the captives you took, and who have escaped may tell him of our treatment of them and this may work in our favor."

"I do not think so," he replied. "We have had many instances where they have refused to make friends with us, and for that reason we always had war."

"But have you not often sacrificed their people when you have taken them in your wars?"

"We have always done so."

"Have any of your captives ever returned to them?"

"No."

"And have they always killed and eaten your people when they captured them?"

"Yes; and none has ever returned to us. The Korinos would not let us keep the captives, but said that the Great Spirit told them they must be sacrificed."

The foregoing information was sufficient to convince John of one thing, namely, that it was really the spirit of the Korinos which kept up the tribal warfare, at least so far as one end of the conflict was concerned.

In spite of all the arguments advanced by the Chief, John was determined to make the trip with his own people, and thus avoid any feeling on the part of the tribe, against their present friend.

In the morning John called Stut, and advised him to wait until the following day, when he should pull up anchor and proceed to the north for a distance not exceeding twenty miles, and then, seeking a safe anchorage, to await news from him.

With forty of his own trusted men, together with Uraso and Muro, they set out on the march to the north, cheered by the people of the village, who came out to witness their departure. The old man who had been rescued, was still too weak to accompany them, so he was taken to the vessel, where he could receive the best of care and attention.

In order not to be out of touch with the sea, John decided to follow the hills along the eastern side of the island, and this course was selected because the people to which they were going, unlike those at the southern portion of the island, lived in the mountainous region, as heretofore stated, and the probability of meeting them would be much better than if they had followed the level plateau.



Fig. 10. Cinnamon.

In the march the boys, as well as John, were ever on the alert to discover the possibilities of the island, so far as the natural products were concerned.

"Something smells awfully sweet around here," said George, as they were tramping along a beautifully-wooded crest.

"I think it must come from the trees that have the beautiful pale blue flowers. Wait until I get a branch."

One of the men was quick to carry out Harry's wish. John was immensely pleased at the interest which the boys exhibited. "What does it smell like?" he inquired.

"Something like cloves and cinnamon, both," answered George.

"Peel off the bark and taste it."

"It is just like cinnamon."

"That is correct. It is the real cinnamon tree. It is the cassia of the Bible, one of the spices so frequently referred to in Scripture. The bark only is used, but the species which have fruit, are gathered and oil expressed from them, which is called *cinnamon suet*."

Advancing, the surface became more rugged. They had to cross numerous gullies, and broken portions, and frequently jagged rocks would show themselves. Evidently when the island was raised up from the sea the rocks were forced through, and the climate in time disintegrated them, and formed a soil.

"Do you think we shall find any minerals here?" asked Harry.

"If we are to judge from our experiences on Wonder Island, where there is almost exactly the same formation, we may reasonably expect to find copper

and also iron here."

"While Harry and I were over at the bluff with Uraso, we saw something like green drippings, from the walls."

"That is, undoubtedly, copper,—that is the sulphate form, in which it is usually found."

"I was amused at Laleo (the native guide), who told Uraso this morning that our mission would be successful, and when he was asked why, answered, that the first thing they saw was three black birds. How superstitious these people are."

"Do you think they are any more so than civilized people?" answered John. "It is curious how the number three runs through all their ideas. In certain parts of England they have a great many omens, and one of them is that if the traveler, starting on a journey, meets three magpies, it means success; if two appears, it is a sign of marriage; and four unexpected good news."

"I recall that it is considered lucky for sun to shine on a bride," added Harry.

"The other part of that couplet is 'rain on a corpse,'" remarked John.

"I never knew it was lucky for the corpse to be rained on," responded Harry, in a questioning tone.

John laughed immoderately, as he answered: "Well, it might not be lucky for the corpse. But there are numerous lucky and unlucky signs that no one can account for, prevalent in our own country, such as putting on stockings wrong side out, and finding a horseshoe."

"Of course, they are both fortunate signs," said George, smiling at the thought.

"In Scotland, among those who are the most matter of fact people in the world, signs are very common. It is a bad omen with them to stumble over a threshold, or to step over green or red, or to sneeze while making up a bed."

"After all, we are not so much ahead of the savages, are we?" mused George.

During the march that day there was nothing specially worthy of note. The animals they met were few and small, and it did not appear that there were any which merited mentioning, so the boys gave up the idea of meeting any adventure in that line.

Shortly after four in the afternoon they began to seek out some good camping place. Laleo informed Uraso that they had now passed into the territory claimed by the northern tribe, and the desirability of caution was necessary.

A rocky shelter, only a short distance above a running brook below, was found suitable, and there the halt was made for the night. Early in the morning they were awakened by Muro, with the welcome intelligence that the *Pioneer* was sighted several miles to the north, where she lay at anchor.

At the suggestion of John the boys went to the headland, a mile to the east, and there hoisted a signal flag, which was observed by the vessel, and the return signal given, this being indicated by four circular sweeps of the flag.

Waving the flag twice to the right, and twice to the left indicated that they were to remain there until further advised.

After a good breakfast the march was resumed, leading further to the west to avoid the rugged hills near the sea. Either Uraso or Muro was constantly in the lead, always accompanied by one of the men who, in case of necessity, might be sent back to furnish John the reports of his observations.

Before noon the messenger came in with the welcome information that the first of the natives had been noticed, not far to the north. Muro, who was in the lead, awaited the arrival of John and the boys.

Together they went forward, the men remaining in the camp. A few men could thus move through the brush with less likelihood of observation, than a large number, which was the principal reason for this mode of procedure.

After another mile of cautious movement, a runner was sent back with the order to bring all of them forward. Away in the distance the village was sighted, George's field glasses now being brought into play. The huts could be seen plainly along the mountain side, and scattered about in profusion amid a plentiful supply of trees.

In some respects, viewed from a distance, the scene did not look at all primitive, and were it not for the crude character of the houses it might have been taken for a typical modern town or village.

Only one hut had been passed, thus far. It was not at all crudely built, and while it had been left to decay, it showed that the owner had some ideas of comfort, and an eye to convenience, as it was located by the side of a spring. On one side of the cottage was a weed-grown garden, and some fine specimens of taro as well as wild potatoes were in evidence.

Earthenware cooking utensils were discovered, which added to the interest of the place, but no other furniture was found to show how the people lived. It might have been deserted for a year or more.

Ascending the second small hill, they were startled to find themselves face to face with a half dozen of the natives, who were frightfully alarmed at the appearance of the visitors, for they set up a shout and ran like deer toward the village.

John kept on at the head of his force, and while the commotion in the village, not a half mile distant, was plainly visible, he did not halt, until he saw a curious crowd surrounding a short individual, who stood apart from those around him.

"That is the Chief," said Laleo. "It is said he is a terrible man, and unlike all others," thus repeating what the Chief had told John.

As he made no attempt to come forward or indicate what his wishes were, John directed the men to follow him, fifty feet in his rear, and he went on until within two hundred feet of the motley crowd, the people in the meantime making no sign of resistance, nor did they object to the advance.

When John stopped, the curious figure, who was designated as the Chief, moved forward toward John without a bit of hesitation, and the boys were simply dumbfounded at his singular appearance, and at the gait he assumed.

A word picture of him would not be amiss. He was a hunchback, with an extraordinary lump on his back, the arms much too long for his body, and crooked, distorted legs. The head, however, was massive, and covered with a heavy beard, which seemed to grow close up to the eyes, giving him a fierce appearance, because his head was covered with a thick coating of long gray, or sandy hair, that swung around the darker beard, as he shambled along.

As he neared John his bright and staring eyes were the first thing noticed. When he came across the intervening space, his face was stern, and unforbidding, but as he neared John it relaxed, and he began to smile.

John stepped forward, and extended his hand. "I am glad to meet you," said John.

The man looked at John for a moment, and then tried to mumble something, that the boys could not understand. After a few attempts he fairly shrieked out: "How are you?"

This was certainly a startling thing, because the voice and the intonation were perfect. John opened his jacket and brought out a miniature American flag, which was unrolled, and the moment the strange being caught sight of it he seized it and pressing it to his lips, kissed it fervently.

"I am an American," he finally struggled to utter. "I am a white man, and you are the first white man I have seen for fifty years. You are welcome to our home and village."

The boys could not credit their senses. How did this poor specimen of the white race become the powerful Chief of a tribe of savage cannibals?

John looked at him for a moment in astonishment, as he asked: "How long have you been Chief of the people here?"

"About forty-five years. They are good people too."

"We heard you were cannibals," remarked John.

For a moment he scowled, and then his face brightened up. "Yes; I know my neighbors to the south have always believed that to be so, but they have heard such tales from their witch doctors, such as we used to have, but it is not true."

"You mean the Korinos?"

"Yes, those who left you two days ago, and have come to me for protection," and he smiled as he said this.

"I tried to get them, but they eluded us," added John, by way of information.

"You must pardon me, but it is still a little difficult for me to form sentences. It is so long since I have talked to any one in my native tongue. But I am impolite. Bring your people into the village, and let us entertain you. I do so want to hear about the great world and what it is now like."

The Chief turned to his people and told them that the White Chief was from his own tribe, and that he came from a far-away country, on a visit to him, and that they must treat the people as his own.

Nothing more was needed to make them welcome. George suggested to John that Stut on the *Pioneer* should be notified, but before they had time to carry out the order a number of the villagers came rushing through the village and sought out the Chief.

The latter turned to John and said: "My people tell me that there is a large ship here."

"It is the vessel we came in," answered John, "and we were about to send a messenger to tell them to anchor near the village."

"I am so happy to know this," said the Chief. "I want to see the ship, because it is the first time that any one has stopped at our shores. Some years ago we found some strange things that floated ashore from a wrecked vessel, and I want to show them to you, because I cannot understand what some of the things could be used for."

They were led through the principal street of the town. It was clean and well kept; the huts were far better than those in the village they had left, and the natives were, apparently, happy and contented.

As they marched along George was the first to notice a tall individual, who, with several others, were edging away from the visitors.

"There they are!" he cried out. John turned to inquire, when Harry commenced laughing, as he added: "Here are the Korinos, John!"

The latter looked in the direction indicated, and laughed when he saw their discomfiture. The Chief was hurriedly informed of the situation, and he laughed heartily, as he ordered one of his men to bring in the fugitives.

They were ushered in, and Uraso told them that they were friends and not enemies, and that the White Chief tried to secure them so that their own Chief would not harm them. It was a great relief, unquestionably, and their actions showed it. John then told them, that he wanted to have a talk with them, and that he would assure them of their safety.

CHAPTER XI

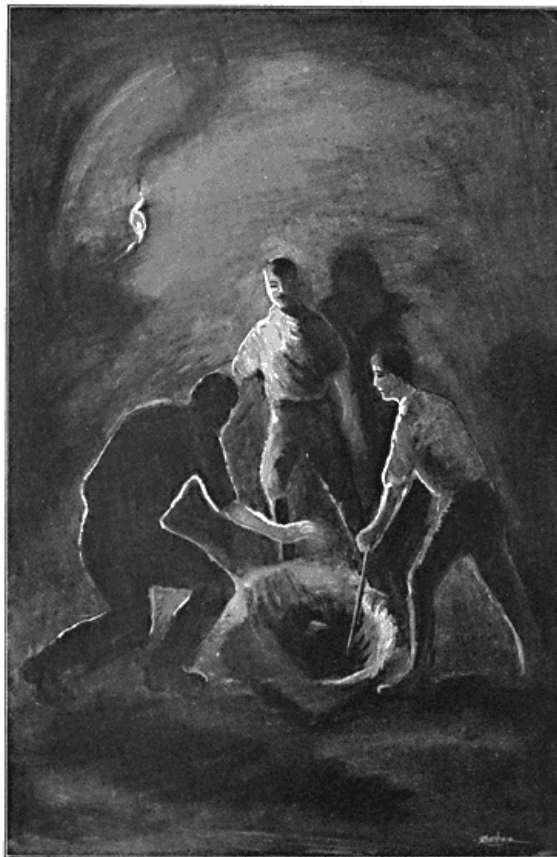
THE HUNCHBACK CHIEF

THE White Chief's house was built on a plan which was a vast improvement over anything found on the two islands. True, it was nothing but an assemblage of rooms, which surrounded an open court. The furnishings were crude, but it was evident that all the articles were such as had been taken from the wreckages on the shore.

Goods not native made, were noticed, and even a photograph, on a tin plate, like the old style daguerreotypes, was observed by Harry. Three chairs, one with a broken rocker, formed part of the furnishings in the court. In one corner was a mass of articles, the case of a ship's chronometer, the horn of a phonograph, some tin tubes of different lengths, and other odds and ends, which could not be recognized.

"I am anxious to hear your story," said John. "If you have no objection we should be glad to have you relate it."

"It will give me pleasure to tell of my experiences, although it may not interest you; but before doing so you must partake of food, because I know what it means to travel through our country. Besides I have ordered it prepared, and it is now ready."



"It is copper," said John

[See p. 122]

"These two men I have with me," said John, pointing to Uraso and Muro, "are Chiefs of two powerful tribes, who live on a neighboring island, and they are real friends I found there when these two boys and I were shipwrecked there several years ago."

"I am, indeed, glad to welcome them. I see that they have adopted the white man's clothing."

"Yes; and their people who are wonderfully interesting are engaged in farming, and manufacturing."

Then John told him briefly the history of their experiences, and how the people on Wonder Island were working out their salvation.

John's tale impressed him most forcefully. "You have made good use of your talents. Unfortunately, for me, and for the natives here, I was not able wholly to bring out the people from their low condition, as you will be able to understand more fully when the story is told." He said this sorrowfully, and with apparent regret.

After the meal, he continued his narrative: "I was a poor boy, a native of the State of Massachusetts, and was bound to a whaler as a helper, when less

than fifteen years of age. It was a hard life, as you may know. I had no education, and I learned the life of misery and sorrow when I should have been at school.

"But during that and the second year I became hardened, and my unfortunate physical condition made me the butt of my companions, and one day, in a fit of resentment, I struck down one of my tormentors, while in the harbor of Bedford, after which I escaped and made my way to Boston.

"There, the next day, I found employment on an outgoing ship, that was in the China service, and two days later, I was gratified to learn that it would sail that night. I had a much easier berth, and now I found that among those men I was considered better than a mere brute, and I became acquainted with a young man who taught me to read.

"This was such a delight to me that I could hardly wait until my daily duties were over, before the books were brought out, and by the time we put into Shanghai, I could read and write, as well as perform many examples in arithmetic.

"I knew nothing of geography, or of any other of the necessary parts of education. Our outward trip was unexciting, but on the first return trip, we met one of the dangerous monsoons, and the ship was wrecked. One of my shipmates was the sole occupant of a spar, and he aided me in my attempt to grasp it, and together we floated about the great sea for several days, without a thing to eat or to drink, until I lost consciousness, and knew no more until I opened my eyes, and saw the vilest looking savages standing about me.

"When I saw them they appeared like a horrid dream. I had read in one of the books about the terrible visions that men dream of, and when they tried to make me eat something, I began to feel that it was a reality.

"But the men were naked, and I saw the bones of human beings about me, and everything had the appearance of a feast. I soon saw that they were cannibals, and as I had heard of their practices their faces grew more and more repulsive to me.

"I recovered slowly, and now began the terror in my mind. Each day I expected would be my last. But day after day passed by, and I soon began to become reconciled to my fate. An incident soon changed the entire aspect of affairs for me. I had been treated with the utmost deference. I was furnished with an abundance of food, but I had previously learned that it was the custom of those people to fatten their victims, and this was not welcome knowledge.

"I became desperate. One day, while they were bringing me the finest roasts, I rebelled, and taking a club, scattered the food, swinging the club at them and shouting defiance, because human nature began to rebel, and I could not stand the suspense any longer.

"To my surprise they scattered, and fell on their faces. Among them was the head man, whom I had always regarded as the Chief. Finally he came up timidly, and fell on his knees before me. I was so astounded that I did not know what to do. I went to the Chief and raised him up, because I was in a quandary, and could not understand them.

"This seemed to reassure him, and he told me to follow him. I had been here long enough to understand most of their jargon. I was surprised when he led me to his own hut, and brought out his daughter, who knelt before me. Then I began to understand. I was no longer the expected victim, but the prospective son-in-law. This was better than anticipating death daily.

"I accepted the situation. The daughter became my wife. It was she who welcomed you when we came in. When her father died I became Chief, but long before his death, I controlled the people, as I knew so much more, and had superior wisdom, judged by their standard, that they obeyed me in everything.

"But much as I abhorred, and tried to prevent it, as I did on many occasions, they practiced their rites, and had their Korinos, the real offenders, who taught them the necessity of sacrifices.

"But when I became Chief, I sternly refused to permit them to kill their captives, and cannibalism was practiced only by stealth. I succeeded in stamping out the practice only by putting the Korinos to death, and in shutting up their caves."

The boys, as well as John were riveted to their seats during this entire recital, until he referred to the caves, when they relaxed, and indicated their pleasure and anxiety. That meant still further quests in that direction.

The Chief noticed their movement, and continued: "I am tiring you, but permit me to add only a few things. I have endeavored to better the condition of these people, and have succeeded. To the south of us was a powerful tribe. My first care was to make ourselves secure against them.

"Like my people they, too, were cannibals. They were ruled over by a Chief who was cruel, and whenever any of their people escaped I took them in and cared for them, and there are now many of those living with us who could not be induced to go back. For more than forty years no one has been killed and eaten by my people."

"Your work here is certainly most commendable. There is nothing which needs apology. Under the circumstances you have done all that was possible, and to the best of your ability. No one can do more," was John's timely observation.

"I thank you for the compliment. I owe everything to the few books which my comrade taught me to read. When I left the United States my heart was bitter toward all mankind. I could not see why I should have been treated in such a harsh manner among civilized people, but when I landed here and saw how much worse the conditions were, I began to reflect. It would have been an easy and a natural thing for me to be brutal to others, as they had been to me."

"You have shown a noble spirit, and I shall try to help you in caring for your people. Our ship is here, and we have some things for you, as soon as they can be unloaded," rejoined John.

During the afternoon communication was established with the *Pioneer*, and the natives were willing helpers in bringing up the packages, but it was too late to distribute them. Before leaving John said: "You have not told us your name."

"I was christened Ephraim Wilmar."

John seized him by the hands, as he said: "And was your father's name William?"

"Yes," said Ephraim, as his great eyes grew still bigger. "Did you know him?"

"I knew him well; he died about thirty years ago. He was my father's friend."

This information established a bond of friendship between the two.

"I have forgotten to take note of time, and I may be out a year or two in my reckoning," continued Ephraim, "but according to the best information I have this must be the year 1911."

"You are short one year; it is now 1912."

"Then let me see! We sailed from China in January, 1860; and during that same month the ship went down. From that time to the present I have no idea of what has taken place."

"Then you know nothing of the four years' war between the North and the South?"

"No; I remember there was some trouble about the slaves, or something of that sort before we left China."

"But there are no more slaves in the United States."

"You surprise me! Then they were freed by the war?"

"Yes; and Cuba is also free, and is now a republic, and the Hawaiian Islands belong to the United States, as also do the Philippines."

"That does not seem possible. Why, if I remember correctly Cuba and the Philippines belonged to Spain. When did the United States purchase them?"

"We had a war with Spain, and we took the Spanish possessions, as well as Porto Rico. Manila was captured three days after war was declared."

"Three days after war was declared! How could our fleet, which must have been half the way around the world, get the news that war had been declared in that time?"

"The commander of our fleet at Hongkong, was notified by telegraph."

"How could that be done without a telegraph line? Over what part of the earth are the lines now running?"

"Everywhere; but there are many running under the sea and are called *cable lines*."

Ephraim looked at John for a moment, as though he doubted the meaning of the words just uttered, and then slowly inquired: "That must be a remarkable thing. I do not see how it would be possible to string wires under the sea."

"They are encased in water tight coverings, and some of the lines are four thousand miles long. But nowadays we do not need wires for telegraphing."

The deformed figure arose, and appeared to be agitated, as he said: "Do you mean to say that messages can be sent without wires?"

"Stations for that purpose are now in operation all over the world."

"That is as improbable to me as though you should tell me that it would be possible to talk over a wire," he answered.

"But we do talk over wires, and it is possible to talk over distances hundreds

of miles apart, without wires even."

He glanced at those about him, and shook his head. He appeared to hesitate about asking any more questions, and after shambling back and forth a dozen times, or more, he stopped at the pile of debris, and picked up a thick disk-like piece of metal, to one side of which was a short broken tube attached.

"I have examined this many, many times. Perhaps you can tell me what it is?" and he handed it to John.

"This is the disk of a phonograph."

"What is that?"

"An instrument which will reproduce the human voice, or any noise, or the sound of music."

"I do not understand what you mean. If I talk to it will it talk back to me?"

"No; it is so arranged that one form of the instrument receives the sound of your voice, and impresses it on material in the form of a cylinder, or a disk, and if this cylinder or disk is put into another instrument, this little apparatus, which I hold in my hand will speak the same words you uttered."

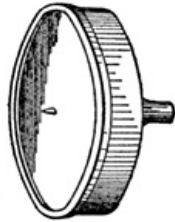


Fig. 11. Phonograph Disk.

"Then electricity must be a wonderful thing, to be able to be used by men to talk to each other all over the world, and even to preserve what they say."

"But the phonograph is not an electrical apparatus. The disk, here, with the little stylus, or pointer on it, vibrates and gives forth the sound."

"All this is most marvelous, and I would like to see some of those wonderful things," he exclaimed.

"If you will come to the ship we will show you many of the things that electricity does, as we have a phonograph there, and we have a search light that operates by electricity, and which enables us to see many miles," added Harry.

"Yes; I must see your ship, and I am ready to accompany you any time, and I want my people to see those things, as well."

"But there are many other things that we now do with electricity. All street railways are now operated by it; many boats are run by that power; cooking is done by it, and its uses extend into almost everything that man touches," remarked John.

"If this one branch of knowledge has improved so wonderfully within a space of fifty years, the progress in other directions must be very wonderful, indeed," he responded. "But you have told me so much, and I hardly know how I can grasp its meaning. I suppose things here in this part of the world must appear very crude to you?"

CHAPTER XII

THE CHIEF'S FAMILY

EPHRAIM'S wife was not crude and uncouth, like most of the native women. It was evident from the care which she observed in the domestic arrangements, that Ephraim had a hand in shaping her course.

The food was served with considerable care, and, in some degree with the formality observed in civilized homes. John was a careful observer of customs, and he was surprised to note that all the natives patterned after the habits established by their Chief.

"I tried," said Ephraim, in answer to John's questions, "to better their condition, and to teach them how to prepare and eat their food, and we made vessels of pottery, which you will notice are found everywhere. They understood the art of weaving, in a very primitive way, which I also tried to improve. Only on three occasions did we take any toll from the sea, when the wreckage came ashore.

"Of the articles which were thus recovered, I took only a fair share, and the others were impartially distributed to the people."

"Did you ever have any trouble with the natives, or did they ever dispute your authority?" asked John.

"Only once, many years ago. A man claiming to be the son of the Chief, gathered together a number of adherents, but my people rose against them, and killed the leaders, which I very much regretted. When I remonstrated with them for the severity of their course, they justified it by saying that I had been kind to them, and had made them better, and it was the very thing that taught me to feel that human beings, although savages, understand kind treatment. It made me a convert in my feelings against some of the white men who had treated me with such severity."

During the day, after the packages had been removed from the ship the articles were taken from the packages and arranged in Ephraim's home. Articles of clothing were distributed to the Chief's family, and what pleased him more than anything else, were the cooking utensils, all of the newest ware, and in great variety, some of which were curiosities to him.

He had four children, the eldest a young man about thirty years of age, who had a family of three children; the next, a strong, active native, about twenty-five; a medium-sized young woman, almost white, of about twenty, and the youngest a lad of seventeen, who was quickly attracted to the boys.

These, together with their mother, undertook the task of distributing the gifts to the people. Articles of adornment were, of course, the most enticing to the natives, and John had anticipated this feeling in the selection of the gifts.

After the feast of the good things, John broached the subject next to his heart, and that was to explore the island, and particularly the caves. In referring to the matter he said:

"I recognize that whatever treasure we may find in them belongs to you, and you are entitled to them."

"But they are of no use to us," he responded. "I am not wise in the ways of the world, but I am sure that great wealth, in the way of gold and silver, would not make my people happy. I agree with you that employment, and trying to teach people to help and care for each other, is much more likely to make them happy, and besides, the treasures which you refer to could not be used by them to any advantage."

"You have spoken wisely," answered John, "nevertheless, we have no need of the riches which we may find. My search is for a different sort of wealth."

"I do not understand what could be of more advantage, or repay you better than gold and silver."

"It is believed that many of these places contain the records of people who have lived here thousands of years ago. All over the world hidden treasures of that kind have been found, some of them which go to show that men lived on the earth hundreds of thousands of years."

"You are much wiser than I am, and understand the reason for making such a search, but I do not see why that would be of any use to know those things."

"A great man once said, 'Know thyself,' and another remarked, that the 'proper study of mankind is man.' To ascertain the origin of humanity, how man lived and acted, what were his motives and desires, his beliefs and his aspirations, and to know how he has improved, are interesting questions to me."

He mused at this statement for a long time, and then quietly said: "That may

be so; it may make us greater and better men, and it may be gratifying to have that knowledge, but I have now arrived at that time of life where things appear differently from the way I used to look at them. Every year I begin to think less of myself, and more of those about me.

"When my children grew up about me they were the only ones I cared for. They were the only things in the world that interested me. When my grandchildren came they were new inspirations to me, and my views toward others changed, and made me feel better inclined."

"That shows, does it not, that as we grow older, and as the world increases in age, everything improves, our minds, the advancements in the arts, in the sciences, in inventions, and generally in the improvement of the human race? It is a part of the whole education which man in his improved condition is trying to instill, and it is human knowledge, and the desire to learn everything, that gives a stimulus to us."

There was no more welcome intelligence than the news that on the following day they would visit the first cave in the northern hills, and that Ephraim would accompany them. The people in the village were delighted at the news that the ancient caves of the Korinos would be opened.

The trip took on the nature of a pleasure expedition. Even the family of the Chief were insistent on going along, and the boys quickly became the friends of Camma, the youngest son of Ephraim, and insisted that he should go back with them to Wonder Island on a visit when they returned.

Ephraim assented to this most heartily. They showed Camma the workings of the revolver, and presented him with one of them. Then, when they went to the ship, he was presented with a camera, and an outfit for developing.

When the boys brought back a small hand sewing machine, and gave it to Mene, young Camma's sister, the joy in that family was beyond all bounds. Ephraim stood before the little machine, as though paralyzed. It acted like a human being, only more perfectly, as its work showed.

But now for the caves. Sufficient food was taken along to make the trip a comfortable one. The village in which Ephraim lived was nearly a half day's journey from the original site of the town that was occupied by the old Chief. He had founded the new site, near the sea, because of the exposed condition of the old village, and also on account of the unsanitary condition of the surroundings.

The caves were near the old town, and it required nearly five hours to make the trip, but it was enjoyable, every step of the way. The three boys engaged in hunting, on the way, because the new toy in Camma's hands had to be put to use. Ephraim put no restraint on the jolly pranks of the boys. John was careful to tell him that Harry and George were not wild or reckless, and that Camma would find them healthy comrades.

Shortly after noon, they were told that the first of the caves would be found in the hill toward the right, and that the work of opening the principal one would not be undertaken until after luncheon.

You may be sure that the boys made a hurried meal, and without waiting for the workers to come up, they grasped their weapons, and were soon half way up the hill, their guide, an old man, who knew the location of the caves, being with them, to show the way.

The old man pointed to the rocky wall, and indicated where the opening was. Ephraim had closed it effectually, for they saw the evidence of the wall before them, where its comparatively smooth surface showed the difference between the natural wall and the rough rocks elsewhere.

"Where is the other cave?" asked George.

"It is on the other side," he answered.

"And is that also closed?"

"Yes; just as you see this."

When the workers came up John directed them how to commence at the top, and take out a rock at a time. He smiled as he saw how well the work had been done, and Ephraim was gratified at the praise bestowed.

"You certainly made a first class job of ashlar work," remarked John.

"What is that?" asked Ephraim, in surprise.

"It is just this kind of masonry where the courses are irregular, and built up from the rock just as it came from the quarry."

"I was not aware that there were different kinds of masonry. I thought that masonry was merely the placing together of stones so they would bind each other, and that is the way I had them do it."

"Masonry is one of the oldest of the arts. It is really the foundation stone of architecture. The work you have done here happens to be of rock that has a rather smooth outline, that is, the stone broke off smooth, in the upper layers,

but the large pieces near the bottom represent what is called rubble work."

"This is very interesting to know," remarked Ephraim.

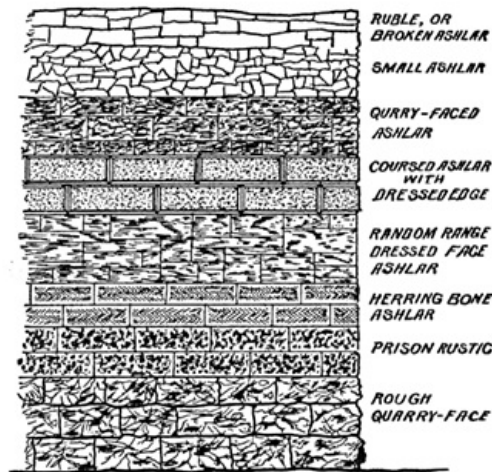
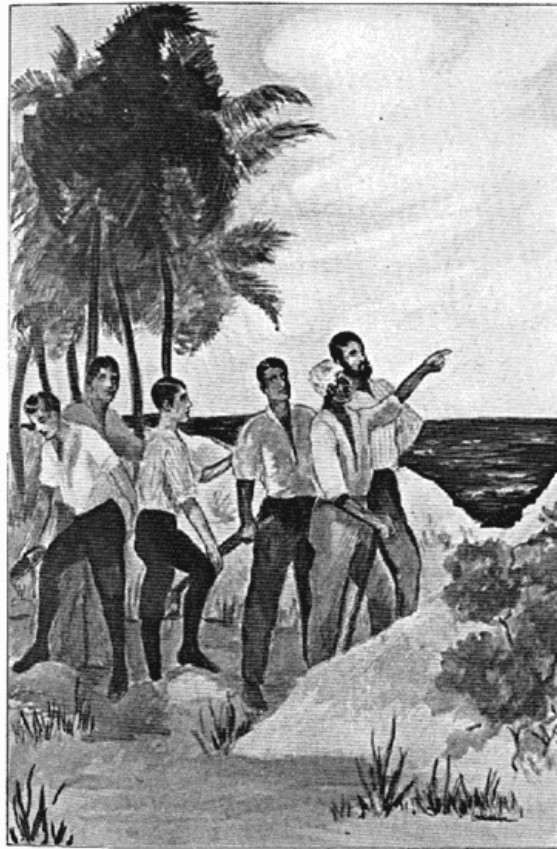


Fig. 12. Types of Masonry.



"The old man pointed to the rocky wall"

[See p. 153]

"I might add," continued John, "that when the courses are not regular it is called *broken* ashlar; when stones of less than one foot in breadth are used it is called *small* ashlar; if the wall is backed by rubble, or inferior work it is called *bastard* ashlar. Then every kind of surface has a particular name, like the *random-tooled*, where the tool marks are shown in all directions; *rusticated* when only the joined edges are trimmed up; *prison-rustic* when it is pitted with deep holes; *herring-bone* when it is tooled in rows of opposite directions to each other; and *nigged* when finished up with a pointed hammer."

Within an hour the stones were removed and put aside, and then Ephraim was treated to another surprise when he was made acquainted with the little electric flash lights which John exhibited. With these they entered the cave.

All savage tribes have some sort of animals, as pets, and dogs are the most frequent. This was the case among these people. The dogs were with the party, and, as usual, ahead of the procession. Two of them went ahead on a scouting expedition, while John and the boys, with their flash lights followed.

After they had gone, probably two hundred feet, there was a slight descent apparent in the floor of the cave, and ahead were the two dogs stretched out, lifeless.

George ran ahead, as he noticed them, and John shouted out: "Do not touch them!"

He stopped, and looked back, and then slowly walked up to the animals. John requested the party to halt, and he went forward, and put his foot on one of the dogs. "We must go back," he said.

"Are they dead?" asked Harry, as he came forward.

"Why not take them out and see what the trouble is?" inquired Harry.

"No need for that," responded John. "I know what the trouble is."

"Is there any danger in the cave?"

"Yes."

Ephraim and the natives were now alarmed. It will be remembered that the universal belief among the natives is, that to go into these caves unbidden, means death. True, John had shown the fallacy of this on several occasions, but here was positive evidence that death had visited the dogs, and this might be the fate of those who attempted to go on.

But the most alarming thing was the fact that John himself was the one who said there was danger, and that they must return. He did not venture to make an explanation until they were out of the cave.

"There is carbonic acid in the cave, and as it is a deadly poison we cannot go in until it is removed."

"That seems singular," responded George. "I went in as far as the dogs, and it didn't affect me."

"But you did not reach down to touch the dog."

"I saw you touch the dog, and it didn't seem to affect you."

"I touched it with my feet and not with my hands."

"I cannot see what difference that makes."

"If you had touched the dog with your hands it would have brought your face down near the floor of the cave, and the gas is at the bottom of the cave only."

"Why should it be there and not all over?"

"Because it is much heavier than the air we breathe, and remains at the bottom, just like water. If you recall, this part is lower than the corridor through which we came, so that it could not run out. I have always observed that in all the other caves the floors within were higher than the entrance, and in such cases there is no liability of getting poisonous gases."

"But how are we to make the investigation, under the circumstances?"

"We must remove the gas."

"How can that be done?"

"Several ways are open; one would be to tap the floor and drain the gas out, which would be difficult to do with our resources. Another plan would be to force in a lot of air, so as to render the gas inert, or we might put in enough air to make it burn, and consume it."

"Why, will it burn?"

"Most assuredly; all it needs is enough air; but I am afraid this plan will not be a very safe one for us. If the floor of the cave is not at any place more than four feet below the entrance, we can go about safely, but in such case we must move about with the utmost caution, so as not to get too much of the gas in the system."

"I am afraid it will be a difficult thing to go in unless we know absolutely where the low places are, or unless we survey the bottom of the cave," said George, brightening up at the idea.

"What would happen if we threw a light into the bottom where the gas is?"

"It would be extinguished instantly," remarked John.

"That gives me an idea," asserted George. "Why not take a lamp, and carry it ahead of us, about three feet from the ground, and whenever that goes out, it will show there is gas there?"

"That is a good observation; but I am afraid it would be very dangerous to do that."

"Dangerous? I thought you said that the carbonic gas would put out the light?"

"So it will; but if three parts of air should be added to one part of the gas it will make an explosive mixture,—that is, a mixture which will burn, as there has been enough oxygen added to support combustion."

"In what way could enough air mix with the gas to make it burn?"

"By stirring it; the movement of the body might make an admixture just above the surface of the gas, which would burn, and that might mean a catastrophe for us."

"Then we are certainly stopped at this cave."

"Not by any means," rejoined John, and he saw the boys' faces smiling again. "We must make a safety lamp."

"Do you mean a lamp that will not explode the gas, although it has enough oxygen to 'support combustion,' as you say?"

"Exactly. Have you ever heard of the Humphrey Davy lamp? Well, that was invented to meet the very condition found here."

"Tell us about it."

"In 1816 Davy discovered that a flame would not pass through a fine wire gauze, while conducting some experiments. It occurred to him that use could be made of this discovery by surrounding the flame of a lamp with gauze, and the well-known lamp was built on that principle."

"What I am curious to know is, that if it will not burn the gas, will it go out if it gets down in the gas?"

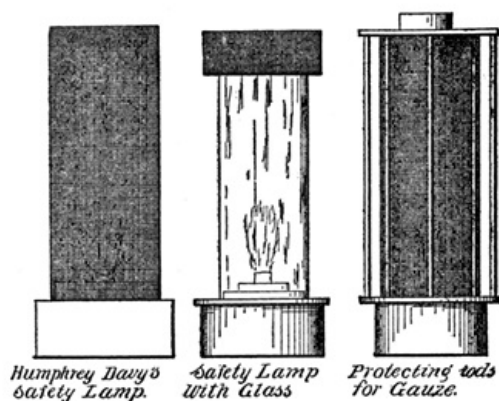


Fig. 13. Types of Safety Lamps.

"Yes; because enough air, or oxygen must go through the mesh to support combustion of the flame itself. If it does not get enough it is smothered."

"Then why not make a lamp of that kind?"

"But where can we get enough gauze to make a cylinder big enough to go around a lamp?"

John laughed at the serious predicament, which expressed itself in the faces of the boys. "That is true," he said; "but if we can get a small piece of tin, we can punch it full of fine holes, and probably make that answer."

"We haven't anything in the way of tin large enough to go around a lamp, but here is a round piece, about three inches in diameter."

"That will answer; punch that as full of holes as possible, and be sure they are very small."

"What shall we use for a lamp?"

John was already looking around, and soon spied a tree in the distance that looked like a small pine, and beneath that he found some cones, a dozen of which were picked up.

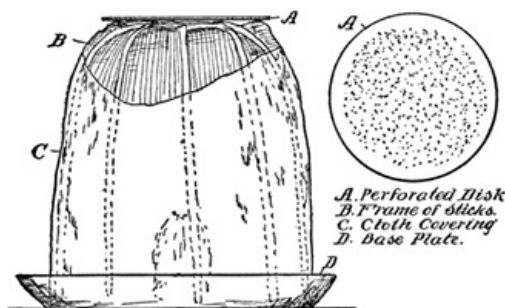


Fig 14. How John made the Lamp.

"That is a pine tree, isn't it?"

"Yes; these cones will burn for some time."

"But they will not make much of a light."

"No; but we are not after a light, but they will do for testing purposes."

The accompanying sketches show how it was made. A plate was used for a base, on which the burning cone was placed. A half dozen twigs were then provided, and these were bent U-shaped, after being secured together at their middle portions, and the lower ends held by a cord, and this was then inverted, and a piece of thin cotton goods, of a single thickness, only was

wound around the little frame, leaving an opening at the top, which was covered by the perforated tin disk.

"There, now we have an article which provides for the admission of air, through the cotton goods, and the product of combustion can escape through the perforated opening at the top."

The boys danced around with joy, when the cone was ignited, and a bale, which was simply a string, attached, so it could be carried conveniently.

This time they went on, far beyond the place where the poor dogs lay. Occasionally John would lower the device, and when it descended too far, the knot would begin to smoke, and this was explained by the statement that as it went into the carbon gas, less and less air was supplied, which caused the flame to die down.

The cave was similar to the others, being white from the lime deposits, but in all their wanderings they had never seen anything to compare with the beautiful hangings noted in the interior, particularly in the chambers, which they passed, one after the other, four of which were especially admired.

Ephraim was intensely interested. He never had taken the trouble to visit any of these caverns, and was not disposed to take much stock in the many tales that had been related about the weird interiors.

"I can now understand," he said, "why the natives possessed such a fear of them. I have faced many perilous conditions, during my life here, but I confess if I had any faith in the superstitions about these places, they would have paralyzed me, now that I have seen their ghostly appearance."

They suddenly emerged into a spacious chamber, so large that their voices seemed to reverberate. The flash lights were directed to all sides and to the immense vaulted and icicle-covered ceiling. John stood the lamp on the ground. It was free from the dangerous gas. The floor was fairly level, but it was covered with the broken hangings from the ceiling.

"I see an outlet, directly opposite the one we came by," exclaimed George.

The party hastened across the intervening space. They were traveling along the greatest length of the chamber. Midway between the two openings were two other side openings, and John stopped and exclaimed: "It is true! We have found it!"

The boys had never seen John so agitated before. They pressed around and requested an explanation, but he fumbled in his pocket, and soon drew forth a carefully wrapped piece of brown paper.

"This is parchment. It contains the sketch of the cave that has been the object of my search. I believe we are the only white people who have ever been privileged to enter it since the chart was made three centuries ago."

Ephraim, as well as the boys, glanced about them. What was there to excite him? Other caves had the same sort of formation, the chambers and the openings: and while they wondered John drew a compass from his pocket, and after holding it for a while, continued:

"This chamber runs north and south as you see. We entered on the south side. It had two other outlets, one to the east, the other to the west."

"Then it is the cross-shaped cave!" almost shouted George.

"Yes," answered John, as he fixed his eyes on the boys. "In the year 1620, a Spanish navigator found a cave, of which this is a description, and within it were found the remains of hundreds of people."

CHAPTER XIII

THE CHART AND THE CAVES

JOHN pored over the map, without going any further. Evidently something was passing in his mind, for occasionally his eyes left the paper and he looked about, as though undecided.

"Do you know any more about what they found?"

"Yes; there are many incomplete portions belonging to the history, but it may be summed up by the statement, that they also found an immense amount of treasure, much of it in the form of solid gold. The adventurers were wild with joy at the discovery, and took steps to remove it.

"Before proceeding far they found carvings and inscriptions, the latter of which were unintelligible to them, but they were very curious, judging from the few sketches which were made. But like many men of their class they began to quarrel over the treasure, and fought each other to the death."

"That was just like the fellows who lived in the cave at the Cataract," suggested Harry.

"No doubt that was over the treasure, too, there, as well as here. Four of the men escaped, only to be chased by savages, and after finally reaching their vessel were almost wrecked because they did not have enough properly to man the ship.

"After reaching civilization, they engaged a number of men, and returned. Some went in, among them two of the original discoverers. They did not return for some days, and another party went in, but they did not return.

"Only one of the four remained, and when their companions did not return, the others took fright and returned to the vessel. Juan Gutierrez was the name of the sole survivor of the first expedition. The adventurers who accompanied him declared that he and his company had lured them to the strange isle, in order to destroy them, and on the return to the first Spanish port, he was cast into prison, and remained a prisoner for nearly twenty years.

"This chart, or what remains of it, or from which this copy was made was written by him while in prison, but the singular thing is, that while he was explicit in many things, he did not leave a clue as to the location of the island. Many of the things on it, as you see, are very faint."

The boys now examined the chart for the first time. Harry started back in surprise, as he pointed to the chart, and looked up at John. "Why, there are the same marks we found on the skull at Wonder Island!" he exclaimed in great excitement.

"Quite true! and do you now wonder why I have been so much interested to find the location? Chance has thrown this opportunity our way. It is true we might be mistaken, but the description fits."

It would require pages to tell about what they found in the recesses of the cavern. Hundreds and hundreds of skeletons were discovered, and the most curious tablets and carvings in hieroglyphics were scattered in the adjoining chamber.

Peculiarly-formed tools, implements of warfare, also of metal, small slabs of uniform size, and with characters on both sides, which might have been the historical books of the singular people who lived here ages ago, were in profusion not only in the large chamber, but in the most unexpected places.

To John it was a vast storehouse of archeological wealth. To the boys it was much more. There were still some things that John did not explain, and which they wanted to know.

"Do you believe that the different parties went in and never came back again?" asked George.

"I have no doubt but the account was true."

"What became of them?"

"They probably met the fate that almost overtook us when we first went in," was the answer.

The parchment was correct in the main details, as to the records within the cave, but there were no treasure, nor could any trace be found of them. They spent several days in the search, but to no avail. The boys were not much disappointed, it may be said, but they were gratified to know that John had accomplished the one desire of his life, and they knew, also, that it would be a source of great joy to the Professor.

It was found that the cave entrance at the opposite side of the hill was the northern outlet to the same set of caverns, and Ephraim did not know of any

others that existed in the northern part, so that they did not feel it to be desirable to take up more time in this direction.

They had now found two isles, besides their own loved island, and when they assembled that evening in the cabin of the *Pioneer*, they had a most earnest conversation as to the results of their latest enterprise.

"We have sought the treasures of the islands, and what have we accomplished?" asked George.

"What have we accomplished? I have been thinking that to find the natives here, and to be able to help them, is a pretty big thing in itself," answered Harry.

"That is true," he responded, "and the same thing might be said, also, about the wonderful products of the islands; they are certainly worth coming here for. I wonder what Blakely would say if he knew of all there is here, and the knack shown by the natives to handle the things?"

"I am in sympathy with your views," said John. "Treasures, like gold and silver, are worth seeking for, but when you find that the earth is inviting people to till it, and there are people who, through ignorance, do not know how the earth can be utilized, it is a great privilege to be able to help them, and the recollection of what you have done will be the greatest treasure not only to you but to the poor people that have been benefited."

"I think Ephraim's story is a wonderful one," said George, "but he could not go far. His education was limited, but see what he has done with the little he knew."

"It was curious, however, that the cannibals had fear for him. I cannot understand that," rejoined Harry.

"Savages are children only. They have the capacities of full grown men, but have never had the opportunities. Their superstitions lead them into singular forms of reasonings. With them the deformed are objects of curiosity, and generally, of reverence. Those mentally deficient are regarded as possessing a superior spirit."

"I remember that the Professor told us so on one occasion, but it seems to be singular that they should get that view. How do you account for it?"

"That is a trait, or, I may say, a belief which is not at all uncommon among civilized people. Throughout Europe many men, who lived years ago, are revered as Saints, and, who, from the accounts given of them, were demented. Why, it is even claimed that there is but one step from the abnormally gifted to the insane person."

"Is that really so regarded among learned men?"

"It has been the subject of many remarkable books which have been written to show that genius and insanity are closely allied. Take, for instance, the case of Blind Tom, an ignorant negro, who, although he could not read, nor did he know a single note of music, was able, nevertheless, to play the most marvelous music, and repeat, at a single hearing, an entire musical score."

"But such talents, as that, I have heard, is only in some particular direction. He was not able to do anything else," suggested George.

"Quite true. But it is so with what is called genius. I once knew a learned minister, a leading professor in one of the colleges, who was absolutely devoid of any other phase of education, except theology. He could not master the first rudiments of mathematics, and knew no more of astronomy than a ten year old boy, but he was supreme in his particular branch of knowledge."

But the great question with John and the boys was the future. Two islands had been discovered. Some of the mysteries of the past three years had been solved, but others still remained; in fact, those which interested them the most, were still shrouded in a veil through which there was only the slightest glimpse.

John felt that their first duty would be thoroughly to explore the island to the north and west of the village, and thus enable them to make a complete report when they returned to Wonder Island, and this course was finally decided upon.

The spirit of John had now entered Ephraim. He had fully agreed to accompany them in the *Pioneer*, and learn of their great work on that island. He said that it was his duty to his children and to the natives who had stood by him so nobly, to provide for their future welfare.

He was most active in arousing the people to an understanding of the mission of John and the boys. Within a day, all preparations were made for the journey through the island, and Ephraim was with them in order to learn all that might be necessary, so that when he returned he could advise the people.

For more than a week they tramped through the attractive portions of the land, and then the day was set for departure.

"I have been thinking of making a trip to your friends in the South," said John, as they were dining at Ephraim's home, the day before the date of sailing.

"That would please me more than anything else," replied Ephraim. "It occurs to me that is the first step toward peace and prosperity on the island."

"Then we shall sail to their village, and from that place go to Venture Island, where we had our first adventures, stopping, on the way at Hutoton, where they have a criminal colony."

"What is that?" inquired Ephraim. "A criminal colony?"

"Yes," said John. "On the large island to the south, which we discovered before we came here we found a singular condition of things. Near the southern end of the island we came into contact with a tribe ruled over by a Chief, named Beralsea, a powerful man; in fact, there is no law there except the will of the Chief."

The boys were now laughing immoderately, and Ephraim was moved to smiles at their mirth. "It must have been very amusing, I have no doubt," he said.

"We were thinking of the jolly time we had when Sutoto married the Chief's daughter," said George.

"We shall tell you all about it on our way there," added Harry.

"I was about to say," continued John, as he also smiled at the reminiscence, that his views on theft were most peculiar. He did not regard it as a crime if the people stole from each other. But if they attempted to steal from him, or tried to deceive him, it was such a great crime, that the unfortunates were banished to a place called Hutoton, which, as he stated, meant the Place of Death.

"We were informed that it was a terrible place, and when a man was sentenced it also meant a like sentence to all of his family, and that no one was ever known to return from that horrible prison home."

"I have heard, but only vaguely, that there was such a place, but had no idea that it was so near to us. But did you verify the character of the place?"

"We went there, and instead of finding a barren and uninviting spot, and misery and want, we saw a lovely village, and people so much more advanced than those in the village ruled over by the Chief, that we were amazed.

"The ruler there treated us handsomely, and had even taken care in the most kindly manner, of a white man who had escaped the rigors of the sea some years before, and who was demented, or incapable, through paralysis, of recognizing those around him."

Ephraim started as John said this. "A white man, did you say? How old was he? Where is he now?"

"We sent him to Wonder Island where the Professor has taken care of him, no doubt," Harry interjected.

"You appear agitated. Have I recalled anything that might give a clue to his identity?" queried John.

"No; it could not be possible! It was merely a passing fancy. Strange, how things sometimes will affect you. No, I do not know that I can add anything to your knowledge concerning him." The subject was not again alluded to during that day.

Ephraim and his family were taken aboard the *Pioneer*. Everything was marvelous to them. The cabin with its complete furnishings, the musical instruments, the phonograph, the piano player, which acted like a wizard, because it gave out the sweet musical tones, as though it were a living thing, and then a moving picture screen, which was the last thing the boys installed before they left New York, made up a series of entertainments for the family that had no end of marvels for them.

"To think of it; for fifty-two years this is the first time I have paced the decks of a vessel. It is the happiest day of my life." And Ephraim could scarcely keep the tears from coming. Happiness shows itself in that way with the strongest, not with the weakest. The strong man can stand the miseries and the sufferings much better and with a braver front than the weak; but excessive joy will break him down so that he manifests it more easily.

John saw his emotion and sympathized with him. Taking him by the arm he led him to the cabin forward, and as they entered the cozy library, he pointed to the books. This was the end of Ephraim for that day.

Without leaving the room he moved from case to case and scanned shelf after shelf, and when John, on one occasion came in, he heard him mutter: "Is there another place like this on earth?"

Late that evening the *Pioneer* took down part of its sail as they approached land in the distance.

"We are nearing Hutoton," shouted George.

Stut ordered the whistle to blow, and before the landing was reached the shore was lined with the people. They soon recognized the visitors, and the boats were prepared before the anchor finally dropped.

The entire crew of the *Pioneer* went ashore, and Ephraim was curious to see the head man, and have a conversation about the manner in which the colony was conducted.

The boys could not understand the change of plans. Why did they not stop at the southern part of the island, and visit the Malosos, who were supposed to be Ephraim's enemies?

It was learned that John and Ephraim, after the vessel started, concluded it would be wiser to visit Hutoton first and get all the information possible from them concerning the time, condition, and circumstances of the casting ashore of the white man found there when John and his party made their visit.

In explanation of their action, it may be well, also, to state that they still had on board of the *Pioneer*, the white man they had rescued or taken from the stockade in the Malosos village, and that there were certain things in his tale that seemed improbable to John.

The visit to Hutoton might be able to clear up the mystery, and possibly establish the identity of the paralyzed man, and in that event it would, not be necessary to go directly to the Malosos village but await their return from Venture Island before visiting the village.

While the old man was being taken from the vessel, George went to John and inquired: "Did he ever tell you his name?"

"Oh, yes; he says it is Henry D. Retlaw."

All noticed that he stole furtive glances about him as he was being conveyed to the village.

"Were you ever here before?" asked John, as they neared the house of the magistrate.

He shook his head vigorously, and answered "No!" with a vehemence that startled John.

CHAPTER XIV

RESCUE ISLAND

ORDERS had gone out to prepare to receive the visitors in true Hutoton style, but, in truth, the people did not need any urging. The remembrance of the last visit, when the gifts were so judiciously distributed, was sufficient to assure a generous welcome.

It was out of the question to leave that night, and John felt it to be a duty to cultivate their acquaintance, and confer with the chief magistrate about starting the people at work gathering the native products.

John announced that within a month it was proposed to establish regular sailings between that port and Wonder Island, which would enable them to get supplies and ship their products each week. This intelligence was then imparted to the people, who received it with the greatest enthusiasm.

"One of the objects of the present visit is to take you with us to Wonder Island," said John, addressing the leader, "so that you may learn what we are doing, and come back prepared to instruct your people."

When this information was conveyed to him, he cast down his eyes, and said sorrowfully: "But I am a convict, like the others, and I have been condemned to stay here. If I leave this place I disobey the law of the Chief."

John smiled as he replied: "I have provided for all that. You will meet your Chief Beralsea in Unity, the Capital of Wonder Island. Hutoton is no longer the terrible place that the Chief pictured to us. He told me that your assistance was necessary to him and to the people in the colony."

This information was received in gratitude, and his consent was thus readily obtained.

After a night of feasting, preparations were made for the departure. Retlaw was brought to the place where the paralyzed man was discovered, and the leader Caramo accompanied them.

The moment Caramo saw him he turned to John and said: "I have seen that face before. I am sure he accompanied another man when on one occasion a boat load came ashore a long way to the south of us."

"How long ago was that?"

"Not more than three suns ago."

It must be understood that *three* suns meant with these people, three years by our reckoning. When Retlaw was examined he denied that he had ever been on the island before, and, of course, there was no way to discredit his statements. After all, Caramo might be mistaken in identifying him, as they were some distance apart at the time the island was supposed to have been visited by Retlaw.

At noon of the following day the *Pioneer* weighed anchor, and set sail for the southern port of the northern island, there to visit Chief Ta Babeda, of the Malolos.

While they were skimming the shore south of the village, George said: "There is one thing we have neglected. We have had so much to do lately that we haven't found time for it, but there is an opportunity now."

"What is that?" asked Harry.

"We have no name for the island to which we are now going. We might consult Ephraim. It would be hardly fair to impose any sort of name on his country," suggested George, with a good humored laugh.

Ephraim was delighted at the idea. "We must have a name, assuredly, but it never occurred to me before. The natives called it Rescudada; at any rate that is as near as I can recall the pronunciation of the word."

"Why, that is almost like Rescue."

"Why wouldn't that be a good name?" asked Ephraim. "There has been considerable rescue work here, and it is going on all the time."

"That's the name for it!" exclaimed Harry, enthusiastically.

"Suppose we notify General John and Skipper Stut that the Geographical Society has just named the island 'Rescue'?"

This important function was attended to and a note made in the log that the island discovered in south latitude 41° 37' 10", and west longitude 138° 2' 56", by the steamship *Pioneer*, was formally named *Rescue*.

Long before the village was reached the great fog horn of the *Pioneer* commenced to give the signal. The villagers knew what it meant, and the old Chief himself was at the landing place to welcome the visitors.

The boats were manned by the sailors, and the boys, together with John, Ephraim, and Caramo, were in the first boat. When Ta Babeda gazed at Ephraim, he was astounded. John had not informed him of the name of his visitor, but he continued to gaze at him in amazement.

It was evident that the old Chief was impressed with his appearance, so unlike anything he had ever before known in the form of a human being. When they arrived at the Chief's house, John awaited the proper time before making the introductions, and finally said:

"It gives me pleasure to introduce to you, the greatest enemy you have. This is Rumisses, the Cannibal Chief of the Umbolos."

The Chief was startled beyond measure. True, he knew that John and his party had come into contact with his arch enemy, but this was certainly a thrilling way to bring them together.

Ephraim walked forward and seized the Chief by the hand, and then pressed his nose against him. This was, of course, symbolic of friendship.

The Chief unhesitatingly accepted the token, but he could not remove his eyes. Here was the man, so unlike all others, and the impression of superiority, undoubtedly, was also in his mind, but Ephraim quickly relieved him of his reflections, as he said:

"Because I am so unlike you, is not due to any particular knowledge, or favor from the Great Spirit. I am a white man, like the Great Chief here, and was unfortunate to be cast among the natives in the north, and I have tried for many years to prevent the practicing of the sacrifices, and have succeeded."

"But we were told that all the people you captured from us were sacrificed."

"It is not true. They are all living with us in perfect happiness and contentment."

"Then why is it that we have been so much deceived?"

"Because the Korinos have not told you the truth. They did this because they knew no better."

"Yes; the White Chief has told us that they have deceived us, and I believe him. But I learn that my Korinos have gone to you for protection!"

"Yes; and I have shielded them, and they are now on board of the vessel in the harbor."

This information brought back all the native resentment of the old Chief. "Then he has brought them back to me!" he exclaimed in great earnestness.

"I believe he intends to do so, but it will not be until they go to Wonder Island, that marvelous place."

"Then I am content."

John heard the conversation, and soon turned it into another direction, when he informed the Chief that the Chief of Venture Island as well as the leader of the criminal colony, were to accompany them to Wonder Island, and that the company would be incomplete without him and his family.

He looked at his visitors for some time, doubting in his mind the propriety of such a course, but the entreaties of Ephraim, and the urging of Muro and Uraso, were sufficient to decide the question, and the only matter that now weighed on his mind was to determine who should accompany him in this wonderful voyage.

Ta Babeda had never summoned up sufficient courage, while the ship was formerly in port, to board the vessel. His examination of the *Pioneer* was made from the shore. Now he would step into a new world.

He little knew what wonders would be exhibited to him. The ship's band was the greatest thing he had ever known, and he never tired of its music. But when he saw the curious piano, the music box that acted as though it had life, and the other evidences of civilized arts, that were found in the cabin, he was content to make the best of it.

Like all natives, as we have already stated, he was immoderately fond of eating, and the kitchen arrangements, where food was cooked without any fuel, interested him beyond everything else. He would sit at the entrance of the kitchen for minutes at a time.

The push buttons, the snap switches for the electric lights and for the cooking apparatus, were some things which he could not understand. The little innocent wires meant nothing to him, nor could the boys, or even John, explain the phenomenon to him so he could understand it.

The boys puzzled over this, as he was insistent upon an explanation. What finally happened, the very thing the boys tried to avoid in every way, came when he touched the two wires, and formed a short circuit through his hand.

He emitted one yell, and bounded out through the door, and it was some time before he could be induced to make further investigations. His expressions

were very humorous, particularly when he insisted that the wires were mad, and didn't like him, and that they tried to pull his arms out of his shoulders.

Harry then took two of the wires and brought them together, and then pulled them apart. Each time this was done, a spark would flash. The object was to show that two wires were necessary to produce a circuit or a current.

Eventually an inspiration seemed to strike him, as he exclaimed: "They are married! Yes, I see!"

The boys laughed as they told John of the circumstance, and how utterly impossible it was to produce a current until a circuit was established.

John threw himself back and roared at the recital of the story, as told by the boys. "I think his description is a pretty good one. Perhaps he was thinking of the family circle?" and John continued to laugh as the boys tried to grasp the full meaning of his little joke.

But Ta Babeda was an apt pupil. He was far more acute than Beralsea, and there scarcely was an hour but he had one of the boys at his side trying to fathom some of the mysteries in the new world. This was in the nature of a picnic for the boys, who enjoyed his curious questions and his equally unexpected comments.

Ephraim, too, was generally present, as well as Camma, his eldest son, the latter evincing remarkable knowledge for one who had never known of the wizardry that resides in wood and stones and iron.

To Ephraim this opportunity to open the wide world to his children must have been a heaven of delight, and he reveled in every hour and even regretted that nature demanded sleep. It seemed to be better awake and seeing and feeling. Two weeks prior to this he had merely existed; now he was a man again, and living.

It was, indeed, a merry party on board of the noble ship. When the Chief, and those about him were told that the vessel was the creation of George and Harry, it was another occasion to marvel over.

"Your boys can do the same thing, and make other things just as wonderful," said John, as they were commending and petting the boys.

"Do you think so!" asked Ta Babeda, in great earnestness, and for the first time showing any curiosity or indicating any desire to give his children any advantages.

John saw that the leaven was working, as he replied: "That is why I have been so anxious to have you and your children visit our city. Your wife and daughters will find as many surprising things to interest them as the boys will discover."

The run from Rescue to Wonder Island, would occupy, ordinarily, about ten hours, of a complete day, and for that reason the start was made early in the morning. Unity was about eight miles from the sea, on a large stream, and it was desirable to make the run through the river by daylight.

But shortly before noon a wind sprang up from the west, and it increased in intensity, so that shortly after the noon hour they were compelled to make a long tack to the south. This meant a night on board ship, and a stormy one at that.

The wide, wide sea, without the sign of any land in sight was, indeed, a fascinating thing to the natives, and how they admired the native sailors with whom they readily fraternized. They watched every movement, the taking down of the sails, the changing of the angles of the great sheets, as they turned in their course, the handling of the tiller, and all the paraphernalia of sailing, for the *Pioneer* depended principally on her sailing capacity, and not on the small engine with which she was equipped.

The boys explained to Camma, that upon their return to the island a much larger engine would be installed, so that they need not depend upon the sails thereafter, but would be able then to sail directly through the wind, instead of being blown back and forth, as was now the case.

The wind did not abate until the morning was breaking, and then there was a welcome change in the direction that the storm was taking. Many of the natives were ill, and John had the satisfaction of administering the new and lately-discovered remedy, namely, Atropine.

Shortly after ten o'clock the eastern end of Wonder Island was sighted. The great mountain range was visible, and the identical headland, where the skull with the inscription was found, could be discerned through the mild haze.

There was immense curiosity on board the ship as it skirted along the shore. The Tuolo landing place was sighted, but they continued past it. Two hours afterward they could plainly see the dock which had been built for the use of Uraso's people, and an hour later Muro was just as much interested to point out to Ephraim and Ta Babeda the landing station of his tribe.

Immediately after luncheon, George, who was always on the alert, ran through the vessel, with his field glass in hand, and announced that the *Wonder*, the large steamship, which made trips to Chili, was coming up in the distance, and heading, as they were, for the mouth of Enterprise River, which flowed past the city.

All were intensely excited at the announcement, and rushed forward to get a glimpse of the great ship. As she came up the streamers began to fly from every spar and mast, and Harry ran up to Stut, and asked why the *Pioneer* did not have them out.

"But they are ready and will be flown as soon as we get nearer." As he said this the first ones were unfurled. Then the *Wonder* blew three long blasts which the *Pioneer* answered.

"They are going to let us go in first," said John. Such was, indeed, the case, for the *Wonder* slowed down, and the *Pioneer* entered the mouth of the river, for the last eight miles of the eventful cruise.

Two miles from the town both vessels began to blow signals with the fog horns, and long before the wharf was reached the people began to flock from all sides.

One little incident pleased the boys beyond all measure. On the bridge, and furiously waving his arms, and swinging an American flag was Sutoto, with his bride by his side.

"So Sutoto has been on a wedding trip to Chili?" remarked Harry.

Such was the case, as they afterwards learned. Both boys were busy explaining the sights and the locations of the different buildings to Beralsea and Ephraim, and the latter was much affected as he saw the flag floating from the tall staff in the principal square of the city.

Beralsea had seen Sutoto wave the flag from the bridge of the *Wonder*, and when he saw the same sort of emblem on the staff, he inquired of Ephraim the meaning of the curious thing. It was then explained to him that it was the magic combination of colors which their great tribe believed in, and which was always raised above them wherever they were, as a symbol that they were protected by it.

"But how can that protect the people? Is there something in it like the unseen lightning, which we have on the ship?"

"Unseen lightning, is a pretty good name, coming from a savage," remarked Harry in an undertone.

"No; not in that way," answered Ephraim, "but whenever people see it, wherever they may be, they know that the tribe is great enough to give protection to any one who may try to injure any member of our tribe."

"The White Chief has told me that there are many islands and countries, and that the world is round, and is peopled by many different tribes. Do the people everywhere know that 'flag,' as you call it?"

"Yes; in every part of the world."

"Who are those two men standing there alone?" asked Ta Babeda.

"I do not know," responded Ephraim. "This is the first time I have been here. The boys will know."

"That," answered George, "is the Professor,—that is, the man with a white beard and hair. The large man by his side is Beralsea, the Chief of the tribe on Venture Island."

Ephraim looked at Ta Babeda for a moment, with an amused smile, and then remarked: "He is almost as large as you are."

The *Wonder* was the first to get her cables to the dock, and as she swung against the wharf, and the gang plank was fixed in place, the first ones to spring ashore were Sutoto and Cinda, the latter of whom rushed to her father's outstretched arms, and then to her mother and the other members of the family.

The boys did not know how or where to extend the first greetings. There was Sutoto and Lolo, and the dear old Professor, who considerately kept in the background, but the boys insisted on giving him the first greeting.

CHAPTER XV

THE RETURN TO WONDER ISLAND

"THAT was an awfully sly thing to do, as soon as our backs were turned," said George, as Sutoto and Cinda were finally free from the vigorous greetings.

"What is that?" asked Cinda.

"To run away without giving us notice!"

"But we have seen the great wide world, and it is wonderful, and I can never tell the people here how grand it is."

And then the boys looked at Cinda, and when they saw the latest fashions displayed, the prettiest gown, the neatest slippers, and the stunning hat they took off their caps, and made a neat bow in recognition of that feminine touch of character which so readily adapts the sex for acquiring the latest fashions wherever they may be.

Every one was wild with excitement. "There is Blakely!" shouted Harry. "Hurrah! old boy! We have the place for you to visit, as soon as possible. The finest island you ever saw, and the people all ready for business."

"My hands are full now; we must have another ship. Look at the *Wonder*; she is so full of goods that we are more than eight hours behind time. But I am arranging for another steamer."

"Too bad that we are finding more islands than you can handle," responded George; "I suppose we shall have to find another manager?"

"Or several assistants," said Blakely.

"What are all these men here for?" asked Harry. "Why the whole island must have come to town."

"Well, we have had to send for all the spare men from the different tribes. Fifty of the Tuolos just came in this morning, and thirty of the Illyas arrived yesterday, with their families. The *Wonder* must be unloaded, and start back again before six this evening. But what did you find that looks as good as Venture Island?"

"Rescue Island; a dandy place, and much bigger than Venture Island. And what do you think? We found a chief there who is a white man," remarked George.

"A white man? Where is he from?"

"Massachusetts; and he is humpbacked, but as bright as can be."

"I saw him, did I not? He was on the *Pioneer*?"

"Yes; there he is with Ta Babeda."

"Ta what?"

"That's the Chief's name who owned the other tribe on Rescue Island. Isn't he an immense fellow? But he is a brick; I can tell you. Come over and I'll introduce you," and Harry pulled Blakely over while the latter resisted, as the men were constantly besieging Blakely for orders.

"Never mind the work now. Get acquainted with the *big* men first," and the Professor laughed as he saw the boys forcibly tug at Blakely and haul him over to the group.

"This is one of the big men we have on the island," said Harry to Ta Babeda, and the latter looked at Blakely for a moment, and began to smile, for while Blakely was chunky he was not at all large, if the Chief might be taken as a standard.

He took Ta Babeda's hand, and welcomed him most heartily, and then turned to Ephraim, and also extended a greeting.

"This is the man who does all the business," said Harry, "and he is going to make you a visit." At this point they were interrupted.

"Shall we store all the pineapples aft," said a man hurriedly.

"No; put them amidship," he answered.

"We have no crates for the vegetables," said another.

"Never mind, put them in the large boxes, and they can be crated on the way."

"Some more men have just come; what shall we put them at?" was the report of another, and so from one to the other, Blakely was ever ready with a prompt answer.

The Chiefs and Ephraim watched and wondered at Blakely and his constant readiness to entertain them, meanwhile giving orders to hundreds of the workers who were crowding about. It was an object lesson of what business

meant, and the boys felt proud and happy to see the great ability which he displayed.

But what a happy day it was for the Professor. He and John were in close conference, after the formal introductions were over. "There is something brewing," said George as he nudged Harry, and cast a glance toward the place where they stood in earnest conversation.

"I do believe John is telling him about the copper box; and by the way, he has never spoken about that since we took it out of the cave. That is just what he is doing; see, he is indicating the size of it."

Harry laughed, as he answered: "I am satisfied they will not do anything rash, without consulting us," and George laughed at Harry's view of the case.

They had been absent from the island a little over a month. During their absence the new hotel was completed and was now in running order. This became the headquarters for the visitors. While it was only two stories in height, it contained nearly a hundred rooms, and the utmost effort was made to make all of them comfortable.

The boys had their own rooms, and could not be induced to give them up. John and the Professor also maintained their old rooms, which were most comfortable, and attached to the Professor's apartments was a large room where the people came daily to see him and consult about their many wants.

He never failed to see them. It mattered not who called, it was unvarying custom to greet all alike. The affection for him in the minds of the people grew stronger day by day.

There were now five of the Chiefs on Wonder Island permanent residents in Unity. A great change had come over the feelings of the people with respect to the ownership of land. When the town was laid out, and the people began to flock to the place, attracted by its many advantages, it began to look for a time as though the different Chiefs soon would find themselves without subjects.

In addition to this the Professor recognized that too many of the people were expecting to be put to work in the city, and this would cause agriculture to be abandoned, whereas it was obvious that they must depend upon the soil for sustenance.

John and the Professor therefore developed a plan which would be the means of keeping the people in their own sections, or, at least, encourage them to till the ground.

The Chiefs in Wonder Island owned the soil. Their people reserved to themselves the right to hunt and to gather the fruits and nuts necessary to sustain life. But they had no right whatever, independently of the Chiefs.

The first step, therefore, was to gain the consent of these rulers to a division of the land, so that all their people might have farms. Uraso and Muro were the first to agree to the plan, and it was quickly followed by all except the Tuolos and the Illyas.

The Chiefs themselves, under this plan, were to receive one quarter of the acreage, and of the residue, one-third was to be turned into what was called a state fund, to be used for schools and for administrative purposes, while the balance was to be given to the people, who were to select their own land.

For the purpose of enabling proper deeds to be made, it was necessary to make a survey of the islands, and this had been completed six months previously, so that many of the people who now understood that the lands selected belonged to them, and could not be taken from them without their consent, were only too happy to consent to remain on their own land.

But here another problem presented itself. It was desirable that the people should build homes on these farms, and Blakely and John evolved the plan to provide certain quantities of lumber, at a low price, to be paid for from the products of the land. This had a most stimulating effect, and applications were coming in from every quarter. As a result small saw mills were put up in the territorial limits of each of the tribes, so that it was an easy matter for the people to get the lumber near home.

But that which taxed the energies of Blakely most, was to provide the farming implements and the seed and instruction necessary to start them on the way. As it was impossible to provide all the tools and implements required for this purpose, Blakely had recourse to the States, and by inserting a few advertisements in the agricultural papers throughout our country, it was not long before the implements were forthcoming, all of which were paid for from the reserve fund which had been provided.

And now another thing of the utmost importance happened. It was noised about from Maine to California that there was an immense opportunity to make money in the now well-known Wonder Island. Every return trip of the *Wonder* from the nearest South American port, brought Americans, with

funds to invest in plantations and in setting out coffee trees and banana groves.

Many Americans came from the great ranches of South America, particularly Brazil, which furnishes full three-fourths of all the coffee of commerce. These men went through the islands and began the barter for the lands.

At first this was encouraged, but it was soon discovered that the shrewd, and, more frequently than otherwise, the unscrupulous traders were cheating the unsophisticated people, so that the Professor had to take a firm hand, and declare that no transfers would be made until the sales had been investigated.

This made the prices of lands go up by leaps and bounds, and the Professor told the people that they should not sell their holdings, as it would be much better for them to own and till the farms than to sell them and then work for the owners.

All this tended to make the people appreciate that they really owned something—that they had wealth and power within their grasp. Then began, or rather was carried out more systematically, the founding of schools, and by many means the parents themselves were induced to attend the schools.

All were taught English. With the large funds that the state had obtained in selling a portion of the state lands, the Professor sent for teachers from the United States, and these came prepared to take up the work all over the island.

The most interested workers were the Korinos, as they were called on Rescue Island, and Krishnos on Wonder Island. The Professor's first work, after the conquest of the savages, was to educate those people for teaching, and in this they were found to be very efficient workers.

The Korinos brought from Rescue were placed under the tuition of the Krishnos, and it was surprising to see how happily they regarded their lot, and what progress they made after they understood what was required.

Although we have not a full account of all the products shipped from Wonder Island during the first six months, it might be stated that during the last thirty days, the shipments from the port of Unity, comprised 60,000 pounds of coffee, eighteen tons of bananas, and six hundred quintals of spices, besides over four hundred tons of fibres, of which jute formed one-half.

It is estimated that within another year, when many of the large plantations should be ready to yield their products, that amount would be increased to such an extent that several additional ships would be necessary to carry the tonnage.

The foregoing is particularly instanced to show what John could point out to the Chiefs who were now their guests, and to impress upon them the necessity and value of adopting such a land system as they had established.

Ephraim readily understood and approved of the plan, but it was not so easy for Ta Babeda, and Beralsea. At the quiet suggestion of John the opportunity was made whereby they were constantly thrown into contact with the resident chiefs. Within a week they accepted the suggestions and a half dozen surveyors were commissioned to go to the islands and take up the work of surveying the lands, and making records, which were to be put into such form that the Chiefs would understand them.

One day Ephraim, in conversation with John said: "I want my boys to remain with you until they receive their education. I see that the opportunities for work are unlimited, and I would also like to send over a number of young men for the same purpose."

"Your decision pleases us immensely," said John, "and I have been wondering why your daughter would not also like to remain for a time, as there is much she can learn that will be of great help to you."

Ephraim was silent for a while, while he looked at John, and he finally answered: "That means my wife will remain here also. But that has my hearty consent. It will be for their good, and for the good of my people."

It was not long before Ta Babeda heard of Ephraim's decision, and he adapted the same course to the delight of his children. As for Beralsea, his favorite daughter was already the wife of the Chief Sutoto, of the Berees, and it was certain that she would remain in Unity, so that there was no difficulty in getting his consent to sending his children and others who would carry on the work of education.

But the boys had not, in the meantime, forgotten their factory. The old water wheel was still there. Money could not purchase it, and they would not permit its removal. It was the same old crude wheel built nearly three years before at the Cataract, at the other end of the island, not more than two miles from the rocky shore where the sea gave them up.

After the return there had been so much to see and to learn, about the new developments, and the visitors required so much attention that the boys quite

forgot the copper box, and to inquire about the condition of the paralyzed man who was found at Hutoton.

"The Professor has just told me," remarked John, "that the old man is improving, and hopes that within another month he will be able to talk."

"Has he any idea of what his name is?"

"Not in the least. He keeps mumbling something about *the triangle*, or something of that kind, but that is, of course, unintelligible."

"I understand Retlaw is improving, also?"

"Yes; we have thought of bringing the two men together, as soon as the paralytic is so improved that he can talk."

"I have often wondered what kind of a disease paralysis is?" inquired Harry.

"Paralysis is not a disease of itself. It is merely a sign of some disorder of the nervous system. It may be shown by complete disability on one side of the body, or in some particular portion, and only certain sets of nerves may be affected."

"But what seems so singular is, that he is not only unable to speak but he cannot move about."

"The form of paralysis, which affects the memory, is called *dementia paralytica*, and attacks the brain, while some portion of the body also may be affected."

"Isn't it curable?"

"There is little hope for a permanent cure. If the attack should come on suddenly it is the most dangerous. Where it seems to approach gradually, there is more likelihood of being able to check it."

"In what way is there an improvement in the old man?"

"So far as the bodily ailment is concerned he is gaining. When he was brought back he was unable to utter a single word, nor could he move himself in any way, except with one arm, and that only to a small degree. Now he is able to shuffle along, across the room, and sometimes tries to say something, which is not distinct. The only thing which thus far seems intelligible is the word *triangle*, as I have stated."

"Harry spoke about the copper box this morning. Have you opened it yet?" asked George.

"Oh, no! I wouldn't think of doing it unless you were present. The Professor and I have had several talks about it, but we have all been so busy that the matter has been deferred from time to time. I hope we shall be able to get at it to-night."

While thus engaged in conversation the Professor appeared, smiling and happy. The boys greeted him affectionately, as was their custom always.

"Do you want to make a visit with me?" he asked.

"Yes; where?" asked George.

"We will go out on B Street first," he answered.

Together they passed the large school house, and crossed the open square, and entered the most beautiful of all the streets, the one laid out with rows of trees along the curbs, and flower beds along the middle portion of the driveway.

"Can you guess where we are going?" asked the Professor.

"No."

"Do you see the newly-painted house to the right?"

"Is that where Sutoto lives?"

"Yes; there is Cinda. Isn't she happy, though?"

They went in and were accorded a happy welcome. Her father, the Chief, Beralsea, and her mother, Minda, were there, but Sutoto was absent.

"And where is the bridegroom?" asked the Professor.

"He is in the yard somewhere. I will call him." And she tripped out the steps, merry as a lark.

Sutoto came in, and the boys simply shouted at his appearance. He was covered with dirt and grease, and made no great effort to conceal the fact.

"And what have you been up to?" asked George.

"Come out and I will show you."

In the little "garage," if it might be so termed, was an auto, one which Sutoto had purchased and brought back with him on his wedding trip. "I was going to send for you," he said, addressing Harry, "because I have been having trouble with the carbureter."

CHAPTER XVI

THE SAVAGES AT UNITY

THE boys were simply wild with delight, and George commenced to laugh immoderately, after viewing the brightly-polished machine.

"What is the matter? Anything wrong? Is it upside down?" asked Sutoto.

"No; I was just thinking how funny it seems that one of the wild savages of the island should be the first to import an automobile."

Sutoto didn't in the least mind this allusion to his former condition, but the boys were the only ones who dared to jest with him in this manner. He joined in the laugh, but quickly replied:

"But I am not the only one favored in this way."

"Why not?"

"I know some other people who are indulging in pleasure cars also."

"Who is that?"

"Well, Blakely has one, a fine little car he calls a 'runabout.'"

"He never said anything about it. Then he brought one over for John, and another for the Professor, but you must keep quiet; they are not to know anything about it."

"Then there are two more machines down there that have queer names on them, because the fellows themselves are peculiar, and are awfully civilized," said Sutoto, with a faint attempt at a smile.

Harry laid down the wrench and turned to Sutoto. "What are the names?" he asked, for the first time interested.

"On one it says 'Mayfield,' and 'Crandall' on the other." And Sutoto said this without cracking a smile, or indicating that he really knew who the names applied to.

Probably, no one on the island, at least among the natives, really knew the boys by any other designation than George and Harry. The surnames were of no use. Sutoto was simply "Sutoto," and no more, and so with Uraso and Muro.

The Professor and the old Chief heard the hilarity, and were soon out of the house, and although the boys and Sutoto tried to push the machine behind the garage, they were too late for the Professor's quick eye.

He laughed when he saw the commotion. "It is all right; if I were not so old, I would get one myself."

"That's just the time you need it," said Harry. "By the way," he continued, "I will bring it around to your place this afternoon."

"Bring what?" asked the Professor.

"Your car; of course." And Sutoto and the boys laughed at the Professor's discomfiture.

"I thought there was some job about to be put up on me. I wondered why Blakely tried to keep me out of the warehouse yesterday."

But while this merry scene was taking place, five new machines were coming along B Street, with Blakely in the first one, and a competent chauffeur in each of the others.

"The first is yours, Harry, and the next one, with the red body is yours, George," said Blakely. "I thought we should surprise you."

"Why, there is John, too!" exclaimed Sutoto.

"Yes; he is in his car; he was greatly surprised. But the Professor's car is a neat one; don't you think so?"

The boys had no ears for any one or for anything. Each was a forty-horse power roadster, while the Professor's car had a five-passenger body, was handsomely upholstered, and equipped with particularly easy-riding springs. John's machine was equally well built, and after the boys had made a full examination of their own treasures, they investigated the other cars, and marveled at their beauty and appearance of comfort.

The procession of the machines naturally attracted the people who came from all directions to witness the wonder wagons which ran by themselves. They crowded around, and listened to every comment. The old Chief was the one most excited at the strange things.

Neither Sutoto nor Cinda had informed them of the autos, because it was intended to have quite a surprise party, and it was afterwards learned that Blakely and Sutoto had planned to give all of them a surprise. The fact that

the Professor and the boys, having gone to Sutoto that morning, were absent from their homes, precipitated to disclosure, so that John was found and together they went to Sutoto's house.

You may be sure that it did not take the boys long to learn the mysteries of the machines, and they were with Sutoto, until he got the hang of the motor, and could spin along as fast as any of them.

The old Chief was finally induced to get into the Professor's machine, and the latter instructed the driver to proceed slowly. Minda, who was with them, was the braver of the two, by far. The speed was about six miles an hour, at which the Chief marveled.

Then, gradually, the driver speeded up, until they were making a comfortable speed of fifteen miles an hour. As confidence increased the pleasure grew stronger, and before they returned on the first trip he was as determined as could be to have one for his own use.

Blakely took note of his wish, and said: "I shall see to it that on the return trip one of the machines will be shipped to you, but it will be two weeks before the *Wonder* comes in."

From that day on Sutoto had his hands full entertaining the Chief, but the boys relieved him of much of this, by taking him from place to place, where he saw the work going on in all parts of the beautiful country, and witnessed the planting of the groves, the gathering of the crops, and the way in which the produce was handled at the wharf.

Sutoto's home was a beautiful structure of five rooms, all nicely furnished, the gift of the Professor. The boys enjoyed the visits there. Sutoto was always a boy to them, and Cinda a happy bride,—and a woman of whom any one might be proud.

When Beralsea, her father, decided that his children must remain and attend the schools there, the adjoining cottage was prepared for them, and Minda consented to stay, but Beralsea, who had now partaken of the commercial instincts, under the tutelage of Blakely, was determined to return at once and revolutionize the condition of affairs in Venture Island.

That day he and Ta Babeda had a long conversation, and together they visited John and Ephraim, and then called in Blakely. The boys were present, of course, and it then turned out that they had agreed upon a plan to start the agricultural work in the two islands conjointly, and the only question which remained was to take care of the management of the work.

Both of the Chiefs declared that they did not possess the qualifications to direct the work, and Ephraim pleaded age as the reason why it would be impossible to undertake the burdens.

"I have an idea," he said, "that the best solution would be to make George and Harry the managers for the islands. I have been with the boys for some time, and see what they are capable of, and every one would be glad to work under them."

The boys were, of course, somewhat confused at the encomium, and the Professor came to their rescue. "These are my boys," he said. "I have known them ever since they came to the island. They have been with me under every condition of service. We have had hours and days of pleasure, and of trials, such as few have undergone, and always, whatever the circumstances, they have been manly, and never gave up, although sometimes things seemed hopeless.

"You have seen how, through their ingenuity, they have built the water wheel, the mills and the factories. Fortune has been kind to them; they do not need the money that may come to them, as they have found riches here, far greater than you know, but they have loved the work, for the pleasure it has brought them, and it is for them to decide."

"Harry and I have talked about these things many times," answered George. "When we first came to the island, we had nothing. For our own preservation we set about to better our condition, began to build the things necessary to maintain life, and to protect ourselves.

"What at first was a necessity, later became a pleasure, because we could see, day after day, how we built the shop and the machinery out of the crude things; it would be hard to leave that work now."

Harry approvingly nodded his head, as he responded: "I consider it a pleasure to do anything which would help the people here. George and I feel that it would be wrong to leave them, so long as we can be of service to them.

"The money we have will not make us happy; that I know, unless we can use it to do some good. And it is so with our time, also. I am as willing to give that as money, because we have been amply rewarded and now our duty is to the people here."

As a result of the conference it was agreed that George and Harry should

take up the management of the affairs on Venture and Rescue Islands, they to decide which should be the particular sphere of each.

The Chiefs were immensely pleased at this arrangement, and the first steps were taken to put their plans into execution.

John advised them that they should decide which island each would take, and then each should cultivate the acquaintance of the young men that the Chiefs should select, so that the administrative functions could be instilled into them, and that they might be taught the business qualifications necessary.

George laughingly remarked that as the Chief Beralsea had so accommodatingly captured him, when they first arrived on the island, he thought that their intimate acquaintance, which was so long prior to Harry's should decide the matter in his favor, by taking Venture Island.

"That suits me all right. I have one advantage over you on Rescue Island; and that is the caves. You haven't even an excuse for a cave."

"But I have Hutoton, that terrible place where the criminals live," retorted George, with a laugh.

"And that reminds me; what about the copper box?"

The boys wended their way to the Professor, and were delighted to find John there. "Before we go we want to have the copper box opened," remarked Harry.

"I have just brought it around, in the machine," said John, as he noticed the boys peering at it through the window.

"What is that in the package lying on the box?"

"Can't you guess?"

"No."

"Have you forgotten the skull with the inscription on it?"

"Do you mean the skull we found on the headland at the eastern end of the island?"

"Yes."

"Why, what is that for? Do you think it has anything to do with the box?"

"Probably not; but I was curious to examine it further in view of the similarity of the chart and the inscription."

The boys could not possibly understand what was meant by such a reference. While they were talking the Professor entered the room, and remarked, "I have just come from the old fellow, and his reason is returning under the treatment, and he is also better physically."

"Do you mean the paralytic?"

"Yes; but there is one thing which is singular, and that is the constant muttering of the word *triangle*. This morning I could plainly distinguish several other words, such as 'of' and 'three,' and 'very well,' and parts of other words, showing that in time, if his improvement continues, we may get more information."

"I have an idea," hurriedly shouted George as he broke for the door. "Wait for me," he said, as he turned around and cast a glance back into the room. "I will be back at once," were the last words they heard.

John laughed at George's precipitous flight. "I suppose he has just thought of something that bears on the case. In the meantime, and while George is away, you, Harry, might get a hammer and a cold chisel. We may have to cut the top off."

Harry rushed out and taking John's machine was quickly at the shop, where he secured a hammer and several cold chisels capable of cutting the copper.

When he returned George was there, and was unfolding the paper scrap which they found below the skull. "Probably, this will explain the triangle," said George, as he pointed to the V-shaped mark. "The upper part of it is very likely worn away, so that we cannot see it."

John smiled at the suggestion as he took the paper and carefully examined it. "Your view may be correct," he responded.

"That looks like a suggestion of a line," said Harry, pointing to a faint scratch near the upper margin.

The Professor's messenger came in hurriedly, and announced that the paralytic had sent for him. "I will return by the time the box is opened," said the Professor, as he hurriedly went out of the door.

"Now for the box," said Harry. The slitting chisel was applied, and he dextrously cut along the top, under the directions of John.

"Direct the chisel downwardly, to see if there is any seam to be found along the side," directed John.

"Yes; here is the place where the top was put on," shouted Harry.

"Why, it has been soldered," said George. "Well, that means business."

It was evident that the soldering was effectively done, because the solder had run entirely through the seam, and it was really sweated on. The copper used was about an eighth of an inch thick, and the soft and ductile character showed that it was pure metal.

"Be very careful as you get around so as not to disturb the contents, by the falling of the lid," said John.

It still adhered at various places, and this was carefully cut away by one of the thin chisels, and the lid finally raised at one corner, sufficiently to disclose a portion of the contents, which appeared to be round and white, and resting near the center of the space.

All caught a glimpse of it, and involuntarily started back in surprise. It was a skull, the counterpart of the one lying on the table which contained the inscription.

"Open it wide," said John in a peculiar voice, and as he did so the Professor rushed in and announced that the paralytic had recovered speech, and he had ordered him to be brought in.

While the Professor was saying this, John was slowly raising the lid, and by a quick motion tore it away, and the Professor was actually taken aback at the sight before him. He gazed for a moment, and then muttered: "And the same inscription too!"

All looked toward it in amazement, and while puzzling over its meaning, the paralytic was helped in by two attendants. He came forward, saw the two skulls, and before either could prevent it he collapsed and fell to the floor, apparently lifeless.

He was gathered up and placed on a couch, and restoratives applied by the Professor. He lay thus in a stupor for more than a half hour, but soon returning consciousness began to manifest itself, and when he opened his eyes, and glanced about, his lips began to move. Here the Professor held up a warning hand, which he seemed to heed, for he immediately closed his eyes, and was soon asleep, as his breathing became regular, and the pulse began to act normally.

"There must be no more agitation now," said the Professor. "We can take the box to the adjoining room." This was done, and John carefully lifted the skull from its resting place, bringing with it a mass of other material, which looked like brown or discolored parchment.

The skulls were placed side by side. They were singularly alike, the inscription of the one found on the headland, was on the left side, and the like figures of the one taken from the box were on the right side.

"That is a singular thing," said Harry.

"So it is," answered John, "but it doubtless has a meaning," he continued.

Beneath the box, and attached to the wrappings, was a mass of material which John eagerly seized, and began to unwrap, while the Professor interestedly looked on. There was not the first sign of any treasure in the box, and when the several folds of the parchment were unrolled, the boys could see the hieroglyphics that the Professor and John so eagerly scanned.

"Yes, yes, I knew you would come back," said the man in the adjoining room, and John dropped the parchment and followed the Professor into the room, where they saw the old man sitting on the couch and staring about with an inquiring countenance.

"What is your name?" said the Professor.

He did not answer at first but looked at John and the Professor in amazement.

"Why do you ask?" he then muttered, without changing his countenance. "I have told you over and over," he continued.

"Do you know where you are?" asked John.

"Certainly. You may ask Walter about that."

"Walter? Do you know Walter?" asked George, almost involuntarily.

He smiled and nodded his head. "He is here. I saw him yesterday. I wish he would explain." Then he dropped back on the couch and remained motionless.

The effort to arouse him was useless, and the Professor advised patience. There was something so peculiar about the whole situation that it fascinated the boys. What did this man know about Walter? Possibly, through him the great mystery, that commenced with the note in the seat of their boat, would be explained.

After they came back to the island, Retlaw rapidly recovered, and was frequently found wandering around the town. On several occasions he called on the Professor. To the surprise of all he appeared at this time, surprised to

find John and the boys present, and appeared to be terribly startled on seeing the two skulls.

The moment he saw the paralytic, he became agitated, and started for the door. John barred the way, and said: "Do you know that man?"

In a hesitating voice, he answered: "Yes; I know him well. Where did you find him?" and notwithstanding he saw the quiet figure he drew back with an expression of fear and hesitancy.

George slyly drew forth the Walter note, referred to in the previous volume, "Adventures on Strange Islands," and handed it to John. The latter seized it and said: "Did you ever see this?"

He grasped the paper, and answered: "Where did you get this? Did he have it?"

"No," replied the Professor; "we found it in a recess at the end of a seat in our boat,—the one we made on this island, three years ago."

"I do not know how it could have gotten there. It was written to Clifford,—"

"John B. Clifford?" asked Harry in excitement.

Retlaw turned, when he heard Harry. "Yes," was the hesitating answer.

"Do you know Walter?" asked John.

He did not reply, but glanced at all of them, and while doing so Harry came forward, and said: "Isn't your name Walter?"

The man started back and held up his hand: "What makes you think so?" he asked in alarm.

"Because *Retlaw* reversed, spells Walter," answered Harry.

It was time for the Professor to show surprise at the acuteness of Harry's conclusions. John took the cue at once. "Why are you trying to deceive us?"

He dropped his eyes, and was silent, and then he slowly turned to the quiet man.

John noticed the movement. "Who was the man tied to the vessel and wrecked on the island to the south of us?"

This question by John produced an added agitation in the department of the man. He was visibly affected by the question, but there was no reply.

"As you do not feel disposed to answer our questions we must detain or keep you in custody until Clifford recovers," said John, and motioning to the boys, they gathered around him, and called in the attendants and ordered the men to take charge of him.

As they were about to pass out the door, Ephraim ascended the steps and was about to pass into the open door. He caught sight of the curious group, and when his eye alighted on the figure on the couch, he drew back for a moment, while his gaze remained fixed.

Then he calmly moved forward, slowly shaking his head from side to side, and muttered: "That looks like Clifford, my companion on the ship, and the one who aided me to gain a foothold on the spar. How did he come here?"

"That is the man we found at Hutoton," said John. "But do you know this man?" he asked, pointing to Walter.

Ephraim turned, and scrutinized his face. "No, I have never seen him, to my knowledge."

Walter moved back with a sigh of relief, while John and the Professor looked at each other with puzzled expressions.

"Then the man we found tied to the boat was not Clifford!" exclaimed George.

John looked at Walter, and he saw him grow pale.

"Who was the man," he asked, in a threatening tone, as he approached Walter. The latter hesitated. "We are determined to ferret out this matter, and it will be to your advantage to tell us the whole story, for we shall find it out sooner or later."

"I must have time to think," he answered, as he put his hands to his head, and turned to Clifford.

"You may have until to-morrow, but in the meantime, we shall see to it that you are kept within our sight," responded John, as he motioned to the men to take him away.

As he left the door Harry said: "Why do you suppose he wanted time?"

John looked at Clifford for a moment, and answered: "Evidently, he had hopes that Clifford would not survive."

CHAPTER XVII

UNRAVELING THE MYSTERIES

At the suggestion of the Professor, Clifford was left in quiet, while John and the boys deferred their further attempts to explore the mysterious occurrences that were looming up.

They canvassed every phase of the situation, in the hope that some explanation might be offered. What could have been the relations of Walter and Clifford, and who was the man that met his death in the boat at Venture Island?

Why had the sight of the copper box and the skulls so agitated Walter? The latter, apparently, knew of the missive, which was, evidently, written by him, but why did he not give an outright answer concerning it when John asked him point blank?

It did not take the boys long to inform Sutoto of the development and the mystery concerning the two men. The old Chief, Beralsea, was taken over to see Walter, in order to identify him if possible, and then Harry suggested that Ta Babeda might know something of his early history, as Walter was found a prisoner at his village when John and the boys arrived there.

Beralsea had never seen nor heard of him, and Ta Babeda gave the following account of his capture: "About three years previously several men, of whom Walter was one, arrived at the island, on a small boat, something like the one carried by the *Pioneer*, and which was used at the landing."

(It should be stated that one of the boats, and probably, the one referred to, was the identical lifeboat, No. 3, which the boys had fitted up for use on the *Pioneer*.)

"This boat was kept by them at the inlet directly east of the cave where the Korinos were lodged. I did not know anything of this for some time, but the Korinos learned of the presence of the men, and my warriors were set to watch the men. A few days afterwards, another boat, much smaller, appeared with two men, but from all appearances they were a different party, and after they had a conference, it appeared as though there was trouble between the different parties."

"We were about to close in on them, when at the height of their quarrel, but they caught sight of us, and joined in resisting the attack against us. With the guns they had we were no match for them, so we had to retire to the village.

"The next morning we learned that they had gone, and on searching the shore found something with marks on it, that had no meaning to us so it was destroyed."

"Was it something like this?" asked Harry, handing him a sketch.

The Chief studied it for a few moments, and answered: "It seems to me it was like that. The marks were something like these," and he pointed to the crosses.

Harry had made the identical marking which were on the two skulls, which, it will be remembered, showed the characters + V, and below these three X X X, followed by a star.

"I suspected as much," said John. "They were, quite possibly, on the same quest. But where did they get the information?" And he turned to the Professor for a possible explanation.

The latter was now thoroughly interested. "Unless Walter chooses to tell, the matter may not be solved, unless Clifford recovers, and even though he should regain his physical powers, the mind may have relapsed into its late condition."

By agreement John and the boys remained at the Professor's home that night, awaiting symptoms of the patient's disease, and during the night they recounted over and over again the adventures they had undergone, and the experiences with the natives.

They conversed about the new enterprise into which they were to embark, and the Professor congratulated them on the decision to remain and enter the commercial, or business field. "After all," he said, "there is nothing which so broadens a man as to have an occupation, and give to that business the energies of his mind."

"Of course, there are many things that the natives must learn, but they are so willing to work, that it is a pleasure to show them," said Harry. "The best men we have had in the shops were the common natives, but there is one thing that has always been troublesome, and that is to give them different names."

"That is just what I had in mind for some time," added George. "It didn't make much difference where there were only a few,—a hundred or so, but now, when we have three hundred or more it is rather confusing to have a dozen or more *Lolos*, and as many more *Walbes*, and names like that."

"It might be a good idea to suggest that each one have a sort of surname, so that there will be no difficulty of that kind hereafter," suggested John.

"A family name would be the proper thing," added the Professor.

"For my part, I don't see how people can get along without it," remarked George.

"But it has not always been the custom to have surnames, or family names," suggested the Professor.

"But the Romans did," exclaimed George.

"Yes, they had three names: the first was the prenomen, which was a distinctive mark of the individual; then the nomen, or the name of the clan; and third, the cognomen, which was the family name. The first name was usually written with a capital letter only, like M. Thus, M. Tullius Cicero."

"Well, that is the first time it ever occurred to me that the Romans parted their names in the middle," said George, as he smiled at the allusion.

"The ancient Greeks, with the exception of a few of the leading families in Athens and Sparta, had only a single name. Among the German and Celtic nations each individual had only one name, and that was also true of the ancient Hebrews; the names Abraham, David, Aaron and the others were used singly, and this was also the case in Egypt, Syria and Persia, and throughout all of Western Asia."

"But it has never been so in England, has it?" asked Harry.

"During the entire period that England was under the dominion of the Saxons, the single name was prevalent. But that was changed later when feudalism was established and the different lords began to gather their vassals, and to register them."

"But what is the principle on which the names are built?"

"In various ways; at first they distinguished father and son by adding the word *son* to the father's name. If he was of German descent *sohn* would be added; if of Danish origin, the word *sen*, so that the son's name in either case would be *Williamson*, or *Andersohn*, or *Thorwaldsen*, or a given name with the designation *son* added."

"But how about the many other names, and those coming after the second generation?"

"They had to be named after the locality, like John *Brook*, or David *Hill*, or something of that kind, even to an occupation, like the *Smiths*, or the *Fishers*, as well as qualifications, such as *Wise* and *Good* were adopted as surnames."

Every hour Clifford's condition was noted, and before morning his pulse began to beat with greater regularity, and all felt that it would be well to take a nap, to prepare for what they knew must be an interesting, if not exciting chapter, to round out their adventures, and to lay bare the few mysteries which yet remained to be solved.

Sutoto came to the Professor's house quite early, with news from Blakely that Walter had disappeared. He had learned of the imprisonment and that Walter was placed in the regular lock-up, where a few recalcitrants were confined.

How he escaped was not known. True, not much of a guard was maintained, and the natives had no idea that the prisoner was of more than ordinary importance.

John was very much disappointed, but he felt that he alone was to blame, because in the anxiety for Clifford he had entirely overlooked the precaution necessary. He went down to the jail, with the boys, and learned from the inmates that when the man was brought in he appeared to be unconcerned, and immediately selected his sleeping quarters, and that was the last they knew of him.

As the boys were going to their own rooms, a messenger came from the Professor that Clifford was awake, and appeared to be rational, and was now partaking of food. After breakfast they hurried over to the Professor, and found John there smiling.

"I have had a little talk with him."

"What does he say?"

"I have not yet questioned him."

Clifford looked at the boys curiously. "Are you the boys that Mr. Varney spoke about?"

"I suppose we are," said Harry.

"His story interested me very much. I learn that you have a regular manufacturing town here, and that you built all these things without any outside help, before you communicated with the outside world."

"Yes; and we had a glorious time doing it, too, but we owe everything to the Professor and John."

"That is really commendable to hear you say so. But you said, Mr. Varney, that Walter told you Clifford limped, and it was on account of this peculiarity you were led to believe that the dead man on Venture Island was Clifford?"

"One of the three men with Walter, was lame."

"Then it must have been one of his party that was murdered?"

"But Walter was explicit to tell us that one of your legs was shorter than the other. I early learned that such was not the case, and that is what confused me in identifying you. But there is also another thing which I could not understand."

"What is that?"

"Ephraim Wilmar."

"Stop! stop!" almost shouted Clifford. "You said *Ephraim Wilmar*. Do you know him?"

"Know him? He is here on the island."

"When did he come? Where is he?"

"He lives on an island north of the place we found you, and is Chief of a tribe there."

"Chief of a tribe!" he exclaimed. "An island to the north,—the *triangle*,"—and the boys rose from their seats in the excitement.

"Where is Walter's letter?—Quick," said Harry.

George fumbled in his pockets with eagerness. "Is that the triangle?" eagerly questioned Harry.

"Yes, yes; there it is again. The three islands, and the arrow."

"But what does the star mean,—the star that follows, as you see?"

"That,—that is to show the position of the three islands."

"Position of the three islands? What islands? and how does it tell the positions?" George was fairly frantic now.

"There must be three islands, and one of them was the one I was on when you found me, and one is here, because Mr. Varney told me about this one, and then there is another, which you said was to the north of,—of—"

"Hutoton," said John.

"Yes; Hutoton. But the positions! Yes; you will understand! One point is the Southern Cross, near the South polar Circle, the second point is the fixed star Antares, and the third is the fixed star Spica, which, together form a perfect triangle, one limb of which passes through a cluster of stars called the Compasses."

"But what has that to do with the locations of the three islands?"

"They are situated, with relation to each other, exactly the same as the three stars are placed in the heavens."

"What was the object of the three crosses before the star?"

"The three represented thirty."

"Thirty what?"

"Leagues."

"And the arrow?"

"The direction from Spica."

"Why from Spica?"

"Because that star is the one which represents the island on which this particular chart happens to be found."

"Do you mean that a similar chart will be found on each island?"

"No; on only two of them."

The boys were astounded at this information. John and the Professor remained quiet while the boys thus questioned Clifford.

John interrupted to inquire why there were only two charts.

"The record is found on the third."

"So Wonder and Venture Islands are the only ones which have the inscriptions on the skulls?" asked Harry.

Clifford sat up with such a sudden start that the boys were alarmed. He leaned forward, and hurriedly asked the following questions: "You say, 'Inscriptions on the skulls?' How do you know? and why do you say that they

are on Wonder and Venture Islands?"

"Because we have two of them."

He dropped back on the pillow, and reflected for some time, and then slowly said: "But there must be three. One of them is still with the records."

"No; we have the one with the records."

A smile illuminated his features, the tension was relaxed, and he dropped back, and pressed his hands over his forehead, as he muttered: "I am so glad, so glad, so glad," and his voice died down, and he remained quiet, as though in sleep.

The questioners sat there in silence, and watched him as he slept. The Professor motioned them to withdraw, and they passed into the adjoining room.

"It is clear to me now," remarked John. "The knowledge of the record was known to others, and I was not aware that any one besides ourselves really had figured out the secret," remarked John, as he turned to the Professor.

"Well, I came pretty close to it," exclaimed Harry. "I told you that the three X's meant thirty leagues."

"So you did," said John. "Prior to the finding of the skull I did not know of the full inscription. Its significance did not come to me until we reached Venture Island."

"I remember now! I told George that I saw the chart you had made."

John smiled. "It would have deceived you, however."

"Why?" asked Harry.

"Because, if you remember it the third island was to the south of Venture, and not to the north as we really found it."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE STORY OF THE LETTERED SKULL

It was late that afternoon when Clifford awoke, and plainly much, refreshed, and improved physically. When he saw the Professor he said: "I have not told you all, but I want the boys here for that purpose, because I know it will interest them."

When the boys arrived they awaited the coming of John, who informed them that Uraso had received word of the capture of Walter, but that he would not arrive until noon.

Clifford greeted them effusively, and it was evident that he had recovered his spirits, and was well on the road to recovery. After some general talk on uninteresting topics, he began his story:

"I was on the vessel with Ephraim when we ran into the monsoon which wrecked the vessel. After days of suffering I became unconscious, and when the spar finally reached the shore, I was aroused sufficiently to save myself, and after wandering around for some time, came up to a tribe of natives, who took good care of me.

"I had no means of determining the latitude or longitude, because I was then only about twenty years of age, and had shipped on the vessel at Shanghai, because I was anxious to return home. I remained with the people about three years, and they were called Osagas."

"Why, this town is built in the Osagas' territory," said Harry.

"That may be so, but it is enough for the present to know that it was somewhere on this island that I reached the shore, and that about three years thereafter I was fortunate enough to catch sight of a sailing vessel, and on her I reached San Francisco.

"In course of time I built up a profitable shipping business, and owned several vessels engaged in the coast and Alaska trade. Like all shipping men on the western coast, I learned of the many accounts, most of them fables, concerning the treasures on the islands in the South Seas, but they never had any effect on me until about three years ago, I had a hand in furnishing the outfit for a vessel which departed on such a mission, that sailed some time in December or January, of that year."

"Do you know the name of the vessel?" asked John.

"Yes; the *Juan Ferde*. Why do you ask?"

"I sailed in that vessel with Blakely, one of the owners."

"Blakely? Blakely, did you say? Why he is the man who purchased all the provisions from me."

"He is here on the island, and now has charge of all the business matters connected with our venture."

"Well, that is remarkable, indeed; but I must proceed. Four months after the *Juan Ferde* sailed, I came into contact with a peculiar character, who had been all over the southern part of the universe, and he finally interested me sufficiently to look over some peculiar documents which he had, bearing on the subject of the lost treasures, and from the information which he gave, it occurred to me that the location could not be far from the island where I was cast ashore.

"With a good business, and entirely free from all family entanglements, I made up my mind that I would accompany him, and finance the undertaking. What induced me more than anything else, was the fact that the stories he told corresponded so nearly with the information which Blakely gave me, although the latter did not go into many details, that I looked on the venture in the nature of a lark. Besides I wanted to meet my old friends on the island, and possibly induce them to gather the products of the island for me.

"We sailed about five months after the *Juan Ferde* left, and had a quick run to the island where it was supposed I had been left years before. It seems that at the time I landed there the tribe was at war, and we had a terrible time to get away from the people, who, of course, did not remember me, even though the tribe was the same, but of this I had no absolute knowledge at the time.

"Two months after reaching the island, we sailed to the south, in order to explore the second island, noted on the chart, and it was then that the returning monsoon, which usually blows in the opposite direction from the one of six months before, wrecked the vessel, and the next day one of my companions and myself, who were so far as I then knew, the only survivors, reached the southern shore of an island, where we saw high mountains, so unlike those in the island where I was shipwrecked years before."

"While I think of it," remarked John, "how did you know about the second island, to which you refer?"

"I learned this from Walter."

"Then did you know anything about the skull on the headland, and the note which Walter left?"

"I knew about the skull, but never heard of the note to which you refer. The discovery of the skull was an accident, and I attached no importance to it at the time. From the southern portion of the island we journeyed along the eastern coast, to the north, skirting a large forest on the way."

The boys looked at each other, significantly, but he did not notice this.

"Then we reached a large river, and to our surprise, found a boat, evidently of native manufacture, and with this floated down the stream to the sea."

"But where did you get the rope that we found in the boat?" asked George, eagerly.

He turned, and answered: "How did you know we put any rope on the boat?"

"Because that was the boat we made, and we found it afterwards, with the strange rope and oars."

"Strange oars. I know nothing about them. We used the oars found in the boat."

"Did you get the boat near a large falls?"

"Yes."

"And on the north side of the river?"

"Yes; but after we reached the sea, it was too rough, and the wind was blowing too heavily from the north to make it safe to navigate in that direction, so we went south, probably ten miles, and drew ashore. The next morning when I awoke the boat and my companion were missing."

"Who was your companion?"

"Walter."

John looked indignant, and expressed his opinion very forcibly, but Clifford held up his hand, restrainingly. "Do not be too harsh. I have no ill will toward him. I did not know what to do, nor which way to turn, but went to the west, and before night, came, unexpectedly, on the remains of a fire, which led me to believe that I would find friends in the inhabitants.

"I went on and on, and caught up with the band, and was then horrified to find that they were having a feast, and sacrificing human beings. I saw Walter among the captives, but I could not contrive to let him know of my presence, and left the place as hurriedly as I could.

"After a month of struggling I reached the southern part of the island, and there, to my joy, found three of my companions on a life boat, belonging to a vessel called the *Investigator*, and together we made a course southeast, and there found the location of the second skull."

"But you knew nothing of that at the time, did you?"

"I did not know what the marks on the skull were for, but the finding of the second one was sufficient to revive in me the hope that, after all, the treasure might be found. One of the men, who was the intimate of Walter, figured out the course to be taken, and we reached the island to the north the second day.

"There, to our surprise, we found Walter, and he charged one of the men with me, with trying to secure the treasure, but I finally patched up the matter, and we agreed to work in concert. Then, when the next day, we found that Walter had lost the chart, we felt that it was a trick on his part to deceive us, and we separated. At that time I did not believe he told us the truth.

"Two days afterwards we passed a party of natives, who were not aware of our presence, and then we saw that Walter, and the man with him, had been captured, and later believed that they had been killed. We searched the island, to find the cave, but were unsuccessful and thinking that an error might have been made, we concluded to sail for the island to the south.

"We found a tribe of natives when we landed, and owing to the exposure and the trials we had gone through I was taken ill, and grew worse and worse, and from that time on to the time I recovered two days ago, I had not the slightest idea of what passed."

"When I spoke against Walter a few moments ago," said John, "you said he was not to blame. What did you mean by that?"

"During my wanderings, I found parts of the chart, which, I assumed, had been lost by John, and, probably, destroyed by the natives. The part I recovered was of no value to me, but it entirely changed my opinion of Walter."

But Clifford's story left something to be told. It did not explain why Walter

tried to avoid meeting Clifford; or why he was so startled upon seeing the two skulls, or the reason for avoiding the reference to the letter to which his name was signed.

The boys were so intensely interested in his story that they did not notice the entrance of Blakely, who had brought Walter back, but when Clifford saw Blakely there was immediate recognition.

Clifford held out his hand to Walter, as he said: "I did wrong in doubting you. I understand from the statement made by Ta Babeda, that they found the chart the next day, after we met them, and that, of course, clears you."

"But I would like to know," said Harry, "what the other part of the inscription on the skulls means?"

"Do you refer to the sign of plus and the V?"

"Yes."

"When you went into the cave, where you found the copper box, how many chambers did you pass before coming to the large room?"

"I am not sure," he answered, "but I think four."

"Yes; and the case was found in the fifth chamber. The Plus sign indicated the cross-shaped cave, did it not?"

"Yes, and there are several other things which interest me," remarked George, gazing at John, as he continued: "Why should the inscriptions have been marked on the skulls?"

John slowly shook his head, as he looked at Clifford. The latter gazed vacantly into space, as though reflecting, and finally said: "I do not know."

It will be remembered that when Walter entered the Professor's room, where Clifford was lying, he appeared to be startled at the sight of the skulls. The copper box which held one of them was in the adjoining room.

During the foregoing conversation Walter was mute, nor did he appear interested in the question propounded by George.

"It seems most curious to me that the skull taken from the copper box has the inscription on the right side, whereas the other one has them on the left side," observed Harry.

John and George saw the immediate change in Walter's face while Harry was speaking. His agitation was now plain to all, and the perspiration began to appear on his forehead.

John leaned forward as he said: "Do you know?"

Walter started at the vehemence of the question, and threw back his head, as he answered: "Did you find the copper box?"

"Yes," responded John, with a look of triumph.

Walter's features relaxed, and he seemed to sink down, as he gazed about him with a final look of despair.

"Then the quest is ended!" he muttered.

"What do you mean? Explain!" demanded John.

"When I began the search for the treasure of the caves, I was the owner of the original document written by Juan Gutierrez before he died in the Spanish prison. Three attempts had been made to find the island, which contained the secret, and that secret was in the copper box which told of the places and the locations of the other caves. In each case the quest failed, and all perished. The peculiar significance arises from the fact that the only directions were given on a human skull by Gutierrez himself, who declared that two of the skulls would have the inscriptions on the left side, while the one with the cryptic signs on the right side would be accompanied by the descriptions of the locations of all the Caves on the different islands."

"But why should there be three skulls?" asked George, in great eagerness.

"There were three attempts, each resulting in death. The skull is emblematic of death."

"Will you tell us why you tried to avoid Clifford, and were startled at the sight of the skulls?" asked John.

"If, as you say, you have found the copper box, I have no further reason to remain silent. I found one of the skulls,—the others I could not find, one of which I knew must be in the treasure cave. If I had known you found the one in the cave I should not have tried to get away, as I hoped, finally, to find the cave. Since coming here I learned that you had found the third island; I knew of only two, and supposed that the two skulls were from those two, namely, Wonder and Venture Islands."

"But who placed the skulls there?" queried Harry.

"Ah! No one knows that. The Spaniard Gutierrez offers no explanation. All the so-called *treasure charts* have been made from the accounts which he gave, of

the vast amount of gold and silver which is hidden in these natural caches. The place where the copper box was deposited is the grand mausoleum. Only those who know the secret could ever reach the vault. All others would perish."

"The carbonic gas!" exclaimed George.

Walter turned to George, as he said this, but did not comprehend what he meant. It was now evident that Walter had tried to conceal his identity, and thereby hide the secret which would enable him alone to find the vast wealth.

"So the letter which we found concealed in the seat of our boat, was written by one of your companions?" asked Harry.

"Yes."

"This clears up the mysterious things which we have tried to fathom for over two years," said John. "The meaning of the letters is now clear."

"From the time we landed on the island," rejoined the Professor, "we found evidences of white people that we could not follow up, and it is now plain that they were in search for the treasure, so we can now comprehend what the notes meant."

There is but little more to add to the chapter pertaining to the experiences of the boys on the islands. Perhaps, at some time in the future, their work on the new islands will be told. What John and the boys found in the Copper box, the historical sketches and the locations of the treasure islands which were pointed out on the parchments found in the compartment below the skull, were amazing revelations of the days of piratical adventures, when the southern half of the world was one vast carnival of crime, in which gold was the only booty and to obtain which the means were always considered to be justified by the end.

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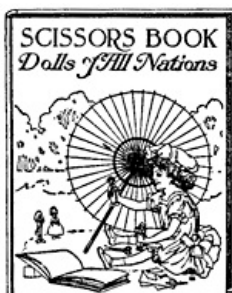
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