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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK MOTOR MATT'S QUEST; OR THREE CHUMS IN STRANGE WATERS ***



MOTOR STORIES

THRILLING
ADVENTURE

MOTOR
FICTION

NO. 16
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FIVE
CENTS

MOTOR MATT'S
QUEST

OR THREE CHUMS
IN STRANGE WATERS

By THE AUTHOR OF "MOTOR MATT"

STREET & SMITH,

MOTOR STORIES
THRILLING ADVENTURE MOTOR FICTION

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CHARACTERS THAT APPEAR IN THIS STORY.

Motor Matt, a lad who is at home with every variety of motor, and whose never-failing nerve serves to carry him through difficulties that would daunt any ordinary young fellow. Because of his daring as a racer with bicycle, motor-cycle and automobile he is known as "Mile-a-minute Matt." Motor-boats, air ships and submarines come naturally in his line, and consequently he lives in an atmosphere of adventure in following up his "hobby."

Dick Ferral, a young sea dog from Canada, with all a sailor's superstitions, but in spite of all that a royal chum, ready to stand by the friend of his choice through thick and thin.

Carl Pretzel, a cheerful and rollicking German boy, stout of frame as well as of heart, who is led by a fortunate accident to link his fortunes with those of Motor Matt.

Hays Jordan, United States consul at Belize. A man of pluck and determination, who furnishes valuable information about his friend, Jeremiah Coleman, and even more valuable personal services during the rescue of Coleman.

Jeremiah Coleman, another United States consul who has been spirited away by Central American revolutionists in the hope of driving a sharp bargain with the United

States Government for the release of a captured filibuster named James Sixty.

Tirzal, a half-breed mahogany-cutter who serves Jordan in the capacity of spy, and who has been a pilot along the coast.

Speake, Gaines and Clackett, part of the crew of the *Grampus*.

Cassidy, mate of the *Grampus* who, because of a fancied grievance, takes the wrong trail at the forks of the road. An old friend whom Matt found to be an enemy and then made a friend again.

Abner Fingal, skipper of the notorious schooner, *North Star*, and brother of James Sixty, to whose evil nature Motor Matt owes most of his present troubles.

Captain Nemo, Jr., skipper of the submarine, *Grampus*, and who falls victim to a sudden illness. Because of the captain's sickness, Matt is placed in command of the *Grampus*.

Ysabel Sixty, an old acquaintance who plays an important part in the story.

CHAPTER I.

IN THE DEPTHS.

"Motor Matt!"

"What is it, captain?"

"We are in St. George's Bay, ten miles from the Port of Belize, British Honduras. Two days ago, while we were well out in the gulf, I opened the letter containing the first part of my sealed orders. Those orders, as you know, sent us to Belize. Before we reach there and open the envelope containing the rest of our orders, I think it necessary to test out the *Grampus* thoroughly. Unless I am greatly mistaken, the instructions yet to be read may call for work that will demand the last ounce of preparation we can give the submarine. I have stopped the motor, and we are lying motionless on the surface of the sea. The lead shows that there are two hundred and twenty-five feet of water under us. The steel shell of the *Grampus* is warranted to stand the pressure of water at that depth. Do you follow me?"

"Certainly, captain."

"Now, Matt, I have been watching you for a long time, and I believe that you know more about the gasoline motor than I do, and fully as much about maneuvering the submarine. We are going to dive to two hundred and ten feet—the deepest submersion by far the *Grampus* ever made. I wish you to take entire charge. If you get into difficulties, you must get out of them again, for I intend to stand by and not put in a word unless tragedy stares us in the face and you call on me for advice."

A thrill ran through Motor Matt. The submarine, with all her complicated equipment, was for a time to be under his control. This move of Captain Nemo, Jr.'s, perhaps, was a test for him no less than for the *Grampus*.

For a brief space the young motorist bent his head thoughtfully.

"Do you hesitate, Matt?" asked Captain Nemo, Jr.

"Not at all, sir," was the calm answer. "I was just running over in my mind the things necessary to be done in making such a deep dive. The pressure at two hundred and ten feet will be terrific. At that depth, the lid of our hatchway will be supporting a weight of more than thirty-two tons." [Pg 2]

"Exactly," answered the captain, pleased with the way Matt's mind was going over the work.

"If there happened to be anything wrong with the calculations of the man who built the *Grampus*, captain, she would be smashed like an egg shell."

"We are going to prove his calculations." The captain seated himself on a low stool. "Gaines is at the motor, Clackett is at the submerging tanks, Speake has charge of the storage batteries and compressed air, and Cassidy is here in the periscope room with us to drive the *Grampus* in any direction you desire."

"Dick Ferral is with Gaines," added Matt, "and Carl Pretzel is with Clackett."

"Exactly. Every man is at his station, and some of the stations are double manned. Now, then, go ahead."

Matt whirled to a speaking tube.

"We're going to make a record dive, Clackett," he called into the tube, "and Captain Nemo, Jr., has placed me in charge——"

"Bully for the captain!" came back the voice of Clackett, echoing weirdly distinct in the periscope room.

"Hoop-a-la!" bubbled the exultant tones of Matt's Dutch chum. "Der king oof der modor poys iss der poy for me."

"Our submergence will be two hundred and ten feet," went on Matt. "You and Carl, Clackett, will put the steel baulks in place. I'll have Dick and Gaines help you."

Another order was called to the engine room, and presently there were sounds, forward and aft, which indicated that the metal props, to further strengthen the steel shell, were being dropped into their supports.

"Cassidy," said Matt, "see that the double doors of the hatch are secured."

"Aye, aye, sir," answered the mate, darting up the conning-tower ladder.

"Speake," ordered Matt, through another tube, "see that the tension indicators are in place."

"Double doors of the hatch secured," reported Cassidy a moment later.

"Pressure sponsons in place," came rattling through the tube from Clackett.

"Tension indicators in position," announced Speake.

"Dive at the rate of twelve yards to the minute, Clackett," ordered Matt.

A hiss of air, escaping from the ballast tanks as the water came in, was heard. A tremor ran through the steel fabric, followed by a gentle downward motion. Matt kept his eyes on the manometric needles. Twenty yards, twenty-five, thirty, and forty were indicated. A pressure of ten pounds to the square centimeter was recorded.

"Plates are beginning to bend, captain," called Speake.

This was not particularly alarming, for the baulks would settle down to their work.

"Close the bulkhead doors, Dick!" called Matt.

"Aye, aye, old ship!" returned Dick, and sounds indicated that the order was immediately carried out.

"Sixty yards," called Clackett; "sixty-five, seventy——"

"Hold her so!" cried Matt.

"What is the danger point in the matter of flexion, captain?" asked Matt, turning to Nemo, Jr., whose gray head was bowed forward on his hand, while his gleaming eyes regarded the cool, self-possessed young motorist with something like admiration.

"Ten millimeters," was the answer.

"We still have a margin of three millimeters and are at the depth you indicated."

"Bravo! We are five yards from the bottom. Do a little cruising, Matt. Let us see how the *Grampus* behaves at this depth."

The entire shell of the submarine was under an enormous pressure.

Matt gave the order to start the motor, and the popping of the engine soon settled into a low hum of perfectly working cylinders. A forward motion was felt by those in the submarine.

"Not many people have ever had the novel experience of navigating the ocean seventy yards below the surface," remarked the captain, with a slow smile.

"It's a wonderful thing!" exclaimed Matt. "The *Grampus* seems equal to any task you set for her, captain."

The air of the periscope room was being exhausted by the breathing of Matt, Nemo, Jr., and Cassidy. Matt ordered the bulkhead doors opened, in order that fresh oxygen might be admitted from the reservoirs. Just before the doors were opened, Captain Nemo, Jr.'s face had suddenly paled, and he had swayed on his seat, throwing a hand to his chest.

"You can't stand this, captain!" exclaimed Matt, jumping to the captain's side. "Hadn't we better ascend?"

The captain collected himself quickly and waved the youth away.

"Never mind me, my lad," he answered. "I feel better, now that a little fresh oxygen is coming in to us. Go on with your manœuvring."

All was silent in the submarine, save for the croon of the engine, running as sweetly as any Matt had ever heard. Aside from a faint oppression in the chest and a low ringing in the ears, the *Grampus* might have been cruising on the surface, so far as her passengers could know.

Cassidy was at the wheel, steering, his passive eyes on the compass.

Matt turned away from the manometer with a remark on his lips, but before the words could be spoken there was a shock, and the submarine shivered and stopped dead.

"Shiminy grickets!" whooped the voice of Carl. "Ve must haf run indo vone oof der moundains in der sea."

"Full speed astern, Gaines," cried Matt.

The blades of the propeller revolved fiercely. The steel hull shook and tugged, but all to no purpose.

Captain Nemo, Jr., sat quietly in his seat and never offered a suggestion. His steady eyes were on Motor Matt.

The king of the motor boys realized that they were in a terrible predicament. Suppose they were

hopelessly entangled in the ocean's depths? Suppose there was no escape for them, and the shell of the *Grampus* was to be their tomb?

These reflections did not shake the lad's nerve. His face whitened a little, but a resolute light gleamed in his gray eyes.

"How are the bow plates, Speake?" he demanded through one of the tubes.

Speake was in the torpedo room.

"Right as a trivet!" answered Speake.

After five minutes of violent and useless churning of the screw, Matt turned to Cassidy. The mate, grave-faced and anxious, was looking at him and waiting for orders. [Pg 3]

"Rig the electric projector, Cassidy," said Matt calmly.

"Aye, aye, sir," replied the mate.

When the little searchlight was in position, a gleam was thrown through one of the forward lunettes out over the bow of the *Grampus*. Matt, feeling keenly the weight of responsibility that rested on his shoulders, mounted the iron ladder to the conning tower and looked through one of the small windows.

To his intense astonishment he found the bottom of the sea pervaded with a faintly luminous light, perhaps due to some phosphorescence given off by the marine growth. Through this glow traveled the brighter gleam of the searchlight.

The *Grampus* was lying in a dense forest of nodding, moss-covered stems. The *algae* of the ocean bed, with its lianes and creeping growth, twisted all about the submarine, fluttering and waving in the currents caused by the swiftly revolving propeller.

A gasp escaped Matt's lips, however, when he fixed his attention forward. For a full minute he stood on the ladder, taking in the weird and dangerous predicament of the *Grampus*.

Then an exclamation fell from his lips, and he looked down to see Captain Nemo, Jr., slowly mounting to his side.

"Look!" whispered Matt hoarsely, nodding toward the lunettes.

The captain pressed his eyes against the thick glass and then dropped back.

"A ship!" he exclaimed. "We have rammed an old Spanish galleon and are caught in her rotting timbers!"

He looked upward, his startled eyes engaging Matt's, and the two staring at each other.

CHAPTER II.

OUT OF THE JAWS OF DEATH.

What the captain had said was true. The *Grampus*, cruising in those great depths, had had the misfortune to hurl herself bodily on into an ancient wreck.

The wreck, which must have lain for centuries there on the bottom, was covered with marine growth, yet, nevertheless, seemed wonderfully well preserved. The high bow and poop, covered with serpent-like lianes and creeping weeds, were erect in the water, for the galleon lay on an even keel. The ship's two masts and steep bowsprit had been broken off, and the decks were a litter of weeds, and shells, and sand.

The *Grampus*, cleaving the heavy submarine growth, had flung her sharp prow into the galleon's side and was embedded almost to the flagstaff.

The captain and Matt descended silently into the periscope room.

"We jammed into an old wreck, did we?" queried Cassidy, calmly but with a look on his face which reflected the perturbation of his mind.

"Yes," answered Matt. "Some Spanish ship went down here—perhaps loaded with treasure for across the sea."

"Hardly loaded with treasure, Matt," spoke up the captain. "This is the Spanish Main, and the reefs off Honduras offered shelter for many a pirate in the old days. This galleon, I am inclined to think, was stripped of her treasure by some buccaneer and sunk. It is too bad that she was sunk in the course we happened to be taking."

The rack of the useless motor ceased on an order from Matt; in the deep, death-like silence that intervened, a wail came up from the tank room.

"Vat's der madder mit us, Matt? Dit ve run into a cave in der ocean? Oof ve can't ged oudt vat vill become oof us?"

"We ran into an old Spanish ship, Carl," answered Matt, "and we are so jammed in the side of the hulk that we haven't been able, so far, to back out."

"Ach, du lieber! Meppy ve von't nefer be able to pack oudt! Meppy ve vas down here for keeps, hey? Nexdt dime I go down in some supmarines, you bed my life I make a vill pefore I shtart."

Carl, white as a sheet and scared, came rolling into the periscope room. Dick likewise showed up from forward.

"Strike me lucky, old ship," said he, "I hadn't any notion this was to be our last cruise."

"It's not," answered Matt. "We'll get out of this."

He turned to Captain Nemo, Jr., who was again seated quietly, his calm eyes on the king of the motor boys.

"The power of the screw, unaided," said the captain, "will not serve to get us clear of the wreck. What are you going to do, Matt?"

Matt thought for a moment.

"Am I to have my way, captain?" he asked.

"Certainly. I want to see what you can do."

"Speake! Gaines! Clackett!" called Matt. "Come up here, at once."

From the engine room, the torpedo room, and the ballast room came the rest of the submarine's crew. Their faces were gray with anxiety, but they were men of pluck and determination, and could be depended on to fight for life until the very last.

"Men," said Matt, "we have rammed an old hulk that has been lying for centuries in the bottom of St. George's Bay. The nose of the *Grampus* is caught and held in the wreck's side, and the full power of the engine is not sufficient to pull us out. We shall have to try something else—something that will put a great strain on the steel shell of the submarine, considering the pressure the boat is under at this enormous depth. I am going to give some orders, and on the swiftness with which they are carried out our lives may depend. You will all go back to your stations, Carl with Clackett and Dick with Gaines; and when I shout the word 'Ready!' the engine will be started with all power astern. At the same instant, Clackett and Carl will open the pipes and admit air into the ballast tanks, and open the valves that let out the water. We may have to do all this several times, if necessary, but you fellows have got to be prompt in doing what you are told."

Again was admiration reflected in Captain Nemo's pale face. Leaning back against the steel wall of the periscope room, he settled himself quietly to await developments.

"Count on me," said Clackett, as he and Carl disappeared.

"And on us," said Gaines, leaving the periscope room with Dick.

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Cassidy merely gave a nod and turned to his steering wheel. Matt went up into the tower and placed himself at one of the lunettes.

His heart was beating against his ribs with trip-hammer blows, but his brain was cool and clear.

When he had given the crew sufficient time to gain their stations, he lifted his voice loudly.

"*Ready!*"

The word rang through the periscope room and echoed clatteringly through the steel hull.

The propeller began to whirl like mad, and the sudden opening of the ballast tanks depressed the free rear portion of the submarine.

For a full minute the wild struggle went on, and so shaken was the boat that it seemed as though she must fly in pieces. Then, abruptly, the *Grampus* leaped backward and upward, clearing the forest-like growth of seaweed at a gigantic bound.

The upward motion was felt by every one in the boat, and cries of exultation came to Matt's ears in clamoring echoes.

Slipping like lightning down the ladder, he shouted to Gaines to stop the madly-working engine and reverse it at a more leisurely speed.

Like a huge air bubble, the *Grampus* swung up and up, and when she emerged above the surface, and Matt could see sunlight through the dripping lunettes, he turned off the electric projector, opened the hatch and threw it back, and gulped down deep breaths of the warm, fresh air.

Once more slipping down the ladder, he saluted the captain.

"I turn the ship over to you, sir," said he, and collapsed on a stool, mopping the perspiration from his face.

"You're a brick!" grunted Cassidy, picking up the course for Belize.

"Hooray for Motor Matt, king of the motor boys!" came a thrilling shout from somewhere in the bowels of the craft.

For an instant, the steel walls echoed with the jubilant yells of Carl, Dick, Gaines, Speake, and Clackett.

"It came near to taking the ginger all out of me, captain," breathed Matt. "The novelty of the thing was mighty trying."

Captain Nemo, Jr., still strangely pale, was regarding the youth fixedly. For some moments after the cheering ceased he said nothing; then, leaning abruptly forward, he caught Matt's hand.

The captain's flesh was as cold as ice.

"Captain!" the young motorist exclaimed, starting up, "there's something wrong with you! Do you feel——"

The captain waved his hand deprecatingly, and the calm, inscrutable smile hovered about his thin lips.

"Let that pass for a moment, my lad," said he. "I was testing the *Grampus*, but, more than that, I was likewise testing *you*. Since we picked up Carl and Dick, off the *Dolphin*, and before that, while we were cruising about trying to find them,^[A] you have been serving your apprenticeship on the submarine. I have always had the utmost confidence in you, Motor Matt, and I have now, I think, tested your knowledge of the *Grampus* in a manner which leaves no room for doubt. You are able to run the boat, and to extricate her from any difficulties in which she might become entangled, as well, if not better, than I could do myself."

[A] This reference of Captain Nemo, Jr., has to do with the thrilling experiences of Carl and Dick while they were at swords' points with Captain James Sixty, the filibuster, for an extended account of which see No. 15 of the MOTOR STORIES, "Motor Matt's Submarine; or, The Strange Cruise of the *Grampus*."

Matt, from the captain's manner, had suspected that the gray-haired inventor of the craft had tried to bring out all that was in him. Captain Nemo, Jr., of course, had not been able to forecast the trouble that was to overtake the submarine in the bottom of the bay, but this dangerous experience had served only to show Matt's resourcefulness to better advantage.

"You are cool-headed in time of danger," proceeded the captain, "and, no matter what goes wrong, your ability is always on tap and can be brought to bear instantly upon anything you desire to accomplish."

The red ran into Matt's face and he waved a hand deprecatingly.

"I'm not a particle better than a lot of other fellows," said he, "who try to use their eyes, and hands, and brains."

"I expected you to say that, Matt," continued the captain. "The test, in your case, was hardly necessary, for I have watched your work in a lot of trying situations—and it has always been the same, steady, resourceful, reliable. Just now, we are going to Belize, British Honduras, to carry out some work for our government. As I have already told you, I don't know what that work is. Two sealed envelopes were given me by Captain Wynekoop of the U. S. cruiser *Seminole*. The first one told us to proceed to Belize. The next one, which I have here in my pocket, will instruct you relative to the work in prospect, and——"

"Instruct *me*?" broke in Matt, startled.

The captain nodded.

"I have not recovered from the strange illness which overtook me in New Orleans, as a result of inhaling the poisonous odor given off by the head of that idol. I feel that another attack is coming upon me—I have felt it for several hours—and, inasmuch as the government is watching the work of the *Grampus* with the intention of buying her at a good round price if she makes good, our sealed orders must be carried out. For this work, Matt, you are my choice; you are to command the *Grampus*, do everything that you think—that you think——"

Captain Nemo, Jr., paused, struggled with the words for a space, then drooped slowly forward and fell from his seat to the floor of the room. There he lay, unconscious and breathing heavily.

CHAPTER III.

THE SEALED ORDERS.

For a brief space Motor Matt and Cassidy stood looking down at the prostrate form crumpled at their feet. The captain had been stricken so suddenly that they were astounded.

Cassidy took a look through the periscope and lashed the wheel; then he hurried to help Matt, who was lifting the unconscious man to a long locker at the side of the room.

"He ain't never been right since he was sick in New Orleans," muttered Cassidy. "He jumped into work before he was well enough."

The captain's former illness had been of a peculiar nature. An idol's head, steeped in some noxious liquor that caused the head to give off a deadly odor, was, according to his firm belief, the cause of his sickness. Carl had also come under the influence of the poisonous odor, but it had had no such effect upon him. However, no two persons are exactly alike, and sometimes a thing that will work havoc with one may have no effect upon another.

"His heart action is good, Cassidy," said Matt.

"He's a sick man for all that," replied the mate. "I've noticed for several hours he was nervous like. We'll have to take him ashore at Belize, and you'll have to be the captain while we're doing the work that's to be done."

There was an under-note in Cassidy's voice that caused Matt to give him a keen look. The mate was a good fellow, but he was second in command, aboard the *Grampus*, and it was quite natural for him to expect to be the one who stepped into the captain's shoes.

"You heard what Captain Nemo, Jr., said?" asked Matt.

"Sure, I did," returned the mate gruffly.

"I had not the least notion he was picking me for any such place."

"He's a queer chap, the cap'n is," said Cassidy, averting his face and getting up from the side of the locker. "I'll go get him a swig of brandy—maybe it'll bring him round."

When Cassidy returned from the storeroom with the brandy flask, Matt could hardly avoid detecting that he had himself sampled the liquor. Matt was disagreeably surprised, for he had not known that the mate was a drinking man.

While they were forcing a little of the brandy down the captain's throat, Dick and Carl came into the periscope room.

"Vat's der madder mit der gaptain?" asked Carl, as he and Dick crowded close to the locker.

Matt told of the illness that had so suddenly overtaken the master of the submarine.

"Shiver me, but it's main queer!" exclaimed Dick.

"For the last hour," went on Matt, "the captain's hands have been like ice and his face pale. I knew he didn't feel well, but I hadn't any idea he was as bad as this."

"Tough luck!" growled Cassidy.

"Will we need a pilot to take us into Belize?" asked Matt.

"We can't get very close to the town, but will have to lay off and go ashore in a boat. I know the place well enough to take the *Grampus* to a safe berth."

"Then you'd better go up in the lookout, Cassidy, and see to laying us alongside the town."

A mutinous look flickered for an instant on Cassidy's weather-beaten face. He hesitated, and then, without a word, turned away and climbed into the conning tower.

A moment more and the captain had revived and opened his eyes.

"How are you feeling, sir?" queried Matt.

"Far from well, my lad," was the answer, in a weak voice. "Are we off Belize?"

"Not yet, sir, but we are drawing close."

"We are close enough so that we can read the second half of our sealed orders."

The captain lifted a hand and removed from the breast pocket of his coat a sealed envelope, which he handed to Matt.

"Open it, Matt," said he, "and read it aloud."

The young motorist paused.

"Captain," said he, "wouldn't Cassidy be the right man for carrying out the work that brought us into these waters? He is the mate, you know, and I think he expects——"

"Cassidy is here to obey orders," interrupted the captain. "Cassidy has a failing, and that failing is drink. No man that takes his liquor is ever to be depended on. As long as I'm around, and can watch him, Cassidy keeps pretty straight, but if I'm laid up at Belize, as I expect to be, I prefer to have some one in command of the *Grampus* whom I can trust implicitly. Read the orders."

Matt tore open the envelope and removed the inclosed sheet.

"On Board U. S. Cruiser *Seminole*, at Sea.

"CAPTAIN NEMO, JR.,

"Submarine *Grampus*.

"SIR: Acting under orders from the Secretary of the Navy, I have the honor to request that the *Grampus* lend her aid to the rescue of United States Consul Jeremiah Coleman, who has been sequestered by Central American revolutionists, presumably under orders from Captain James Sixty, of the brig *Dolphin*, who is now a prisoner in our hands. Mr. Hays Jordan, the United States consul at Belize, will inform you as to the place where Mr. Coleman is being held. This is somewhere up the Rio Dolce, in a place inaccessible to even gunboats of the lightest draught, and it is hoped the *Grampus* may be able to accomplish something. Present this letter to Mr. Jordan immediately upon reaching Belize, and be guided in whatever you do by his knowledge and judgment. I have the honor to remain, sir,

"Your most obedient,

"ARTHUR WYNEKOOP, Captain Cruiser *Seminole*."

A movement behind Matt caused him to look around. Cassidy had descended quietly from the conning tower and was steering the ship entirely by the periscope.

"We are off Belize, sir," announced Cassidy, "and two small sailboats are coming this way. We are to anchor at the surface, I suppose?"

Matt did not know how long the mate had been in the periscope room, but supposed he had been there long enough to overhear the instructions.

"Certainly," said the captain.

Cassidy touched a jingler connected with the engine room. The hum of the motor slowly ceased.

"Get out an anchor fore-and-aft, Speake," the mate called through one of the speaking tubes.

"Aye, aye, sir," came the response through the tube.

A little later a muffled rattling could be heard as a chain was paid out through the patent water-tight hawse hole. Presently the rattling stopped, and the *Grampus* shivered and swung to her scope of cable. More rattling came from the stern, and soon two anchors were holding the submarine steady in her berth.

"I want you to go ashore, Matt," said Captain Nemo, Jr., "and see the American consul. Find a place where I can be taken care of; also, show that letter to the consul and tell him you are my representative. Better take Dick with you."

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"Very good, sir," replied Matt.

A bluish tinge had crept into the pallor of the captain's face. Matt had been covertly watching, and his anxiety on the captain's account had increased. The captain must be taken ashore as quickly as possible and placed in a doctor's hands.

"Come on, Dick," called Matt, starting up the conning tower ladder.

With his chum at his heels, Matt crawled over the rim of the conning tower hatch and lowered himself to the rounded steel deck.

The port of Belize, nestling in a tropical bower of cocoanut trees, was about a mile distant. Owing to her light draught, the *Grampus* had been able to come closer to the town than other ships in the harbor. The submarine lay between a number of sailing vessels and steamboats and the line of white buildings peeping out of the greenery beyond the beach.

Two small sailboats, manned by negroes, were approaching the *Grampus*. Matt motioned to one of them, and her skipper hove-to alongside, caught a rope thrown by Dick, and pulled his craft as near the deck of the submarine as the rounded bulwarks would permit. A plank was pushed over the side of the sailboat, and Matt and Dick climbed over the lifting and shaking board.

"Golly, boss," grinned the negro, "dat's de funniest boat dat I ever seen in dis port. Looks like er bar'l on er raft."

"Never mind that," said Matt, "but lay us alongside the wharf as soon as you can."

The two negroes comprising the sailboat's crew were Caribs. They talked together in their native tongue, every word seeming to end in "boo" or "boo-hoo."

"A whoop, two grunts and a little blubbering," said Dick, "will give a fellow a pretty fair Carib vocabulary. What ails Cassidy?"

"I think he sampled the flask of brandy when he brought it to the captain," replied Matt.

"That was plain enough, for he had a breath like a rum cask. But it wasn't that alone that made him so grouchy. There's something else at the bottom of his locker."

"Well, he's the mate," went on Matt, dropping his voice and turning a cautious look on the two negroes, "and I suppose he thinks Captain Nemo, Jr., ought to have put him in command. To have a fellow like me jumped over his head may have touched him a little."

"Mayhap," murmured Dick, "but it's a brand-new side of his character Cassidy's showing. I never suspected it of him. Do you think the captain's trouble is anything serious?"

"I hope not, Dick, but I'm worried. The sickness came on so suddenly I hardly know what to think."

"Probably he has some of the poison from that idol's head still under his hatches. Main queer, though, that he should be so long getting over it, when Carl cut himself adrift from the same thing so handsomely."

"Things of that kind never affect two people in exactly the same way."

The negroes brought their boat alongside the wharf. As Matt paid for their services, and climbed ashore, Dick called his attention to the *Grampus*. Cassidy could be seen on the speck of deck running the Stars and Stripes to the top of the short flagstaff. The other sailboat, to the boy's surprise, was standing in close to the submarine.

Having finished with the flag, Cassidy could be seen to throw a rope to the skipper of the sailboat, and then, a moment later, to spring aboard.

"What does that move mean?" queried Dick.

"Give it up," answered Matt, with a mystified frown. "Probably we shall know, before long. Just now, though, we've got to think of the captain and send off a doctor to the *Grampus*."

Turning away, he and Dick walked rapidly to the shore and on into the town.

CHAPTER IV.

THE AMERICAN CONSUL.

"There's a bobby," cried Dick, catching sight of a policeman, "a real London bobby, blue-and-white striped cuffs and all. We'll bear down on him, Matt, and ask the way to the American consul's."

The policeman was dark-skinned, but kind and obliging for all that. Drawing the boys out into the street, he pointed to a low, white building with the American flag flying over the door. There were palms and trees around the building, and a middle-aged man in white ducks was sitting in a canvas chair on the veranda. He was Mr. Hays Jordan, and when the boys told him they were from the submarine *Grampus*, the consul got up and took them by the hand.

Matt lost not a moment in telling of the captain's illness, and of his desire for a doctor and of comfortable lodging ashore. The consul seemed disappointed by the news.

"I reckon that puts a stop to the work that brought the *Grampus* here," said the consul.

"Not at all," replied Matt. "The *Grampus* is at the service of the government within an hour, if necessary."

"But who's in charge of the boat?"

"I am."

Mr. Hays Jordan looked Matt over, up and down, and started to give an incredulous whistle. But there was something in the youth's bearing, and in the firm, gray eye that caused him to quit whistling.

"Well!" he exclaimed. "Pretty young to be skipper of a submarine, aren't you?"

"Belay a bit, sir," spoke up Dick. "He's old for his age, if I do say it, and Captain Nemo, Jr., is a master hand at taking the sizing of a fellow. He selected Motor Matt to engineer this piece of work, and, if you keep your weather eye skinned, it won't be long until you rise to the fact that the captain knew what he was about."

"The captain ought to have a doctor without loss of time," interposed Matt, impatient because of the time they were losing, "and he must have a place to stay."

"We'll not send a sick man to the hotel," said Mr. Jordan, "but to a boarding house kept by an American. And we'll also have an American doctor to look after him." He slapped his hands. In answer to the summons a negro appeared from inside the house. "Go over to Dr. Seymour, Turk," said the consul, "and ask him to come here."

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"We might be able to save time," put in Matt, "if my friend went with your servant and took the doctor directly to the submarine."

"Fine!" exclaimed the consul, and Dick and the negro hurried away.

"Sit down, my boy," said the consul, waving his hand toward a chair, "and we'll palaver a little. I don't reckon I ought to say much to you until I talk with Captain Nemo, Jr., and make sure everything is right and proper. Still——"

"Here are my credentials," said Matt, and handed over the letter which he had recently read aloud in the periscope room of the *Grampus*.

The consul glanced over the letter.

"I'll take you on that showing, Motor Matt," said he heartily, as he handed the letter back. "If anything is done for my friend Coleman, it's got to be done with a rush. The dinky little states all around us are able to have a revolution whenever some one happens to think of it. There's one on now, and Captain James Sixty was to help on the fighting by landing a cargo of guns and ammunition. Sixty's work, as I reckon you may know, was nipped in the bud, and the revolutionists are having a hard time of it. But they're still active, and about two weeks ago, when Sixty failed to arrive with the war material and they were afraid he had been captured by the United States authorities, the hot-headed greasers planned reprisal. That reprisal was about the most foolish thing you ever heard of. They spirited away my friend Coleman; then they sent me a letter saying that Coleman would be released whenever the United States Government gave up Sixty—and, at that time, Sixty wasn't in the hands of the authorities, at all. He had just simply failed to show up with the contraband of war, and the revolutionists imagined he had been bagged. I communicated with Washington at once, and it was that, I reckon, that gave the State Department a line on Sixty."

"Is Mr. Coleman in any danger?" asked Matt.

"You never can tell what a lot of firebrands will do. They're bound to hear of Sixty's capture, and of the confiscation of his lawless cargo. The news will get to them soon, and when that happens Coleman is likely to have trouble. If possible, he must be rescued from the revolutionists ahead of the receipt of this information about Sixty and the lost guns. It's a tremendously hard piece of work, and only a submarine boat with an intrepid crew, to my notion, will stand any show of success. If a small boat from a United States warship was to try to go to the rescue, the revolutionists would learn she was coming and would immediately take to the jungles of the interior with their captive. See what I mean?"

"Mr. Coleman's captors are somewhere on the sea coast?"

"Not exactly. They have a rendezvous on the river Izaral, which runs into the gulf of Amatique, to the south of here. The revolutionists have tried to make people think that they have Coleman somewhere on the Rio Dolce, but that would put the whole unlawful game in British territory, and wherever the British flag flies you'll find lawbreakers mighty careful."

The consul looked around cautiously and then hitched his chair closer to Matt's.

"I haven't been idle, Motor Matt," he went on, lowering his voice. "I have had spies at work, and one of them has reported the exact location of the revolutionists' camp. Acting as a log-cutter, he came close to the place. This man will lead you to the exact spot—and, as good luck has it, he's a pilot and knows the coast."

"I should think," hazarded Matt, "that the United States government could make a demand on the president of the republic where all this lawless work is going on, and force him to rescue Mr. Coleman."

The consul laughed.

"You don't know Central America, my lad," he answered. "It's as hard for the president of the republic to get at the revolutionists as for anybody else. Meanwhile, Coleman's in danger. We can't wait for a whole lot of useless red-tape proceedings. We've got to strike, and to strike hard and quick. But we've got to do it secretly, quietly—getting Coleman away before the revolutionists know what we're doing. Understand?"

Matt nodded.

"We'll not do any fighting if it's possible to avoid it," proceeded the consul, "for that would merely complicate matters. Besides, what could a handful of strangers do against a horde of rascally niggers? Softly is the word. We've got to jump into 'em, and then out again quicker than scat—and when we come out we've got to have Coleman."

"Are you going with us, Mr. Jordan?" asked Matt.

The consul started and gave Matt a bored look.

"Going with you?" he drawled. "Why not? It isn't often we have anything exciting, here in Honduras, and I wouldn't miss the chance for a farm. Coleman lives where he never knows what minute is going to be his next, and he's continually guessing as to where the lightning is going to strike, and when. About all I do is lie around in a hammock, fight mosquitoes, take a feed now and then at Government House, and drop in at an English club here every evening for a rubber at whist. It's deadly monotonous, my lad, to a fellow who comes from the land of snap and ginger."

"I'll be glad to have you along," said Matt. "When had we better start?"

"This afternoon." The consul picked his solar hat off the railing of the veranda and got up. "I'm going over to the boarding house," he added, "to make arrangements for Captain Nemo, Jr. It's just around the corner and I'll only be gone a few minutes. Make yourself comfortable until I return."

"I'll get along all right," answered Matt.

Jordan got up, descended the steps, swung away down the street and quickly vanished around a corner.

The scenery was all new and strange to Matt, and he allowed his eyes to wander up and down the street. The houses were white bungalows, some of them surrounded by high white fences, and with tufted palms nodding over their roofs.

Negro women passed by with baskets on their heads, dark-skinned laborers in bell-crowned straw hats slouched up and down, and a group of tawny soldiers from a West India regiment, wearing smart Zouave uniforms and turbans, jogged past.

As soon as Matt had exhausted the sights in his immediate vicinity, he lay back in the chair and gave his thoughts to the captain.

He had always liked Nemo, Jr. The captain had been a good friend to Motor Matt and his chums, and the young motorist hoped in his heart that his present illness would not take a serious turn.

While Matt was turning the subject over in his mind, two men came along the walk and started for the steps leading to the veranda of the consulate.

Matt, suddenly lifting his eyes, was surprised to note that one of the men was Cassidy. The other was a white, sandy-whiskered individual in a dingy blue coat and cap and much-worn dungaree trousers.

Both were plainly under the influence of liquor. They came unsteadily up the steps and Cassidy made a bee-line for Matt.

Cassidy's weather-beaten face was flushed and there was an angry, unreasoning light in his eyes.

"I'm next to you, Matt King," growled the mate, posting himself in front of the youth and clinching his big fists. "You've pulled the wool over the old man's eyes in great shape, but you can't fool *me!*"

Cassidy, when his mind was clear and when he was not under the delusion of a fancied wrong, was a good fellow. He had cared for Captain Nemo, Jr., when he was lying ill in New Orleans, and countless times he had given Matt and his chums proof of his friendship for them. Cassidy was off his bearings now, but Matt felt more like arguing with him than showing authority.

"You are not yourself, Cassidy," said the young motorist. "Why did you leave the *Grampus?*"

"That's my business," snarled the mate.

"Well, take my advice and go back there. No one is trying to deceive the captain."

"You've wormed yourself into his confidence, and what has he done to me?" There was bitterness in the mate's voice. "I'm the one that ought to be cap'n of the submarine, and, by thunder, I'm going to be!"

Matt got up from his chair, his eyes flashing.

"You're going to obey orders, Cassidy," said he, "if you want to stay with the *Grampus*. I'm in command, and I'll give you just a minute to leave here and make for the wharf. If——"

At that moment the mate's crazy wrath got the better of him. With a hoarse oath, he lurched forward and struck at Matt with his fist.

Matt avoided the blow with a quick side-step.

"Now's yer chance, Cassidy," breathed the husky voice of the man who had come with the mate. "It's now or never if you want to put him down an' out."

The fellow, as he spoke, slouched toward Matt with doubled fists. Matt had not the same consideration for this stranger that he had for the mate, and immediately after evading Cassidy's blow he whirled about.

"Who are you?" he demanded sharply.

For answer, the man tried to get in a blow on his own account. But he was not quick enough. With a nimble leap forward, Matt swung his own fist straight from the shoulder. The dingy blue cap flew off and its owner reeled against the side of the building. Just then Matt felt the arms of the mate going around him from behind.

At the same moment, however, footsteps came swiftly along the walk, mounted the steps, and Cassidy was caught by the throat in a firm grip.

CHAPTER V.

MOTOR MATT'S FORBEARANCE.

"What's all this? Jupiter! Two webfeet sailing into one lone-handed youngster! And he seems to be holding his own pretty well, at that. Let go, you!"

With that, Jordan wrenched Cassidy away and flung him heavily against one of the veranda posts.

The stranger, scowling and nursing a bruise on his chin, was gathering up his blue cap. Cassidy, panting and wheezing, was leaning against the post and glaring wrathfully at the consul.

"That man," said Matt, pointing toward the mate, "is Cassidy, second in command aboard the submarine. He takes it hard because Captain Nemo, Jr., placed me in charge, and he came ashore without authority. Who the other fellow is I don't know, but I presume it is some trouble maker the mate picked up."

"Trouble maker is right," went on Jordan. "That describes the rascal to a t, y, ty. I know him. He's Fingal, master of a shady schooner called the *North Star*, an all around bad one, and the authorities in a dozen ports in Central America will tell you the same. We'll land him in the skookum house. And as for Cassidy, it's against regulations for an officer to attack one who outranks him. We'll put *him* in the cooler, too."

The consul was about to call some one from the house with the intention of sending for an officer, when Matt interposed.

"I don't want to do anything like that, Jordan. These men have been drinking."

"That's no excuse."

"But Cassidy, when he's not half-seas over and got a fancied grievance, is a good fellow. He has proved that to me a hundred times. Besides, Captain Nemo, Jr., thinks a lot of him."

"Well, he can't think much of the captain," answered the consul dryly, "or he'd pay more attention to his orders. What do you want to do with the two men?"

"Let Fingal go about his business, if he has any. As for Cassidy, he can go back to the submarine and give his brain a chance to clear. After that he'll see things differently."

"I know my rights," snapped Cassidy, shuffling around belligerently, "and I'm going to hold out for 'em. I've been mate of the *Grampus* ever since she was launched. And now that the old man's laid up, I ought to be master. This here Motor Matt hasn't been on the submarine more'n two weeks, put together."

"Did you hear Captain Nemo, Jr., say that Motor Matt was to be put in charge of the craft?" queried Jordan.

"I heard it, but——"

"Did the rest of the crew hear it?"

"Yes, only they——"

"Everybody understands the situation, then?"

"I guess they do, if——"

"Then this is a case of all cry and no wool. You're making a fool of yourself, Cassidy, let alone showing mighty poor taste. Motor Matt is showing a whole lot more forbearance than I'd ever do, in the same circumstances. You made an attack on your commanding officer——"

"I don't admit he's that," broke in Cassidy fiercely.

"Nonsense, man!" cried the consul, out of patience. "You'd admit it quick enough if you wasn't drunk."

"What business you got buttin' into this, anyway?"

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Jordan pointed to the flag.

"This is a patch of American soil right in the middle of a foreign country," said he. "That flag is yours and mine, and I'm here to adjust just such differences as this between my fellow-countrymen. Motor Matt is captain of the *Grampus*, and you've heard his orders. If you and Fingal don't clear out, I'll call a policeman and have the pair of you taken to the lock-up."

Fingal edged away toward the veranda steps. As he drew close to Cassidy, he muttered something. The mate gave a thick response, and the two lurched down the steps and out of sight along the walk.

"Fingal," said Jordan, after watching the two out of sight, "is setting the mate up to act as he's doing. His influence is bad, particularly as the mate appears to be a good deal of a numskull without much reasoning ability of his own."

"He has always been a first-rate hand," returned Matt regretfully, "up in his duties and entirely reliable. This sudden move of his is one of the biggest surprises I ever had sprung on me."

"That's the way with some people. Give 'em the idea that they've been imposed on, and they're just weak enough in the head to make all sorts of trouble. If you've got the rest of the crew with you, though, it will be easy enough to take care of Cassidy. However, if he wanted to he could make lots of trouble for this expedition."

"I'll see that he doesn't do that. If he shows a disposition along that line, I'll have him locked in the torpedo room. Why he ever came here and set upon me like he did, is a mystery. I guess it was because he was too drunk to know what he was doing."

"That's an easy way to explain it," was the consul's sarcastic comment. "On the other hand, he may have come here with the expectation of doing something to you that would make it necessary for you to be left in Belize with Captain Nemo, Jr."

"No," answered Matt firmly, "I can't believe that."

"You're altogether too easy," proceeded the consul. "If you were hung up here with a couple of fractured ribs, or a broken arm, Cassidy would be the only one left to command the *Grampus*."

Matt shook his head.

"Cassidy isn't a brute," said he. "I'd like to know, though, why this chap, Fingal, is putting in his oar."

"He's got an axe to grind. Drunk or sober, Abner Fingal always has his eye on the main chance."

"Who is he?"

"He's a Yank, from somewhere up in Maine, but he's been in these waters so long he's about half Spanish. Crooked as a dog's hind leg—that's Fingal for you. Sometimes he hoists the flag of Costa Rica, sometimes that of Nicaragua, and now and then the cross of St. George, but no matter what colors he sails under he's the same old sixpence. Too bad Cassidy fell in with him. But there's no use of our wasting any time on those fellows. We've got the job of our lives ahead of us, and we've got to get the work started. Any arms aboard the *Grampus*?"

"I thought you said there wasn't to be any fighting?"

"I hope there won't be, my lad, and we'll do everything possible to avoid it, but there's always a chance of being slipped up in our calculations. How's the submarine armed?"

"There's a Whitehead torpedo in the torpedo room."

"We'll not use any torpedoes. If there's a scrap, it will be on the land and hand to hand. Any rifles or ammunition aboard?"

"None that I know about."

"Then I'll bring a few guns, merely to be on the safe side. You'll attend to the other equipment?"

"About all we'll need is a barrel of gasoline. I can pick that up and have it taken off to the boat."

"I'll come aboard, bringing this pilot I was telling you about, and the rest of the plunder, along toward evening. We'll drop down the coast to-night and start for the rendezvous of the revolutionists in the morning. It will be well, I think, to go up the river with the *Grampus* submerged. In that manner we shall be able to hide our approach. However, that is something we can settle later. If you——"

The consul paused, his eyes down the street.

"Well," he muttered, "here comes your friend, Ferral, and he appears to be in a tearing hurry. I wonder if anything has gone wrong with Nemo, Jr.?"

This thought was uppermost in Matt's mind as he sprang to the top of the steps and watched Dick

running toward the consulate along the street.

"What's up, Dick?" he asked anxiously, as his chum came close. "Is the captain all right?"

"They're bringing him on a stretcher, and the doctor thinks he'll be all right in a few days," Dick answered. "It wasn't that that made me clap on all sail, matey, but something else."

"What else?"

"Why, Cassidy. As we were coming ashore with the captain I saw the mate pulling off to a schooner that was anchored half a mile t'other side the *Grampus*. There was a chunk of a man with him in a blue cap and coat. They were aboard the schooner when we hit the landing, and before we started for town, the schooner's anchor was tripped and she was off down the coast with every rag of sail hoisted and drawing. What does that mean? What's Cassidy up to?"

Matt was astounded. Turning blankly on Jordan, he saw that his face was clouded and ominous.

CHAPTER VI.

"ON THE JUMP."

"You say the schooner got away to the south, Ferral?" asked Jordan.

"Aye, aye, and looked as though she was bound for down the coast. Looks like Cassidy had deserted, Matt."

"We ought to have jailed him," commented Jordan. "Did Cassidy know anything about the sealed orders, Matt?"

"Captain Nemo, Jr., had me read the orders aloud in the periscope room," Matt answered. "Cassidy had been in the conning tower, but when I finished with the letter I saw that he was in the room with us."

Jordan's face grew even more foreboding.

"This looks bad!" he exclaimed. "I wouldn't trust that Fingal man around the corner, and here he's run off with Cassidy and headed down the coast. There's something in the wind, and if our game is tipped off before we get to where we're going it will be a case of up-sticks with Coleman."

"I don't think Cassidy would dare tip off our work to Fingal!" exclaimed Matt, somewhat dashed by the course of events. [Pg 10]

"A drunken man is liable to do anything."

"But what would Cassidy have to gain by telling Fingal our business to the southward?"

"Why, as for that, Fingal has been suspected of helping those same revolutionists. If he can help the scoundrels hang onto Coleman, they might make it worth his while."

"The letter I read in the periscope room," said Matt, after a moment's thought, "spoke of the Rio Dolce as the place where Coleman was being held. This, you tell me, is wrong. In that event, and assuming that Cassidy heard the whole of the letter, then he has a clue that's not to be depended on."

"Fingal must know the Rio Dolce is not the place. The fact that the schooner bore away to the south proves that some one has correct information. No, Matt, Fingal has learned through Cassidy just why the *Grampus* put in at Belize; and Cassidy, intoxicated as he is and worked up over a fancied grievance, has cast in his lot with the schooner. The pair of them are off to the south to make trouble for us, take my word for it. What we must do is to get away as close on their heels as possible. We can't wait until evening, but must proceed on the jump and get away without losing any more time than necessary."

"Avast a minute," spoke up Dick. "You remember, Matt, that there was a schooner took Captain Sixty off the fruiter *Santa Maria*, and sailed with him to find the derelict brig. That schooner was to take off the arms and ammunition from the wreck, and would have done so if the submarine hadn't shown up and been backed by the cruiser *Seminole*."

"I remember that," said Matt. "What of it, Dick?"

"Well, matey, I'm a Fiji if I don't think the schooner that took Cassidy and the other swab south is the same one that figured in our affairs a few days ago."

To all appearances the consul had had news relative to these events in the gulf. As soon as Dick had finished, he slapped his hands excitedly.

"Jupiter!" he exclaimed. "This is more proof that Fingal is hand-and-glove with the revolutionists. This new move, Matt, means that that pair of scamps are off for the south to put a spoke in our wheel. We can't delay the start an instant longer than we find necessary to finish our preparations."

Before Matt could answer, an open carriage drove along the street. The doctor was in the rear seat supporting the captain. The latter looked like a very sick man indeed, and was leaning feebly against the doctor's arm.

"Don't tell him anything about Cassidy's running away," cautioned Matt, starting down the steps and toward the road. "It would only worry him, and we'll carry out the work that has been given to us, in spite of Cassidy and Fingal."

"He knows about it already," said Dick. "We discovered Cassidy and the other chap making for the schooner while we were coming ashore."

"Did the captain give Cassidy permission to leave the submarine?"

"No. Carl said that the captain became unconscious just when the mate started up to hoist the flag, and that the mate took another pull at the flask and went on up the conning tower ladder. It was French leave he took, nothing less. As soon as Dr. Armstrong got to the *Grampus* he wasn't any time at all in bringing the captain to his senses, and the first man Nemo, Jr., asked about was Cassidy."

By that time the carriage, which was proceeding slowly, was opposite Matt, Dick, and Jordan, who formed a little group on the sidewalk. In response to a gesture from the captain, the vehicle came to a halt.

"You are the American consul?" asked the captain, making an effort to straighten up.

"Yes," replied Jordan.

"I am Captain Nemo, Jr., of the submarine *Grampus*. My unfortunate illness puts me out of the work that lies ahead of the boat and her crew, but Motor Matt, there, is perfectly capable of discharging the duties of master. I should feel quite sure of the outcome if it was not for the mate. He has deserted, and I am positive he intends to make trouble. You must get away as soon as possible, Matt. Cassidy went the other way from the Rio Dolce—which is a move I can't understand, if he is planning to interfere with the rescue of Coleman."

Matt and Jordan exchanged quick looks. The captain, having no information to the contrary, was still under the impression conveyed by the sealed orders, viz.: that the captured consul was on the Rio Dolce instead of the river Izaral. Neither Matt nor Jordan attempted to set the captain straight.

Evidently the captain had talked more than was good for him, for when he finished he collapsed, and had hardly strength enough to say good-by. As he was driven off, Matt gazed after him sympathetically.

"Strange that a few hours should make such a difference in Captain Nemo, Jr.," he murmured.

"The climatic change perhaps had something to do with it, Matt," suggested Jordan. "But we can't stand around here, my lad. We've got to hustle—and this isn't a very good climate to hustle in, either. It's the land of take-it-easy. You get the submarine in shape, and I'll hunt up the pilot, get together the war plunder and my own traps, and join you just as quick as the nation will let me. On the jump, my lad, on the jump."

Jordan, suddenly energetic, turned and hastened back into the consulate.

"There's a whole lot to that land lubber, matey," remarked Dick. "He's as full of snap and get-there as any chap I ever saw. But what's the first move? You're the skipper, now, and it's up to you to lay the course."

"We've plenty of stores aboard for the trip we're to make, with the exception of gasoline. The *Grampus* will be in strange waters on a secret mission, and we must make sure of an abundant supply of fuel at the start-off."

The boys were not long in finding a place where they could secure the gasoline, and but little longer in getting a negro carter to convey the barrel to the landing. Here the same colored boatman who had brought Matt and Dick ashore was waiting, and the barrel was loaded and carried out to the submarine.

The sailboat hove-to as close alongside the *Grampus* as she could get, and both vessels were made fast to each other by ropes. The gasoline barrel was tapped, a hose run out from the conning tower hatch, and the negroes laid hold of a pump and emptied the barrel into the gasoline reservoir of the submarine.

Dick took charge of the transfer of the gasoline, while Matt went down into the periscope room and called up Speake, Clackett, and Gaines.

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"Friends," said the king of the motor boys, "we're off on a short cruise in strange waters—a cruise that will probably call for courage, and will certainly require tact and caution. Mr. Hays Jordan, the American consul, is going with us, and when he comes aboard he will bring a pilot who knows where we are to go and will take us there. You men know that it is Captain Nemo, Jr.'s order that I take charge of the work ahead of us. Have you any objection to that?"

"The captain knew his business," averred Gaines heartily, "and whatever is good enough for him is good enough for us."

Speake and Clackett likewise expressed themselves in the same whole-souled manner.

"Thank you, my lads," said Matt. "I suppose you have heard how the mate went off in a huff. That makes us short-handed, in a way, although the pilot we're to take on will help out. Our work is government work, something for Old Glory, and I feel that we will all of us do our best. We shall have to run all night, and I will arrange to have Ferral relieve Gaines, and Carl relieve Clackett. As for Speake, he will have abundant opportunity to rest, as most of our night work will be on the surface. Speake may now get us something to eat, and after that you will all go to your stations."

Speake was not long in getting his electric stove to work. There were only a few provisions he could prepare without causing an offensive odor, and the limited menu was quickly on the table. Hardly was the meal finished when a boat hove alongside with Jordan. Matt, Dick, and Carl went up on deck to assist the consul in getting his traps aboard.

Jordan had exchanged his white ducks for a trim suit of khaki. Two belts were around his waist, one of them fluted with cartridges, and the other supporting a brace of serviceable revolvers. With him came three Mauser rifles and a box of ammunition.

The pilot was an unkempt half-blood named Tirzal. He was bareheaded and barefooted, and had a ferret-like face and shifty, bead-like eyes.

As soon as the impedimenta was stowed below decks, Matt instructed Tirzal in the steering of the submarine. The boat could be maneuvered either from the conning tower or from the periscope room. When maneuvered from the conning tower, the pilot stood on the iron ladder, using his eyes over the top of the tower hatch; when steered from below, compass and periscope were used.

Tirzal grasped the details with surprising quickness, his little eyes snapping with wonder as they saw the panorama of ocean, shore and shipping on the mirror top of the periscope table.

While these instructions were going forward, Gaines and Dick had gone into the motor room, Clackett and Carl had posted themselves in the place from which the submerging tanks were operated, and Speake had gone forward into the torpedo room.

"We're all ready," said Matt. "Take to the conning tower, Tirzal, and give your signals."

The half-breed, as proud as a peacock to have the management of this strange craft under his hands, got up the ladder until only his bare feet and legs from the knees down were visible.

Matt, posting himself by the periscope, divided his attention between the panorama unfolded there and the work of Tirzal. He was considerably relieved by the handy manner in which the half-breed took hold of his work.

With ballast tanks empty, and the *Grampus* riding as high in the water as she could, the motor got to work the instant the anchors were off the bottom and stowed.

"We're off, Jordan!" cried Matt.

"Off on one of the strangest cruises I ever took part in," returned the consul, his face glowing with the novelty of the situation; "and it's a cruise, my boy," he added, a little more soberly, "which is going to demand all our resourcefulness in the matter of tact, skill, and courage. Even then there's a chance that——"

Jordan did not finish, but gave Matt a look which expressed plainly all that he had left unsaid.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LANDING PARTY.

During that night run down the coast the *Grampus* was driven at full speed. The electric projector was fitted against the lunettes of the conning tower, and threw an eye of light far out over the dark water.

It was the hope of those aboard the submarine that they would be able to overhaul and pass the schooner, *North Star*, which, presumably, was rushing on ahead of them to interfere in some manner with the work cut out for the *Grampus*.

The schooner had about three hours' start of the submarine, but the latter craft was keeping to the surface and traveling at such a speed that it was thought she would surely overtake the other boat before the mouth of the Izaral was reached.

However, in this Matt and Jordan were disappointed. They passed one steamer, creeping up the coast, but not another craft did they see.

"The *North Star* won't be able to ascend the Izaral, anyhow," commented Jordan. "If Fingal communicates with the revolutionists, he will have to send a small boat—and perhaps we can overhaul that boat before it reaches the headquarters of the insurgent force."

There was a certain amount of sleep for everybody aboard the *Grampus*, that night, but Motor Matt, Dick and Carl slept the first half of the night, and, after that, relieved Gaines and Clackett; Speake caught cat naps off and on; Jordan stretched himself out on top of the locker in the periscope room and took his forty winks with nothing to bother him; and Tirzal, when the submarine was in a fairly clear stretch of her course, was relieved by Matt and sent down to curl up on the floor and snore to his heart's content.

The tireless motor hummed the song familiar in Matt's ears, and the excitement of the work in prospect kept him keyed to highest pitch in spite of his loss of rest.

In the gray of early morning, an hour after Matt had turned off the electric projector, he sighted the mouth of a river with high, bluff banks on each side. On one of the banks, peeping out from a covert of royal palms, was a small village. Directly across the stream from the village, commanding both the river and the small harbor in front of the town, was a rude fort.

Matt called Tirzal.

"She's de ruvver, all right, you bet," declared Tirzal, after taking a look at the periscope. "Stop um boat, boss," he added. "We no want de people in de town to see um." [Pg 12]

Matt halted the submarine with the touch of a push button.

"We'd better submerge, Matt," called Jordan. "That's the way we've got to get up the river, and it's our proper course for dodging around the town. Can you see anything of the schooner?"

"There are only a few small native boats in the harbor," answered Matt. "The schooner isn't in sight."

"Beats the deuce what's become of the boat," growled the consul. "If she sent a launch up the river, the schooner ought to be somewhere around waiting for the launch to get back."

"She may have pulled off down the coast just to keep clear of us. How's the water in the river?"

"Him planty deep to where we go, boss," spoke up Tirzal. "Sometime him t'irty feet, mos'ly fifty feet. Eberyt'ing go fine if we keep in de channel."

"We'll be on the safe side," went on Matt, "and just swing along with the water over our decks and the top of the conning tower. Ten foot submergence, Clackett," he added through a speaking tube connecting with the tank room.

"Aye, aye, sir," came back the voice of Clackett.

The hiss of escaping air as the water came into the tanks was heard, and Matt secured the hatch and came down the ladder.

The hissing ceased suddenly.

"We're ten feet down, Matt," reported Clackett through the tube.

"Take the wheel, Tirzal," said Matt.

With head under the periscope hood and one hand on the wheel, Tirzal rang for slow speed ahead. Matt and Jordan likewise gave their attention to the periscope mirror and watched, with curious wonder, while the tropical river unfolded beneath their eyes like a moving picture.

The Izaral was bank-full. As the *Grampus* rounded the northern bluff and swerved into the river channel, the high, steep banks, covered with dense foliage, resembled a narrow lane with a blank wall at its farther end. When the boat pushed into the stream, however, and fought the current for three or four hundred yards, the seemingly blank wall gave place to an abrupt turn.

The submarine took the turn and entered upon another stretch of the lane.

This part of the river was as perfect a solitude as though removed thousands of miles from human habitations. At a distance of perhaps two miles from the coast the high banks dwindled to low rises, and on each side was an unbroken forest; the banks were overflowed; the trees seemed to grow out of the water, their branches spreading across so as almost to shut out the light of the sun and were reflected in the water as in a mirror.

Birds of gaudy plumage fluttered among the trees, and here and there in a bayou alligators could be seen stretching their torpid bodies in the black ooze.

Tirzal kept his eyes glued to the periscope. The channel was crooked and dangerous, and a moment's neglect might hurl the submarine into a muddy bank, causing trouble and delay, if not actual peril.

For two or three miles farther Tirzal kept the river channel. Finally they came close to a spot where a deep, narrow stream entered the Izaral on the right. Tirzal turned into this branch and, after ascending it for some fifty yards, had the propeller slowed until it just counteracted the current and held the *Grampus* stationary.

"We got to de place, boss," said Tirzal, lifting himself erect with a deep breath of relief. "Now we come to de top an' tie de boat to a couple ob trees on de sho'."

"Where are the revolutionists?" asked Matt.

"Dey a good ways off, boss. We hab to take to de bank an' go find um. I know de way. Here's where de boats come. You see um pitpan close by de bank? Him rebel's boat."

"Do you suppose," queried Matt, turning to the consul, "that the schooner sent word to the rebels by means of the pitpan?"

Jordan shook his head perplexedly.

"They wouldn't do that. The pitpan is no more than a mahogany log, hollowed out, and would be a poor sort of craft to row against the current of the Izaral while it's at the flood. I can't understand why we don't see or hear something connected with the schooner. Perhaps," and the consul's face brightened, "Fingal and Cassidy are on the wrong track, after all."

"You go to de top, boss," put in Tirzal, "an' me swim asho' wid rope; den we warp um boat close to de bank."

As a preparation for his swim, the half-breed began to divest himself of his clothes.

Matt gave the order to empty the ballast tanks by compressed air, and the *Grampus* arose to the surface to the tune of water splashing from the tanks.

"A party will have to land for the purpose of reconnoitring the position of the rebels," said Jordan.

"I would suggest, Matt, that the landing party consist of myself, Tirzal, of course, and some other person who you think can be easily spared. A strong force will have to remain with the *Grampus*, for our situation is encompassed with dangers. Before we can plan our dash successfully, we shall have to know something of the lay of the land and the disposition of the force that is guarding Coleman."

"You are right," returned Matt. "I ought to remain with the submarine——"

"And get a little sleep," cut in the consul. "You've been on duty all night and must rest up so as to be ready for the sharp work when it comes."

"I'll have Speake go with you and Tirzal," said Matt. "How long will you be gone, Jordan?"

"Not more than two or three hours at the outside."

By then the *Grampus* was at the surface, and Matt climbed the ladder and threw back the hatch. Gaining the dripping iron deck, he looked and listened. The thick forest lay on every side, and the silence was broken only by the flapping of wings, and the lazy splash of alligators in a near-by bayou.

Tirzal, a rope around his waist, scrambled clear of the conning tower and slipped from the deck into the water. He swam swiftly and silently to the bank, pulled himself up, untied the end of the rope from about his waist and passed it around a tree.

Dick gained the deck, made the boat end of the rope fast to an iron ring in the bow, and watched while Tirzal lay back on the cable with all his strength and hauled the bow shoreward, a foot at a time.

"The bank lays steep-to, matey," announced Dick, "and we can run the nose of the old flugee right into solid ground."

"That will make it easier for Jordan and Speake to effect a landing," said Matt.

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A few minutes of pulling on Tirzal's part brought the point of the submarine's bow against the bank. Speake had come up on deck with one of the rifles. A moment later Jordan followed him, with Carl trailing along in his wake.

Jordan carried two rifles, one for himself and one for Tirzal, and also Tirzal's bundle of clothes.

"We're taking all the rifles, Matt," said Jordan, "but I have left my cartridge belt and six-shooters in the periscope room. If you should be attacked—which I hardly expect—your best defense will be to sink to the bottom of the river. We'll be back in three hours. If we're not, you'll know something has gone wrong with us. But don't fret about that. Tirzal knows the country, and he'll steer us clear of trouble."

Speake and Jordan made their way to the point of the bow and sprang ashore. As soon as Tirzal had slipped into his clothes and grasped the rifle, the three comprising the landing party waved their hands to those on the deck of the boat and vanished into the forest.

"Dose fellers vas going to haf all der fun," grumbled Carl.

"I don't think anybody is going to have a monopoly of the 'fun,' as you call it, Carl," said Matt grimly. "You and Dick stay on deck and keep a sharp watch for rebels. I'm going to the periscope room to take a nap. In order to be on the safe side, Dick, you'd better let the *Grampus* slide back toward the middle of the stream. Leave the cable on the tree and pay it off from the bow of the boat."

"Aye, aye, matey," answered Dick.

"Call me if anything happens," said Matt, climbing into the conning tower.

On reaching the periscope room, he signaled Gaines to stop the motor, and told him and Clackett that the submarine was moored, and that they could either sleep or go on deck, as they preferred.

Matt, thoroughly tired out by his long night vigil, stretched himself on the locker and was soon sound asleep.

How long he slept he did not know, but he was suddenly aroused by a pounding of feet on the steel deck, startled cries and a tremendous splashing of water.

Thinking that Dick and Carl, who had comprised the anchor watch, had been caught napping, and that the revolutionists were making an attack on the boat, he leaped up, caught the first weapon he could lay hold of, and darted for the iron ladder.

The weapon happened to be an old harpoon belonging to Speake, who had once had a berth aboard a whaling ship.

When Matt lifted his head above the rim of the conning tower hatch, a strange scene met his eyes.

CHAPTER VIII.

CARL IN TROUBLE.

The most prominent object that met Motor Matt's startled eyes was a big bull alligator. The creature was thrashing about in the water, now striking the sides of the *Grampus* with its powerful tail, and now making an attack on the pitpan, or dugout canoe, which has already been referred to.

Carl Pretzel was in the canoe, and he was wildly anxious to get back to the submarine. The alligator, however, was floundering around in the stretch of water between Carl and the *Grampus*.

"Helup!" whooped Carl. "Der olt man-eader vill ged me oof you don'd do somet'ing."

It hadn't seemed to occur to the Dutch boy that he could go ashore—being much nearer the bank, in fact, than the submarine.

Dick had a hatchet which he had picked up from somewhere on the deck. He rushed back to the conning tower and climbed into it, thus securing an elevated position which offered some advantage in case he hurled the hatchet at the big saurian.

"Paddle ashore, Carl!" called Matt.

"Dot's so," gasped Carl; "meppy I vill. Coax der pig feller away; I don'd like how he uses dot tail oof his."

Carl fell to work with his paddle. By that time, however, the alligator's temper was aroused, and, before Carl had got the pitpan turned, the big creature glided forward, opened its ponderous jaws and closed them about the forward end of the dugout.^[B]

[B] The common supposition that an alligator uses only his tail as a weapon of offense and defense is erroneous. His tail is for swimming purposes, and his big jaws are his main reliance in combat.

There was a frightful crash, and the sides of the pitpan were stove in like an eggshell. One end of the wrecked boat was pushed high in the water, and Carl, at the other end, was in sore straits.

"Helup, or I vas a goner!" yelled Carl, leaping into the water as Motor Matt made ready to hurl the harpoon.

Carl's predicament had become serious in the extreme. If the enraged reptile turned on him, his doom was sealed. The task for Matt and Dick, which they recognized on the instant, was to wound the alligator and take its attention from the boy in the water.

The harpoon left Matt's hand, and the hatchet left Dick's, at the same moment. The hatchet was turned by the reptile's scaly coat as by so much armor plate. The harpoon, however, by a chance, struck just back of the alligator's fore-leg in the place where the hide was not so thick. The big fellow had lifted head and shoulders out of the water in the fierceness of the attack on the pitpan—which fact alone made Matt's blow possible.

Dick, tumbling out of the conning tower, seized one end of a coil of rope and hurled it toward Carl. The Dutch boy grabbed it, and Dick drew him in rapidly, hand over hand.

The alligator, meantime, had whipped away around the bow of the *Grampus*, half its head only on the surface, and leaving a reddened trail in its wake.

Carl, sputtering and gasping, fell dripping on the submarine's deck.

"Be jeerful, be jeerful," he mumbled. "I tell you somet'ing, dot vas der glosest call vat efer I hat mit meinseluf. Dot's righdt."

He pulled himself up by means of the periscope mast, and shook his fist after the alligator, which was returning to the bayou.

"You don'd make some meals off me, I bed you!" he taunted. "Nexdt dime you do a t'ing like dot, meppy I vill haf a rifle hanty. Den, py shinks, I gif you more as you can dake care oof."

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"You'll have to pay Speake for that harpoon, Carl," laughed Matt.

"Mit bleasure," answered Carl. "Id vas der harboon vat safed my life."

"How did you come to get in that fix?"

"Veil, I t'ink I vould like to look at dot bitban, so Tick he bulls on der rope und prings der supmarine glose inshore. I shdep off der pow, valk along der pank und ged indo der tugoudt; den I bick oop der baddle und t'ink I vill row pack, as Tick hat let der supmarine oudt indo der rifer again. Schust as I got shdarded, dot pig alligador pobs oop righdt py der poat. I say 'shoo' aber he von'd shoo vort' a cent. Den I drow vone oof der baddles ad him, und he geds madt as some vet hens und pegins vorking dot dail aroundt. Den I vished dot I vas some blace else, und make some yelling. Der resdt iss vat you know. Ach, blitzen! Der bitban iss gone oop, und I vas poody near gone oop meinseluf. Anyhow, a miss iss as goot as a mile, don'd it?"

"It's just as well, I guess," said Matt, "that the dugout has been destroyed. If we were attacked here by the rebels, the boat would have helped them. But you should not have left the submarine, Carl. The noise we have made here may have been heard. In that event, we can expect trouble."

Just at that moment, Clackett and Gaines came up through the hatch.

"What's been going on?" Clackett asked.

"You've missed the fun, matey," returned Dick. "Carl had a little trouble with an alligator, and just got out of it by the skin of his teeth."

"Clackett an' me was asleep," said Gaines. "Blamed funny, though, we didn't hear the rumpus. What woke me was you fellows, talking and walking over the deck. Haven't Speake and Jordan shown up yet?"

"What time is it?" asked Matt.

"It was a little after twelve when Clackett an' me left the torpedo room."

"Great spark plugs!" exclaimed Matt, startled. "I must have slept longer than I supposed. It was nine o'clock when Jordan and the others went ashore. Jordan said they'd be back in three hours, at the outside. More than three hours have passed and they're not back."

Matt's eyes, suddenly filled with anxiety, swept the tree-covered bank.

"Tirzal knew the country, mate," said Dick, "and I guess those fellows are wise enough to steer clear of the rebels while they're trying to locate Coleman."

"Something may have gone wrong with them, for all that. If Cassidy and Fingal managed to get word to the revolutionists, then quite likely Jordan, Speake, and Tirzal got into a snare. If they did, and if——"

Matt was interrupted by the distant report of a rifle, echoing and re-echoing through the dense timber. There was just one report, and then silence fell again; but, during the silence, the troubled glances of those on the *Grampus* met questioningly.

"Our landing party has been discovered," declared Matt, who was first to collect his wits. "Dick and I will go ashore and see if we can be of any help. I'll leave you in charge of the *Grampus*, Gaines. As soon as we are off the boat, you, and Clackett, and Carl cast off from the shore, go below and sink until the periscope ball is just awash. You may have to put out an anchor to hold the boat against the current. One of you keep constantly at the periscope, watching the left-hand bank. If you see one of us come there and wave his arms, you'll know we want you to come up and take us aboard. Be as quick as you can, too, for we may be in a hurry."

"Depend on me, Matt," said Gaines.

"Depend on all of us," added Clackett.

Matt turned to his sailor chum.

"Go into the periscope room, Dick," said he, "and get those two revolvers of Jordan's. Never mind the belts. Empty out some of the cartridges and put them in your pocket. Hustle, old chap."

Dick was only gone a few minutes. During that time Gaines and Clackett were busy with the rope, hauling the submarine back to the bank, and Matt was listening for more firing.

No more reports came from the timber, however, and when Dick reappeared and handed Matt one of the revolvers, both hurried to the bow of the submarine and sprang ashore.

"Don't forget your orders, Gaines," cautioned Matt.

"You can bank on it that I won't, Matt," answered the motorist. "You and Dick look out for yourselves. Don't make a bad matter worse by letting the revolutionists get a grip on you. If they did, we'd be in hard shape for sure."

CHAPTER IX.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

At the point where Jordan, Speake and Tirzal had vanished into the wood, Matt and Dick found a faint path—a path so little traveled and so blind that it could not be seen from the deck of the *Grampus*, even when she was hauled close to the shore.

"It's as plain as a hand spike," remarked Dick, as he and Matt made their way along the path, "that Jordan and the others took a slant in this direction."

"That's the kind of a guess I'd make," said Matt. "By following the path, though, we don't want to forget that they got into trouble. When you're on a road that leads to trouble, Dick, you've either got to leave it or else be mighty careful."

"I don't know how we'd get through this jungle if we didn't follow the path. Tirzal claims to know the country. If that's a fact, then it's main queer he couldn't pilot Jordan and Speake around any stray groups of insurrectos."

"Our failure to see anything of the schooner while we were off the coast, or anything of a launch from the schooner while we were coming up the river, rather gave Jordan the idea that Fingal and Cassidy were on the wrong track. But I'm inclined to think Jordan was wide of his trail. They must have sent word here and enabled the revolutionists to fix up some sort of a trap."

"Shiver me! I can't begin to tell you how surprised I am at the way Cassidy is acting—that is, if he's gone into cahoots with this swab of a Fingal for the purpose of backcapping our plans to save one of our own countrymen. What sort of a two-faced bandicoot is Cassidy, anyhow? He must be mighty sore to act like that. But mayhap you're mistaken, Matt."

"I hope I am," returned Matt gravely. "I always liked Cassidy, and I hate to see a good man go wrong in such a way as that."

The boys had dropped their voices to an undertone. While they talked, they hurried ahead along the dim, winding path, keeping their eyes constantly ahead.

Owing to the close growth of trees, but very little sun filtered to the ground below, and a twilight gloom hovered over the narrow way. Matt was in advance, and suddenly he halted, whirled on Dick and pulled him behind a matted vine that hung from a tree beside the path.

"Hist!" whispered Matt, in his chum's ear. "I can hear voices around the turn in the path ahead. Some one is coming this way. Crouch down and perhaps they'll go past without seeing us."

Scarcely breathing, the two boys knelt behind the matted vine, each holding his weapon ready in case they should be discovered and compelled to fight for their freedom.

It was not long before the men whom Matt had heard came straggling around the turn in the path. To their amazement, no less a person than Fingal was at the head of the column. The light was none too good for making observations at a distance, but there could be no mistaking the burly form in the dingy blue cap and coat and dungaree trousers.

Fingal slouched along with the thwartship roll of a sailor with stable ground under him. At his back came half a dozen nondescript men, of various shades of color from coal black to light yellow.

These men, no doubt, formed part of the rebel army. They were all barefooted, their clothes were ragged, and they wore straw hats. Each had a machete strapped about his waist, but there the uniformity of their accoutrements ceased. Two had no arms apart from the machetes; one of the remaining four had a long-barreled, muzzle-loading rifle, and the other three had revolvers. Fingal had no rifle, but there was a belt about his waist that supported a six-shooter over his hip.

The file was still talking as it passed the two boys, but it was Spanish talk and neither Matt nor Dick could understand anything that was said.

Without seeing the boys, the file swept on and vanished around another bend. Matt drew a long breath of relief.

"We're out of that mess, Dick," he murmured, getting up and stepping back into the path. "I guess we've settled all doubts about Cassidy and Fingal. Fingal's here, and I'll bet something handsome Cassidy can't be very far off."

"Cassidy's trying to down us," growled Dick, "and that's as plain as the nose on your face. The old Sou'wegian! He ought to be trussed up at a grating and pounded with the 'cat' for this. I never thought it of the old sorehead! Where do you suppose that pack is going?"

"They're looking for the *Grampus*, I guess."

Dick chuckled.

"And the old *Grampus* is ten feet under water! If Gaines is next to his job, he's fixed things so they won't be able to see even the periscope ball."

"Trust Gaines to do everything possible. I don't think the submarine is in any particular danger, but we couldn't help her any if she was. We'll keep on and see where this trouble road lands us."

"Aye, aye, old ship! Luck seems to be on our side, so far, and here's hoping that it will stay with us."

Matt once more took the lead and set the pace. The ground they were covering had a slight inclination upward, and the path continued to wriggle, serpent fashion, through the dense growth of timber.

It was the almost impenetrable screen of the woods that suddenly plunged the boys into difficulties. Rounding an abrupt turn, beyond which it was impossible to see because of the dense foliage, Matt and Dick plunged recklessly into full view of an encampment. It was a large encampment, too, and pitched in the midst of a big clearing. The place was not a hundred yards off, and Matt, pulling himself short up, got a glimpse of black soldiers lolling and smoking under rough canvas shelters.

For an instant he halted and stared; then whirled face about.

"Back, Dick!" he exclaimed. "Run, run for your life!"

The words were hardly necessary. The boys had been seen and a wild clamor came from the encampment. A fizzing sputter of firearms awoke echoes in the timber, and scraps of lead could be heard slapping and zipping through the leaves.

"We might be good for three or four," panted Dick, as he stretched his legs along the path, "but we have to knock under when the whole rebel army gets after us."

"Save your breath!" cried Matt. "Run!"

"Where'll we run to? That other pack, with Fingal, is ahead."

"Never mind. The largest force is behind."

The dark-skinned rebels were tearing along like mad. The boys, looking over their shoulders, could see them wherever the path straightened out into a short, straight-away stretch. At such times, too, some one of the pursuing rabble let fly with a bullet. The bullets went wild, for there is no such thing as accurate shooting by a man who is on the run.

The boys were holding their own—perhaps doing a little better.

"We can distance 'em," puffed Dick, "if they'll only give us a little time. We'll be around the next turn and halfway to the one beyond before they show up again."

Dick had hardly finished speaking before he came to a sudden halt.

"Keep on!" panted Matt.

"Can't! We're between two fires, matey. That other gang has heard the firing and is coming back. Let's get behind trees and do the best we can for ourselves. Oh, this *is* a rum go!"

Matt was able to hear the men racing along in advance of them, and the larger force behind was drawing nearer and nearer.

The outlook was dark, and the only thing left for the boys to do seemed to be to dig into the dense undergrowth and take their chances of being tracked down.

With one accord they sprang toward the left-hand side of the path. The timber, in that direction, seemed a trifle less thick than on the right.

Before they had vanished they heard a guarded voice calling from the right.

"Matt! Motor Matt!"

Startled at hearing his name, the young motorist paused and whirled about. His astonishment grew. A woman—a young woman—had emerged through the trailing creepers and was beckoning wildly.

"This way!" she called, still in the same guarded tone. "Quick, if you want to save yourselves."

A moment more and Matt and Dick both recognized the speaker. She was not one whom they would have trusted had circumstances been other than they were. Just then, however, but little choice was left them.

"It's that or nothing," muttered Dick, and he and Matt charged back across the path and followed the girl into a tangle of bushes.

Hardly had they vanished when both parties of pursuers pushed into sight from right and left.

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CHAPTER X.

STRANGE REVELATIONS.

It was in New Orleans that an attractive young lady, with liquid Spanish eyes, had called to see Motor Matt and had told him many things which were not true. Because of this misinformation, Motor Matt had been lured into the hands of Captain Jim Sixty, the filibuster. The girl who had been instrumental in carrying out this plot against the king of the motor boys was Ysabel Sixty, Captain Sixty's daughter.

The distrust of Matt and Dick, even at the moment when they were hemmed in on both sides by the revolutionists, will be understood when it is explained that their "friend in need" was none other than Ysabel Sixty.

The boys were amazed to see her there in that rebel-haunted wilderness, but they repressed their excitement and curiosity until the girl had led them unerringly to a little cleared space in the heart of the woods.

Here there was a rude shelter constructed of a ragged tarpaulin, and an *olla*, or earthen water jar, suspended from the branches of a tree.

The girl turned and faced the boys as soon as they reached this primitive camp.

"You are safe, for the present," said she. "I am glad I could do something to help you."

"Strike me lucky!" growled Dick, his keen eyes on the girl's face. "Are you helping us, Ysabel Sixty, or luring us into another trap, like you did up in New Orleans?"

A look of sadness and contrition swept over the girl's face. It was a pretty face—not so pretty as it had been in New Orleans, for now it was worn and haggard—and that ripple of sorrow touched it softly.

"I have paid for all that," said the girl slowly. "I have paid for it with more bitter regrets than I can tell. Now, maybe, I can help to undo the wrong. What I did in New Orleans I did not do willingly. My father threatened to kill me if I failed to carry out his wishes. Now he is in the hands of the law, you are free, and I am adrift in this wild country."

There was something in the girl's voice that touched both Matt and Dick. It could not be that she was again playing a part, for there was that in her words and manner which told of sincerity.

"How do you happen to be here?" asked Matt.

"My father, as I suppose you have heard, left the steamer *Santa Maria* to go on the schooner *North Star* and hunt for his water-logged brig. I continued on to Belize on the *Santa Maria*, with orders from my father to take the first boat from Belize to Port Livingstone, at the mouth of the Izaral. There I was met by some of General Pitou's soldiers, and brought out to this camp to wait until my father, or my uncle, should come. My father did not come, and will not. My uncle has already arrived, and it is to avoid him that I have come away by myself, into this part of the

woods."

"Who is your uncle, Ysabel?" asked Matt.

"Abner Fingal."

This took the breath of both of the boys.

"Fingal!" exclaimed Matt.

"His real name is Sixty," explained the girl, "and he is my father's brother. He is captain of the schooner that has been helping the revolutionists, and he has sworn vengeance on all those who had anything to do with my father's capture."

"That means us, matey," and Dick turned for an apprehensive look through the timber in the direction of the path. "I never dreamed of anything like that," he added.

"It's not generally known," said the girl, "that Captain Fingal and Captain Sixty are in any way related. They have both been helping the revolutionists, and, if the uprising was a success, they were to be rewarded."

"You ran away from the rebel camp in order to avoid Fingal?"

"Yes."

"Why was that?"

A flush ran through the girl's haggard face.

"My uncle wants me to marry General Pitou, a Frenchman who is in command of the revolutionists. When I marry," and the words came spitefully and with a stamp of the foot, "I shall marry to please myself, and not some one else."

"Right-o, my lass!" approved Dick. "Don't let 'em bullyrag you into marrying a Frenchie, anyhow."

"I heard that my uncle was expected to reach the camp soon," went on the girl, "and I ran away last night. Pedro, a Mexican who used to be a sailor on my father's brig, helped me to get away. He fixed that little tent for me, and this morning, when he brought me breakfast, he told me some news."

"What was that?" inquired Matt, scenting something of importance.

"Why, Pedro said that my uncle, together with another man named Cassidy, had come over from Port Livingstone on a little gasoline boat which they had stolen from the custom-house officer in the town. They brought information that a boat that travels under water was coming to release the American prisoner. Of course," and the girl smiled a little, "I knew who it was that was coming in that under-water boat, so I made Pedro tell me everything he knew."

"He said the boat was coming from Belize, and that the American consul to British Honduras might come with it. He told me that Fingal informed the general that it would be possible to entrap the other consul, and that this would give the rebels two valuable prisoners to hold until the American government would exchange Captain Sixty for them. The plan was to capture the under-water boat and all on board. Fingal and this man Cassidy were to have the boat, and Fingal was to be allowed to do whatever he pleased with all the prisoners except the consul."

"We know what that meant, matey," said Dick, making a wry face. "The old hunks wanted to make us walk the plank for the part we played in the capture of Jim Sixty."

"Pedro said," went on Ysabel, "that General Pitou doubled the guards all around the camp so that those who came to rescue Coleman would not only fail, but would be captured themselves."

"The plan must have worked out pretty well," observed Matt. "Did Pedro tell you whether any of the rescuers had been captured?" [Pg 17]

"He came very early this morning," answered Ysabel, "before the general's plans had been carried out."

"Mr. Coleman is with the insurgents?" asked Matt.

"He has been with them for a long time."

"Is he well treated?"

"As well as he can be. The rebels are half starved, but Mr. Coleman shares their rations with them."

"Where is he kept?"

"In a tent in the middle of the encampment. He is constantly under guard, but, while I was in the camp, I was able to talk with him. We were the only ones who could speak English, and the soldiers were not able to understand us. I told Mr. Coleman that I was going to run away, and he said it was the best thing I could do. He asked me, before I left, to take a letter from him to the customs officer at Port Livingstone. But he wasn't able to write the letter before Pedro helped me get away."

Here was great news, but not wholly satisfactory. The captured consul was alive and well cared for; but he was also well guarded in the heart of the insurgents' camp.

"That puts me in a blue funk," muttered Dick. "I wouldn't give a hap'orth for our chances of doing anything for Coleman. If we get away from here ourselves, we'll be doing well. And then, too, what's become of Jordan, Speake and Tirzal? I hate to make a guess, for it fair dashes me."

Matt was also very much alarmed on account of their missing companions; in some way, however, he hoped through Ysabel Sixty to be able to accomplish something—if not for Coleman, then at least for Jordan and the two with him.

"How did you happen to be so close by, Ysabel," queried Matt, "when Dick and I were so sorely in need of help?"

"Pedro said that you would probably make a landing in the Purgatoire, which is a branch of the Izaral, and that the general was watching closely the path that led from the branch to the encampment. I heard a number of rifle shots, and that led me to hurry toward the path. I got there just in time to see you. I am sorry for what I was compelled to do in New Orleans, and if I can help you any now I wish you would let me."

"You have already been a lot of help to us," said Matt. "Whether you can help us any more or not remains to be seen. Perhaps, Ysabel, we may be able to help *you* a little."

"How?" she returned, leveling her lustrous black eyes upon him.

"You can't remain here, in this poor camp, indefinitely," went on Matt. "Pedro is taking a good many chances, I should think, coming here to smuggle food to you. What would happen if General Pitou was to catch Pedro? In that case you would be left without any one to look after you."

"I know that," answered the girl, drawing a long face, "but anything is better than being compelled to marry the general. I *won't* do that!" and again she stamped her foot angrily.

"What are your plans?" asked Matt.

"Pedro is going to try and get a pitpan for me and send me down to Port Livingstone. He says there is a pitpan on the Purgatoire, and that, just as soon as the hour is favorable, he will start me for the town."

"That pitpan has been stove in and destroyed," said Matt, "so you can't count on that. Why not go down the river with us, in the *Grampus*? Have you friends in Port Livingstone?"

"No," replied the girl, a flash of pleasure crossing her face at Matt's suggestion that she go away in the submarine, "but I have good friends in Belize—my mother's people. They will take care of me. I should have stayed there instead of coming on to Port Livingstone as my father told me."

"Then it's settled," said Matt definitely; "we're going to take you with us when we go."

"When are you going?" asked the girl.

"Just as soon as we can find out what has become of the rest of our party and do something to help them."

"The rest of your party? Who are they?"

Thereupon Matt began to tell the girl about Jordan, Speake and Tirzal, how they had come ashore to reconnoitre and had not returned. Barely had he finished when a low whistle, like a signal, floated out of the depths of the wood. Matt and Dick jumped and clutched their revolvers.

"It's Pedro!" whispered the girl. "You have nothing to fear from him, but he mustn't see you. Hide—over there, behind those bushes—and wait till he goes away."

Matt and Dick hurried in the direction of the girl's pointing finger. They had no sooner got safely out of sight than Pedro came running breathlessly into the little clearing.

CHAPTER XI.

ONE CHANCE IN TEN.

Pedro was as ragged as all the rest of the rebels, but he was brown, not black or yellow. He was barefooted and wore on his head a battered straw hat. His only weapon was a machete, fastened about his waist by a piece of rope. He was a man of middle age, and from his manner there was not the least doubt of his loyalty to the daughter of his former captain. He carried a small parcel, knotted up in a dusty handkerchief, and laid it on the ground near the water jar; then, drawing off and keeping close watch of the timber behind him, he began speaking hurriedly in Spanish.

The girl's face lighted up as she listened. Once in a while she interrupted the torrent of words pouring from Pedro's lips to put in a question, then subsided and let the torrent flow on.

For five minutes, perhaps, Pedro talked and gesticulated. At the end of that time he pulled off his tattered hat, extracted a scrap of folded paper from the crown and handed it to the girl. Then, with a quick, low-spoken "*Adios!*" he vanished into the forest.

As soon as he was safely away, Ysabel turned toward the bushes where the boys had been concealed and clapped her hands.

"Come!" she called; "I have something to tell you."

Matt and Dick hurried to join her.

"What's it about?" asked Dick eagerly.

"It's about your friends, of whom you were telling me when Pedro came. They have been captured—"

"Keelhaul me! There's nothing very pleasing about that."

"Didn't you expect it?" the girl asked. "You knew something must have happened to them when they failed to return to the boat."

"Yes," spoke up Matt, "we expected it, but I think both of us had a hope that they had merely been pursued into the wood and were working their way back to the *Grampus*."

"The men General Pitou had set to watch the path from the Purgatoire were the ones who captured them. Mr. Jordan had time to fire just one shot before they were seized, but that bullet wounded a captain, one of the general's best men. Pedro says General Pitou is very angry, and that he is going to keep all the prisoners and not release them until the United States government gives up my father."

"The government will never do that," said Matt. "Our country is too big to be bullied by a handful of rebels, 'way down here in Central America."

"Then General Pitou says the prisoners will all be killed."

There was little doubt in Matt's mind but that this irresponsible rebel general would be reckless enough to carry out his threat.

"Oh, but we've made a monkey's fist of this, all right," growled Dick. "We come down here to rescue Coleman, and, instead of doing that, we leave Jordan, Speake and Tirzal in the enemy's hands. A nice run of luck this is!"

Matt was equally cast down.

"Tirzal is to be shot as a spy," went on Ysabel.

"Poor chap! But what could you expect? I hope the president of this two-by-twice republic will capture every man-jack of the rebels and bowse every last one of them up to the yardarm. That's what they're entitled to, from General Pitou down."

"Did Pedro have anything to say about us?" inquired Matt.

"That's where the good part of it comes in," went on the girl. "The rebels think you're in the woods, somewhere to the north of the path. All the general's force, excepting about twenty-five armed men who are guarding the prisoners at the encampment, are hunting through the timber in the hope of catching you. Fingal is helping in the search, and vows he will make you pay dearly for the part you played in the capture of my father."

"I fail to see anything pleasant in all this, even yet," continued Dick. "I thought you said that here was where the good part comes in?"

"Can't you see?" cried the girl. "If all the rebels, outside the encampment, are looking for you in the timber the other side of the path, why, that leaves the way clear to the submarine. We can go there, right off, and get away from General Pitou and his men."

There was a short silence after this. Matt and Dick were both turning the subject over in their minds. When their eyes sought each other, dogged determination could be read in each glance.

"As you say, Ysabel," said Matt, "we have an opportunity to get back to the submarine, but we can't go and leave our friends behind us."

"You—can't—go?" breathed the girl, staring at Matt as though she scarcely understood his words. "Why can't you go?" she went on, almost fiercely. "Your friends are captured, and how can you hope to get them away from twenty-five armed men? Don't be so foolish! Get away while you can—pretty soon it will be too late, and if you are caught you will be shot."

"What's in that handkerchief, Ysabel?" queried Dick, pointing to the parcel Pedro had placed on the ground near the water jar.

"Food," said the girl curtly. "Eat it, if you want to. I'm not hungry."

She was in a temper because Matt and Dick would not hurry away to the submarine. She could not understand why they should delay their flight when it was manifestly impossible for them to be of any help to their captured friends. As if to further emphasize her displeasure, she turned her back on the boys.

Dick stared at her, and then swerved an amused glance upon his chum.

"Didn't Pedro give you a note, Ysabel?" asked Matt gently.

"Yes. It was from Coleman. He managed to write it and give it to Pedro for me. It is mine."

"Suppose you read it? Perhaps there is something in it that is important."

Ysabel partly turned and threw the note on the ground at Matt's feet.

"You can read it," she said.

Matt picked up the scrap and opened it out. It was written in lead pencil, on the back of an old envelope.

"I hope you can get away some time to-day in that pitpan Pedro was telling you about. If you can do that, you can help all the prisoners now in General Pitou's hands. Some time soon we are to be taken down the Izaral halfway to Port Livingstone, where the rebels have another camp which they consider safer than this one. We will all go in the gasoline launch which was stolen, early this morning, by Fingal and Cassidy. Tell this to

the customs officer at Port Livingstone, and ask him to do his best to intercept the launch and help us. I cannot write more—I have not time."

This was the note.

"Shiver me!" muttered Dick dejectedly, "if the old cutthroat, Pitou, has his prisoners taken farther back in the jungle, there'll be no possibility of rescuing them. We're on the reefs now, for sure."

Matt turned to Ysabel. Her anger was passing as quickly as it had mounted, and she seemed anxious to meet any question Matt should ask her. [Pg 19]

"When Fingal and Cassidy came up the river in the gasoline launch," said Matt, "did they turn into the Purgatoire branch?"

"No. Pedro said that they went on up the Izaral, and got across to the encampment by another road through the woods."

"Then, if the prisoners are brought down in the launch they'll have to pass the mouth of the Purgatoire?"

"Yes."

"Dick," said Matt, "there's a chance that we can do something to that boat load of prisoners."

"What?" queried Dick, pricking up his ears.

"We can go back to the submarine, drop down the Purgatoire and wait there, submerged, until the gasoline launch comes down."

"Then what, matey?" asked Dick.

"Then we'll do whatever we can. There'll be five of us on the submarine, and I don't see why we couldn't accomplish something."

But Dick shook his head.

"You don't know, matey," said he, "that Coleman's information is correct. It's hardly likely that Pitou would blow the gaff to one of his prisoners."

"Coleman may have found it out in some other way than from General Pitou."

"Well, the launch may already have dropped down the river."

"Hardly, I think, when most of the rebels are out looking for us. There's a chance, Dick."

"One chance in ten, I should say, matey."

"That's better than no chance at all, which seems to be what we have here."

"We've worse than no chance at all, out in this scrub with the rebel army looking for us. If we're caught, we'll be done browner than a kippered herring. Although I haven't much hope, I'm for making a quick slant in the direction of the *Grampus*."

"Then you're going to the submarine?" asked Ysabel joyfully.

"Yes, and we'd better start at once while the coast seems to be clear."

The girl clapped her hands and started for the timber.

"Do you want this?" asked Dick, lifting the bundle from beside the water jar.

"No, it's only food—my dinner that Pedro brought me. You have plenty on the submarine, haven't you?"

"Yes," Matt laughed.

"Then hang that to a tree branch for Pedro. Probably he robbed himself to help me. He'll come back and get it."

Dick twisted the knots of the handkerchief into the end of a branch and they all started hurriedly back toward the path.

The difficulties of the way made it necessary for them to travel in single file. Matt went ahead, Ysabel followed him, and Dick brought up the rear.

In ten minutes they were back in the path and hurrying swiftly in the direction of the Purgatoire. But ill luck was still following them, like an evil spectre.

They had not gone far along the course before a rebel soldier sprang from the timber into the path at Matt's side.

The surprise was mutual, and, for an instant, Matt and the negro stared at each other. Fortunately the negro had no firearms. He drew his machete, but before he could aim a stroke with it, Matt had leaped forward and struck his arm a fierce blow with the butt of Jordan's revolver.

A yell of pain fell from the negro's lips, his arm dropped at his side and he jumped backward into the woods.

"Quick," shouted Matt to those behind. "There may be others with him and we'll have to make a dash for the *Grampus*. Run on ahead, Dick, and get the submarine up and close to the bank. I'll follow you with Ysabel."

Dick would have demurred at this arrangement, but a chorus of wild yells, issuing from the wood,

proved that the negro had spread the alarm.

"The boat will be ready for you," shouted Dick, as he passed like a streak along the path.

Seizing the girl's arm, and keeping the revolver in hand, Matt started on as rapidly as the girl could go.

CHAPTER XII.

BY A NARROW MARGIN.

Ysabel made poor work of the flight.

"Go on," she begged; "don't try to save me. You can get away if you don't have to bother to help me along."

"I'll not leave you," answered Matt firmly, taking a quick look over his shoulder. "The soldiers have not yet reached the path and there's a good chance for us. Do your best, Ysabel!"

The girl struggled along as well as she could, Matt bounding ahead and dragging her by main force. The shouts behind were growing louder. A rifle was fired and the bullet hissed spitefully through the air above their heads.

"Fingal will kill you if he catches you," panted the girl.

"I'm not going to let him catch me," answered Matt.

"He will catch you if you try to take me with you! Leave me, I say. I won't be hurt. Perhaps, if I turn around and run toward them, I can do something to help save you."

"You're wasting your breath," said Matt finally. "Save it for running."

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Ysabel was a girl who was accustomed, in some things, to having her way. She thought that, if Matt persisted in burdening himself with her, he would surely be captured, and she was anxious to save him at all costs. Thus, in a fashion, she could atone for what she had done in New Orleans.

Suddenly, while Matt was dragging her onward, she threw herself upon the ground.

"I can't go another step!" she cried breathlessly. "Leave me and save yourself."

He made no reply, but bent down and picked the girl up in his arms. Then, thus burdened, he staggered on along the path.

The pursuers were coming closer and closer. Two or three shots rang out, so close together that they sounded almost as one. Matt stumbled and nearly fell.

"You're hurt!" cried the girl, noticing how his left arm dropped at his side, releasing her.

"Nicked, that's all," he answered. "The shock of it came near to taking the strength out of me for an instant. I'm all right now, although the arm isn't much good for the present."

"I'll run along beside you," said the girl, in a strangely subdued tone.

Her ruse to get Matt to leave her—for ruse it was—had not succeeded. On the contrary, it had cost Matt something. The girl, all contrition, ran at his side and did much better than she had done before.

A turn in the woods put them out of sight of their pursuers and presented a screen against the vicious firearms.

"Just a little farther," breathed the girl. "The river is close now."

"We'll make it," returned Matt cheerily.

His face was a trifle pale, but the same dogged look was in his gray eyes which, more than once, had snatched victory from seeming defeat.

"Does your arm hurt, Matt?" the girl asked.

"It's feeling better now," and Matt lifted it.

A little stream of red had run down his hand. The girl stifled a cry as she looked.

He laughed lightly.

"A scratch, that's all," he assured her. "Let's see how quick we can get around that next turn. When we pass that, we'll have a straight run to the river."

They called on every ounce of their reserve strength, and were around the bend before their enemies had had a chance to do any more firing.

Matt was wondering, during that last lap of their run, whether they were to be defeated at the very finish of their plucky flight.

They had delayed too long in leaving the girl's camp. He saw that, plainly enough, and yet he would not have started back to the boat at all unless he had received the news contained in Coleman's note.

Had Dick reached the river in time to attract the attention of those on the submarine and have

the craft brought to the surface, ready and waiting for Matt and the girl?

If not, if the slightest thing had gone wrong and caused a delay, then Matt and his companion must surely fall into the hands of Fingal and General Pitou.

Yet, harassed though he was by these doubts, Matt's nerve did not for a moment desert him.

The rebels were behind them, and firing, when he and Ysabel reached the bank of the river. But the soldiers were firing wildly now, and their bullets did not come anywhere near their living targets.

And there, plainly under Matt's eyes, was the *Grampus*. She was at the surface, he could hear the throb of her working motor, and Dick was forward, swinging back on the cable and holding her against the bank. Carl was half out of the conning tower, tossing his hands frantically.

"Hurry oop! hurry oop!" clamored Carl. "Don'd led dose fellers ged you, Matt. Schust a leedle furder und—"

Matt was about to yell for Carl to drop out of the tower and clear the way, but a bullet, fanning the air close to Carl's head, caused him to disappear suddenly.

"You'll make it!" yelled Dick, reaching over to help the girl to the rounded steel deck.

"Into the tower hatch with you, Ysabel!" cried Matt. "Help her, Dick," he added. "There's no use hanging onto the rope now."

As Matt scrambled to the deck, the impetus of his leap flung the bow of the submarine away from the bank. Dick was already pushing and supporting Ysabel toward the tower hatch.

The bullets were now flying too thickly for comfort, but Matt drew a long breath of relief when he saw the girl disappear behind the protection of the tower.

"In with you, Dick!" shouted Matt, the *pingity-ping* of bullets on the steel deck giving point to his words.

"But you're hurt, matey," answered Dick.

"No time to talk!" was Matt's brief response.

Dick, without delaying matters further, dropped through the top of the tower. The firing suddenly ceased. As Matt mounted the tower and threw his feet over the rim, he saw the reason.

Four of the ragged soldiers had leaped from the bank to the submarine's deck. More would have come, but the gap of water had grown too wide for them to leap across it. These four, scrambling and stumbling toward Matt, caused their comrades to hold their fire for fear of injuring them.

Just as Matt dropped down the iron ladder, the foremost of the negro soldiers reached the tower. His big hands seized the rim as he made ready to hoist himself upward and follow the fugitives into the interior of the boat.

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Matt had yet to close the hatch, and the negro's hands were in the way. With his clenched fist he struck the black fingers. His work was somewhat hampered from the fact that his left arm was still not to be depended on, so he had to use his right hand entirely.

With a howl of pain the negro pulled away his hands. Thereupon, quick as a flash, Matt reached upward and closed the hatch. Not a moment too soon was this accomplished, for the other three soldiers had reached the tower and were preparing to assist their comrade.

Matt pushed into place the lever holding the hatch shut.

"Fill the ballast tanks!" he shouted. "Pass the word to Clackett, Dick. Lively, now! Ten-foot submersion! We've got to clear the decks of these negroes. If they should break one of the lunettes we'd be in a serious fix."

Down below him Matt could hear Dick roaring his order to Clackett. With eyes against one of the narrow windows Matt watched the rebel soldiers.

They were beating on the hatch cover with their fists, and kicking against the sides of the tower. On the bank, their comrades were running along to keep abreast of the boat and shouting suggestions.

The *Grampus*, steered by Dick with the aid of the periscope, had turned her nose down-stream in the direction of the Izaral.

The hissing of air escaping from the ballast tanks as the water came in was heard by the four ragamuffins on the outside of the steel shell.

From their actions, they began to feel alarm. This strange craft was more than their primitive minds could comprehend.

Slowly the submarine began to sink. As the water crept up the rounded deck, the negroes lifted their bare feet out of it gingerly and pushed up higher. One of them leaped onto the conning-tower hatch.

Then, suddenly, the *Grampus* dropped below the water. A mud-colored blur closed Matt's view through the lunette, and as he slid down the ladder into the periscope room, he heard faint yells from the negroes.

Dick, hanging over the periscope table, twirling the steering wheel, was laughing loudly.

"Look, Matt!" he cried. "If you ever saw a lot of scared Sambos, there they are, up there in the

Purgatoire!"

Matt stepped to Dick's side and peered down upon the mirror. Far behind, in the trail of bubbles sent up from the *Grampus*, the four negroes were swimming like mad toward the shore. Their comrades on the bank were leaning out to help them, and it was evident that they would all be saved.

"We can laugh at the affair now," said Matt, "yet it was anything but a laughing matter a while ago. Eh, Ysabel?"

"You saved me, Motor Matt," replied the girl, "and now let us see how badly you are hurt."

"A bandage will fix that in a little while, Ysabel," said the other; "just now I've got something else to attend to, and the arm can wait."

Turning back to the periscope, he watched the river bank sliding away behind them, and waited for the moment when they should draw close to the Izaral.

Their work—the work which they had one chance in ten of accomplishing—must be looked after.

CHAPTER XIII.

WAITING FOR SOMETHING TO HAPPEN.

Ysabel sank down on the top of the locker. Carl had turned on the electric light in the periscope room and was staring at the girl in unconcealed amazement.

"How vas dis?" he asked. "Miss Harris, iss it you, sure enough?"

"Not Miss Harris," answered the girl with a flush, "but Miss Ysabel Sixty."

"You bed you," returned Carl, slightly abashed. "Miss Sixdy, dis vas kevite a surprise. I hat no itee dot you vas in dis part oof der world. How id vas——"

"Slow down your motor, Gaines!" shouted Matt, through one of the tubes. "Make ready the bow anchor, there, Clackett—you don't need to bother with the tanks, because we're going to anchor under the surface. Carl," he added, turning to his Dutch chum, "below with you and make ready to let go the stern anchor when I give the word. Sharp on it now!"

Carl jumped for the bulkhead door leading to the after-part of the ship.

Every one on board, with the exception of Dick and Ysabel, were astounded at these manoeuvres of Motor Matt's. However, Matt was in charge, and all hands obeyed him without question.

With his eyes on the periscope, Matt stood and watched, now and then calling a direction to Dick, at the wheel.

When the *Grampus* shot from the Purgatoire into the Izaral, she went broadside on against the current of the larger stream. The steel hull heaved over a little under the mass of flowing water, but the screw and the rudder held her stiffly to her course.

"Now," shouted Matt into the speaking tube, "let go your anchors!"

The swishing clank of chains, paying out under water, came to the ears of those in the periscope room.

"Anchor's down!" cried Clackett.

"Dot's der same here!" yelled Carl, his voice ringing from aft.

"Stop the motor, Gaines!" ordered Matt.

The humming of the cylinders ceased, and the *Grampus*, anchored broadside on across the Izaral, tugged at her mooring chains.

"Where are we, Matt?" came the voice of Gaines through the motor-room tube. "I thought we were making a run to get away from the revolutionists."

"Hardly, Gaines," answered Matt. "We don't want to run away and leave our friends in the hands of the rebels. Come into the periscope room, all of you, and I'll explain what we are doing and why we are doing it."

"And while you're explaining," said Ysabel quietly but firmly, "I'll take care of your arm. Where is something I can use for a bandage? And I'd like a sponge and a basin of water."

"You'll find a bandage in that locker you're sitting on, Ysabel," said Matt.

"I'll get the water," said Dick.

By the time Matt had been divested of his coat, and had had his shirt sleeve rolled up, Gaines, Clackett and Carl were in the periscope room, sitting on the low stools that served for chairs. Dick was back, also, with the basin of water and the sponge, and Ysabel began dressing the wounded arm.

"Great guns, Matt!" exclaimed Gaines. "Are you hurt?"

"A scratch, nothing more," Matt answered. "The bullet simply left a mark and then went on. I brought you up here, friends," the young motorist continued, "to tell you where we are. We're

anchored, broadside on to the current, in the middle of the Izaral River, our periscope ball some three or four feet above the surface of the water. We are going to stay here and wait for something to happen."

"What's to happen?" asked Clackett.

"Well, we've got news that a motor launch is coming down the Izaral loaded with prisoners. If possible, we must intercept the launch. Dick says we've a chance in ten of winning out, but we can't neglect even so slim a chance as that, inasmuch as it happens to be our only one."

Gaines, Clackett and Carl were even more deeply puzzled than they had been.

"Who are the prisoners?" inquired Gaines.

"Coleman, for one—the man we came to rescue. Then there are Jordan, Speake, and, I hope, Tirzal."

"Jordan and those with him were really captured?" demanded Clackett.

"Yes."

"Ach, du lieber, vat a luck!" wailed Carl. "Ve come afder vone Amerigan consul und lose anodder! Dey vas hootoos, dose consuls."

Matt, carefully watching the periscope as he talked, repeated the experiences that had overtaken him and Dick while they were reconnoitring to find some trace of Jordan's party.

The presence of Ysabel had aroused much curiosity in all of them, and the explanation as to how she came to be on the boat straightened out that part of the matter to the satisfaction of every one. Carl, in particular, was highly pleased. He had dried himself out, after his fall in the river, and was feeling easy in his mind, now that Matt and Dick, at least, had been kept out of the hands of General Pitou.

"You dit a pig t'ing, Miss Sixdy," said Carl, "ven you safed Matt und Tick, und Matt dit some more pig t'ings ven he safed you, so dot vas efen. Now, oof ve don'd make some misdakes in our galgulations und are aple to resgue dot poat loadt oof brisoners, eferypody vill be so habby as I can'd dell. Oof gourse, I don'd vas in id, ad all. I hat my drouple mit an allikator, und hat to shday pehindt und dake care oof der supmarine."

"Do you feel pretty sure, Matt," queried Gaines, "that the motor launch with the prisoners will come down the Izaral?"

"All we have to go on, Gaines, is Coleman's note," answered Matt. "I may say that this move constitutes our only hope. If something doesn't happen, about as we expect and hope it will, then we'll have to give up all thought of doing anything for Coleman, or our friends."

"We'll hope something will happen, mate," said Dick. "In case the launch comes down the river, what are you intending to do?"

"I have my plans, Dick," said Matt. "If every one carries out his orders on the jump, I feel pretty sure the plan will carry. The main thing is to keep a keen watch for the launch."

"That's easy enough during daylight, with the periscope ball elevated as it is," remarked Gaines, "but if the launch happens to come down-stream in the night—which, it strikes me, is altogether likely—then the boat is apt to get past us."

"Not if a good lookout is kept."

"How will you keep a good lookout if you don't go to the surface?"

"Well, what the eye can't see the ear will have to tell us. The hollow ball and the hollow periscope mast will bring the *chug* of the motor boat's engine into the submarine. The craft ought to be heard a good distance away. One man will have to be at the periscope all the time, and all the rest of you must be at your stations, ready to carry out orders at a second's notice. You go down to the motor room, Gaines, and Clackett, you go to the tank room. I will stay on the lookout. At midnight, I will have Carl and Dick relieve both of you, but all hands must be on the alert to turn out at a moment's warning. Carl will get some supper for us, and pass it around."

Matt, as usual, had made no arrangement whereby he could secure any rest for himself. But he felt that he could not rest, even if he had the chance.

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The rescue of Coleman meant much to Captain Nemo, Jr., for on the performance of the *Grampus* might depend the sale of the submarine to the United States government. While the failure to rescue Coleman, and even the loss of Jordan, Speake and the pilot had nothing to do with the boat's capabilities, yet failure, nevertheless, would spoil a sale and fill the authorities in Washington with distrust.

The *Grampus* was not a passenger boat, and she had now a lady passenger to take care of. Matt finally solved the difficulty by having Ysabel conducted to a small steel room abaft the periscope chamber. This was set aside entirely for the girl's use, and she arranged a fairly comfortable bed on the floor.

After supper had been eaten, Ysabel retired to her cabin, and Carl and Dick nodded drowsily on the looker in the periscope room. Matt, wide awake as a hawk, kept his eyes on the periscope table and his ears attuned for the first sound of the launch's motor.

Night, however, closed in without bringing any sign of the boat. The gloom, of course, put the periscope out of commission as it deepened, but still Matt watched the table top, looking for

possible lights and listening for the clank of machinery.

Dick took Matt's place for an hour or two, while Matt lay down and tried to sleep. Although he had had only three hours' sleep in two days, yet the young motorist found it impossible to lose himself in slumber. He was keyed up to too high a pitch, and was too worried.

At midnight he sent Dick and Carl to relieve Gaines and Clackett, and was alone with his vigils in the periscope room.

From midnight on the night seemed an eternity; and the gloomy hours passed without anything happening. Matt had believed with Gaines that night would be the time the captors would choose for coming down the river with their captives. Inasmuch as they had not come, did this mean that they were not coming at all? that General Pitou had changed his plans?

Desperately Matt clung to his last shred of hope and watched the coming day reflect itself in a gray haze over the top of the periscope table.

Slowly the trees along the river stood out with constantly increasing distinctness, and the bosom of the rolling river took form beneath his eyes. Up-stream he could see nothing, but—what was that he heard?

Scarcely breathing, he gripped at the table top and listened intently. *Chuggety-chug, chuggety-chug*—there was absolutely no doubt of it! A motor boat was coming down-stream—his ears had heard it before the periscope had been able to pick it up.

"At your stations, everybody!" Matt shouted. "Dick! up here in the periscope room with you! *The motor launch is coming!*"

CHAPTER XIV.

MOTOR MATT'S GREAT PLAY.

Instantly all was commotion on board the submarine, but it was orderly commotion. Clackett jumped to his ballast tanks, Gaines "turned his engine over," and Carl and Dick hastened into the periscope room.

"Aft with you, Carl," called Matt, "and stand by to take in the stern anchor. Clackett," and Matt's lips passed to the tube leading to the tank room, "forward, and be ready for the bow anchor. Dick," Matt's eyes were again on the periscope table, "bring all the loose coils of rope you can find and lay them on the locker."

Dick had no notion what the ropes were wanted for, but he went for them, and soon had four coils laid along the top of the locker. After that, he passed to the steering wheel, standing shoulder to shoulder beside Matt in front of the periscope table.

There was an atmosphere of expectancy all through the submarine. Every nerve was strained, and each person stood at his post almost with bated breath. Ysabel, without speaking, came into the periscope room and watched Matt with steady eyes.

"There she is!" cried Dick, his eyes on the periscope mirror; "I see her coming!"

Matt also saw the motor launch, breaking into sight against the background of indistinct foliage, far up the stream. The boat was comparatively small, and well loaded. Fingal was in the bow thwarts, with a rifle across his knees; in the stern was Cassidy and a negro soldier, both likewise armed with rifles. Between Fingal, and Cassidy and the negro, were the prisoners. There were four of them—Jordan, Speake, Tirzal and a slender, full-bearded man in a battered solar hat. Cassidy was close to the gasoline engine and was evidently looking after it. Fingal, from the bow, was doing the steering.

"They're all there," said Matt, in a calm, matter-of-fact tone. "Come here, Ysabel."

The girl stepped obediently to his side. Matt pointed to one of the prisoners reflected in the mirror.

"Is that Coleman?" he asked.

"Yes," was the answer.

"You'd better go back and sit down, Ysabel," said Matt. "Pretty soon we're going to need all the space we have in this vicinity."

Matt was easy, almost smiling. A great relief had come to him, for the launch was in sight with four captives and three captors, and now it lay with Matt alone whether his friends and Coleman should be released or not.

"Why don't you do something, matey?" implored Dick, his hands shaking with excitement.

"I'm waiting for the right time," was the cool answer.

"We've only two revolvers," muttered Dick, "and there are three rifles in that boat. What can we do?"

"Nothing with firearms. We've got to make a different play, Dick."

A moment longer Matt waited, studying the approach of the launch with calculating eyes; then,

suddenly, he turned.

"In with the anchors, Clackett, you and Carl," he called. "See how quick you can get them off the bottom. Start your engine, Gaines," he added.

The lifting of the anchors caused the *Grampus* to drift with the current. But only for a moment. Soon the screw took the push and Dick, under orders from Matt, headed the craft up-stream and the propeller worked just fast enough to hold her steady.

"Anchor's stowed!" called Clackett.

"Same vay mit me!" came from Carl.

"Jump for the tank room, Clackett!" called Matt. "Carl, up here with you."

As Carl came rolling excitedly into the periscope room, Clackett reported, by tube, that he was back at his usual post.

Matt turned to Dick.

"Keep the *Grampus* pointed for the launch, Dick," said he. "Carl, take a coil of rope and climb to the conning-tower hatch. The moment the tower's awash, open the hatch, get out on the deck and do what you can with the rope."

Carl was bewildered. What was he to do with the rope? "I don'd know no more as a mu-el," he said to himself, but nevertheless he obeyed orders.

Matt continued to watch the periscope table and to calculate. Then, again suddenly, he whirled to the tube communicating with the tank chamber.

"Empty the tanks by compressed air, Clackett!" he called. "See how quick you can do it! *Everything depends on you!*"

The hiss of the air was heard ejecting the water. The submarine began to rise.

"Bring her up under the launch, Dick!" cried Matt. "Make no mistake, old chap! *Under the launch, mind!*"

A thrill ran through Dick Ferral's nerves. At last he understood what his old raggie was about! Had he had time, Dick would have liked to give Motor Matt a hug from sheer admiration.

"When the tanks are empty," shouted Matt to Clackett, "come up, take a coil of rope and rush for the deck."

"Aye, aye, sir!" called Clackett.

The periscope revealed a strange situation. The launch was almost upon the periscope ball. Too late those in the motor boat recognized the device. Before the boat could sheer off, the *Grampus* had risen under her bodily and lifted her clear of the water. The steel hull of the submarine shivered, and wild cries came from those in the motor boat.

Dick grabbed a coil of rope and leaped for the iron ladder.

"Up with the hatch, Carl!" he yelled. "Out on the deck and see how many you can pull out of the river."

"Hoop-a-la!" cried Carl, wrenching back on the lever and throwing up the dripping hatch cover.

He scrambled out.

"Steer from the tower, Dick," Matt called, racing up the ladder, "as soon as the hatchway is cleared."

Clackett followed Matt, and Ysabel Sixty followed Clackett. The thrill of the moment was in the girl's nerves. She could not have held herself back if she had wanted to. Armed with a coil of rope, she climbed over the rim of the hatch and onto the slippery plates of the deck.

What Matt saw, when he struck the deck, was an overturned launch in the water, and two men clinging to the bow of the *Grampus*. One of these was Cassidy, and the other was Tirzal. The former was clinging to the flagstaff, and the other to one of the wire cable guys. By an accident, they had held to the curved deck instead of slipping back into the water.

Dick, from the tower, was able to direct the boat so as to facilitate the picking up of those in the river.

Carl tossed a rope to Speake, Matt got one to Coleman, and Clackett succeeded in getting a line in the hands of Jordan. Ysabel tossed one end of her rope to Fingal, but he flung it aside with an oath. The negro soldier reached for it, but Fingal struck his hand fiercely aside, seized the soldier by the neck and began swimming with him toward the river bank.

While the rescued prisoners were being hauled aboard, Matt watched Fingal and the negro. The current was swift, but both men were strong swimmers. To Matt's satisfaction he saw the two gain the bank and get safely upon dry ground. Fingal's move was characteristic of him, for, as soon as he could lift himself, he shook his clenched fist at the submarine and those on her deck. If he had had a rifle, undoubtedly he would have done some shooting.

"Motor Matt!" cried Jordan.

He was sitting on the deck, his back against the side of the conning tower, shaking the water out of his ears.

"Well?" asked Matt.

"Did you come up under that launch by accident, or did you do it purposely?"

"I had that all figured out, Jordan," laughed Matt.

"It was the greatest play I ever heard of!"

"It was the only one we could make that would stand any show of winning. When you, and Speake, and Tirzal left the *Grampus*, you took all the rifles. We were left with only a brace of six-shooters. Of course I knew better than to try to get the best of Fingal, Cassidy and the soldier with two popguns when they were armed with rifles."

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"Of course you did!" chuckled Jordan. "I'm as wet as a drowned rat, but I'm happy—oh, yes, happier than I ever thought I should be, a few minutes back. By the way, Matt, that gentleman with the dripping whiskers is Jeremiah Coleman, the fellow we came to rescue, and just missed leaving a few more prisoners to keep him company. Jerry, shake hands with Motor Matt. He was cracked up pretty high in those messages from New Orleans, and I must say that he fills the bill."

"Glad to meet you, Motor Matt," smiled Coleman, as he leaned to take Matt's hand. "You've done a fine thing for all of us, and it's something that won't be forgotten in a hurry."

"Dose iss der kindt oof t'ings vat he always does," bubbled Carl.

"Cassidy and Tirzal seem to have come aboard without gettin' wet," remarked Clackett, with a glance of contempt in the direction of the mate.

Cassidy sat on the deck with his head bowed, as abject a figure as Matt ever saw.

"Which way now, Matt?" asked Dick.

"Belize," replied Matt. "Go down the ladder and let Tirzal take the wheel until we all get below; after that, Tirzal can steer from the tower. Go below, gentlemen," said Dick. "You'll feel more comfortable after you dry your clothes, and then we can have a talkfest. There are a lot of things I've got to find out."

Ysabel led the descent into the periscope room; Coleman followed her, then Tirzal, then Speake, and then Jordan. Clackett and Carl brought up the rear of the procession, both, with their eyes, telling the melancholy Cassidy what they thought of him as they dropped down the tower hatch.

"Better go below, Cassidy," said Matt calmly.

For answer, the mate jerked a revolver from a belt at his waist and lifted the muzzle to his breast.

In a twinkling, Matt had hurled himself across the slippery deck and knocked the weapon out of Cassidy's hand.

"You're less of a man than I thought you, Cassidy," cried Matt contemptuously, "to think of such a thing as that!"

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE WAY TO BELIZE.

"What have I got left to live for?" scowled Cassidy, looking up into Matt's face. "I turned against the best friend I ever had just because he had sense enough to put a better head than mine in charge of the *Grampus*."

"You took to drinking," said Matt. "That, I think, was at the bottom of what you did. But I don't harbor any ill will, and I don't believe Captain Nemo, Jr., will, either."

"He'll never overlook this," muttered Cassidy, shaking his head. "An' it was him that pulled me out of the gutter, up there in Philadelphia, set me on my feet and done everything possible to make a man o' me. I ain't fit to live!"

"When a man's not fit to live," said Matt, tempted to be out of patience, "he certainly is not fit to die. Look this thing square in the face, Cassidy, and live it down."

"But you don't know all I done."

"I guess I do, pretty near."

"No, you don't. I began plannin' to do some underhand work the minute I heard what the cap'n was going to do for you. Whenever I git a drink in me, I'm ripe for anything. That's why I sampled that brandy I was bringing to the cap'n. I wanted to nerve myself up for what I was plannin' to do. I listened to you when you was reading the sealed orders. I heard it all, and I knew I had something then that was valuable. As soon as you and Ferral left the *Grampus*, I got away, too. As I stepped out o' the sailboat at the landing, this Cap'n Fingal spoke me. We went into a drinkin' place by the wharf and we spilled a couple of tots of rum down our throats. That was enough to set us both going. I told Fingal what I knowed, and he told me a lot about himself. He said he'd make it right with me if I could get you disabled so'st you couldn't manage the *Grampus*, and would have to be left behind. That, as Fingal and I both figgered, would put me in command. It was to handle you rough, and land you in a hospital, that we trailed you to the consulate. When we failed there, we come back to the landing and Fingal says for me to jump aboard his schooner with him and then lay for the *Grampus* up the Izaral. I told Fingal I thought it was the Rio Dolce, but he laughed and said if you'd read it that way you was stringing me."

"I was about ready to quit on the business, after what happened at the consulate, but Fingal got more rum down me, talked about how I'd been imposed on, and told what a fine thing it would be if we could make you fail in the work you had come down here to do.

"That kind of pleased me, too. If I could have fixed it so you'd fall down on the job the cap'n had laid out for you, then, I thought, the cap'n would think he had made a mistake in not putting me up as boss of the submarine. Funny how a feller's idees will git squeegeed that away as soon as he gets a little grog under hatches.

"Well, anyway, I went with Fingal. We left the schooner at Port Livingstone, and Fingal told the mate of the schooner to go down to Barrios and stay there till Fingal joined him. Then we stole the motor boat and hustled up the river to that outfit of ragamuffins that's hopin' to grab the country and turn it over to another dictator. I was disgusted with the lot of 'em, and with old Pitou more'n any of the rest. I wouldn't go near Coleman, and when our information worked out, and Jordan and the half breed was captured, I felt sore enough at myself; but it was Speake that cut me up the worst. Him and me had always been a heap friendly on the *Grampus*, and there I was, after betraying him into the hands of his enemies. Oh, I tell you, Matt, I felt meechin' enough to go down to the river and jump in. Then, when old Pitou made up his mind to send the prisoners down the river in the launch to another of his hangouts where he thought they'd be safer, and appointed me as one of the guards to go with 'em and see that none of 'em got away, I felt about as respectable as a horse thief. Of course, when you bumped us on the bottom with the submarine, I couldn't sink into the river and never come up; oh, no, I just naturally had to land right on the deck, without so much as getting my feet wet. I don't know how I ever can go back to Belize and look the cap'n in the face. That's honest."

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Cassidy's regret for what he had done was so profound that it made a deep impression on Matt.

"You're not a bad fellow at heart, Cassidy," said the young motorist. "Captain Nemo, Jr., knows that, as well as all the rest of us. Besides, it was a little bit rough to jump a fellow like me over the head of an old hand like you, and——"

"It wasn't!" growled Cassidy, "not a bit of it!" He lifted his fierce eyes. "Think I've got the head to do what you done? No, not in a thousand years. The cap'n knowed what he was about, and I didn't have sense enough to see it."

"Well, you buck up and go to the captain. You didn't cause any great harm, anyhow, the way things have come out. The captain will be so pleased over what's been accomplished that he'll overlook a good deal. I'll say a good word for you, Cassidy."

"You will?" demanded the mate incredulously.

"Yes."

"Well, that's a heap more'n I deserve."

"You'll be the mate to help us back to Belize. I'm in charge until we get there, and I order you to go below and go on duty."

"Orders is orders, I reckon," and Cassidy hoisted himself up and followed Matt to the tower hatch and down into the periscope room. The room was fairly crowded, and a roar of delight went up at the sight of Matt. It died away suddenly as Cassidy showed himself. A glitter came into Speake's eyes as he regarded the mate.

"Better lock Cassidy up somewhere, Matt," suggested Jordan.

"Yes," grunted Speake venomously, "or tie his hands and feet an' throw him overboard."

"You're wrong in your drift, friends," said Matt quietly. "Cassidy is a good fellow at heart, and Fingal twisted him around his fingers. I haven't any fault to find with Cassidy, and he's going back to Belize as mate of the *Grampus*."

"Avast there, matey!" expostulated Dick. "That's playing it kind of rough on some of the honest men that stood by the ship, don't you think?"

"Vat a foolishness, Matt!" exploded Carl. "Dot feller come pooty near being der finish oof you."

"Better think that over a little, Matt," suggested Jordan.

"Him plaanty bad man," said Tirzal, climbing up into the tower in order to do his steering from the lookout.

"If he stays, mate, I resign!" snapped Speake.

"No, you don't, Speake!" answered Matt. "I'm master of this boat until we get back to Belize. Cassidy's mate, and you're in the torpedo room."

"You see how it is, Matt," muttered Cassidy.

"It's as I want it, Cassidy," said Matt firmly, "as far as Belize."

"But, look here," began Speake, disposed to argue the point, "here's a man, holdin' the responsible position of mate, as goes——"

"Forget that for a while, Speake," interrupted Matt, "and remember the number of times Cassidy's pluck and friendship have been a help to all of us. Put all the fine things Cassidy has done into one side of the scale, and this one black mark in the other, and there's still more than enough left to entitle him to our confidence."

"I'm obliged to you, King," said Cassidy. "I'll go on as mate as far as Belize, and then the cap'n

can settle the matter as he thinks right. Just now, though, I'm tired and I guess I'll go to the torpedo room and take a rest."

"All right," said Matt. "You go to the torpedo room, too, Speake," Matt added.

Speake hesitated, then followed Cassidy out of the room.

"You're a queer jigger, Motor Matt," remarked Jordan.

"But he's right, all the same," said Coleman.

"Oh, yes, Jerry," grinned Jordan, "you stick in your oar. You're sort o' chesty for a chap that's been stowed away in the jungle with revolutionists for a couple of weeks or more, eating mule meat and making all kinds of trouble for the State Department of your native country, ain't you? How'd you get run away with, in the first place?"

"That was too easy, Hays," laughed Coleman. "I came across from the Pacific to Port Livingstone, and while I was there the revolutionists gobbled me."

"I believe you said they'd treated you well?"

"The best they could. I played seven-up and picquet with Pitou, and I learned, before I had been two days in the rebel camp, that it wasn't safe to beat the general. As long as I allowed him to beat me, I was treated to the best he had. Whenever I beat him, my rations—even the mule meat—were cut down."

Coleman turned to Ysabel, who had been sitting quietly by.

"I'm mighty glad, little girl," said he, "that you are able to get clear of Pitou and Fingal."

"So am I, Mr. Coleman," answered Ysabel. "If it hadn't been for Motor Matt I'd be still in the camp."

"Motor Matt again!" laughed Coleman.

"Always Motor Matt!" chimed in Jordan, with a quizzical look at the king of the motor boys.

"He iss der feller vat does t'ings, you bed you," declared Carl.

"Let's hear about what happened while Speake, Tirzal and I were away from the boat," suggested Jordan.

"Not now," answered Matt. "I'm hungry, whether the rest of you are or not. Speake," he called through the tube leading to the torpedo room, "see if you can rustle something in the way of breakfast."

"Aye, aye, sir," answered Speake heartily.

For some time the *Grampus* had been heaving and tossing in a way that made it difficult for those in the periscope room to keep their seats.

Matt took a look into the periscope.

"Ah," said he, "we're out of the river and heading for Belize."

"And glad I'll be to get back there," remarked Jordan, with satisfaction. "You've made me a lot of trouble, Coleman."

"I seem to have made a lot of you a good deal of trouble," returned Coleman, "and I'm mighty glad I've ceased to figure as an international issue."

"We all are, for that matter," said Jordan.

CHAPTER XVI.

A DASH OF TABASCO.

In due course the delayed breakfast came up from the torpedo room. By some error, Speake had mixed an overdose of tabasco sauce with the canned beans which he had warmed up on his electric stove.

"Glory!" sputtered Jordan, reaching for water. "Speake must have mixed a Whitehead torpedo in that mess of beans."

"Only a dash of tabasco," replied Coleman. "Haven't you been in Central America long enough to like hot stuff?"

"Not long enough, anyhow, to acquire an asbestos stomach. Talking about a dash of tabasco, though, Motor Matt's raid on the rebels must have been something of that variety. Reel it off, Matt. We're all good listeners."

"You do it, Dick," said Matt. "You were with me and did as much of the work as I did."

"Belay, on that!" remonstrated Dick. "I didn't take care of Ysabel during that run for the river, did I? And I didn't get that piece of lead through my arm, either."

"You'd hardly know my arm had stopped a bullet, would you?" and Matt showed his ability to use his left hand with the same ease that he did his right.

"Don't sidetrack the relish," chirped Jordan. "Let Matt's hot work come on with the beans. Go on, Matt—or you tell us, Dick, if Matt's too bashful."

Thereupon Dick waded into past events as he and Matt had experienced them. He slighted his own deeds to give a greater lustre to Matt's, and finally Matt, in self-defense, had to take the telling into his own hands and finish it.

"Well, Jupiter!" exclaimed Jordan, "there's enough tabasco in that run of work to satisfy almost anybody. But, if Motor Matt hadn't come up under that launch like he did, all of us prisoners, my dear friends, would now be tramping through the jungle toward Pitou's new camp."

"I'm glad that note of mine proved so valuable to us," spoke up Coleman.

"How did you come to lay all that information aboard, Mr. Coleman?" inquired Dick. "It seemed main queer that a prisoner could have got wise to all that."

"Pitou told me," said Coleman, with a twinkle in his eye, "over a game of seven-up. He indulged in liquid refreshment, as I remember, and the more he beat me, and the more he indulged, the more confidential he became. I knew Pedro was a friend of Ysabel's, and that he was helping her to leave the camp, so I managed to write down what I had heard, hoping that Ysabel might get to Port Livingstone and give the news to somebody there who could and would help us."

"You haven't told us, Mr. Jordan," said Matt, "what happened to your landing party."

"I hesitate to put it into cold words," answered Jordan, "after listening to a recital which shows that you are a general in that sort of affair, Matt, while I am only a private. By rights, my lad, you are the one who should have gone with that landing party. However, since it appears necessary to have our experiences in order to make the testimony complete, here goes.

"By accident we struck a path. Tirzal said he knew about the path, but I think the good-natured rascal was talking for effect, and that he had never seen it before. I was fairly sure in my own mind, mainly because we had seen nothing of Fingal's schooner after leaving Belize nor of a small boat after leaving Port Livingstone, that Fingal and Cassidy hadn't reached the revolutionists and told what they knew. I suspect that that's what made me careless, for I was that when you consider that we were out on a reconnoitring expedition and ought to have been looking for traps as well as for revolutionists.

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"Well, the trap was sprung at a turn in the path. I wasn't able to see around the turn, and a bunch of colored persons in ragged clothes were on us before you could say Jack Robinson. This happened quite a little while after we got away from the boat. As I recollect, we had reconnoitred, and had been led away from the path on some wild-goose chase or other by Tirzal half a dozen times. I was just thinking about returning to the boat when we pushed around that turn.

"I had time to shoot, and it so happened that I wounded a colored person who was a favorite captain of the general's. It wasn't a serious wound, but the general was pretty badly worked up over it, and I didn't know but they would stand me against a tree and shoot me out of hand before I could make the general understand I was in the consular service. At the right moment, Fingal came up, and he recognized me. The general was tickled, and felt sure he had enough consular representatives of the United States in his hands to insure the giving up of Jim Sixty. Nice business, eh, Coleman," and Jordan turned aside to his friend, "when it takes two fellows like you and me to make an even exchange for a fellow like that filibuster?"

"Well," answered Coleman, "Sixty is worth more to the rebels than we are. It's what a thing's worth to somebody else, and not what you think it's worth to you, that counts."

"The point's too fine and gets away from me," went on Jordan. "That's about all of it, Matt. Poor Tirzal was recognized as a spy, and he would have been shot quick enough if I hadn't threatened the general with all sorts of things if he carried out his intentions. Out of consideration for me, Pitou agreed to wait until we got to the new camp before shooting Tirzal. That's the only thing, Matt, that saved the half breed's life."

Matt was beginning to feel the effects of his long period of active duty without sufficient sleep, and he called Cassidy from the torpedo room, left him in charge of the *Grampus*, and then lay down on the locker and was soon slumbering soundly.

When he was awakened it was by Jordan. It was getting along toward evening, and the *Grampus* was anchored in her old berth off Belize. A sailing ship was alongside to take the passengers ashore.

Jordan, Coleman, Tirzal, Cassidy and Matt were to go, and, of course, Ysabel. Dick was left to look after the submarine.

Ysabel left Matt and the rest at the landing.

"Will I see you again, Matt," she asked, "you and the rest of the motor boys?"

"I hope so, Ysabel," answered the young motorist, "but I also hope we won't have such rough times when our trails cross again."

"Have I helped you enough to offset what I did in New Orleans?"

"Don't mention that—forget about it. The account is more than square."

"Good-by, then," she called, in a stifled voice, and hurried off along the street.

Jordan and Coleman went on to the house where the captain had been taken, accompanying Matt

and Cassidy. The mate was going to present himself frankly before the captain, acknowledge his fault and then abide by the full consequences.

But fate decreed that the matter should turn out otherwise.

The captain, as it chanced, was very much worse and was unable to recognize any one. The doctor averred that the case was not serious, and that, with good nursing, Captain Nemo, Jr., would pull through all right.

"If he wants a nurse, doctor," said Cassidy, "then it's up to me. I took care of him in New Orleans, the time he was sick there, and I guess I can do it now better than any one else."

"Then pull off your coat," said the doctor, "and go up to his room."

All this was as it should be. For the present, the *Grampus* was still under Matt's care, and he started back toward the wharf to secure a sailboat and return to the submarine.

Jordan and Coleman accompanied him part way, then left him to telegraph their report of recent events to Washington.

"We're going to handle you and the *Grampus* without gloves in that report," declared Jordan, with a wink.

"Just so you please the government and make the navy department take the submarine off the captain's hands," returned Matt, "that's all I care."

THE END.

THE NEXT NUMBER (17) WILL CONTAIN

Motor Matt's Close Call

OR,

THE SNARE OF DON CARLOS.

Carl's Serenade—Don Ramon Ortega—The Shadow of Treachery—Don Carlos Lays His Snare—A Mutiny—A Lesson in Who's Who—The Snare Tightens—The Don's Proposal—Ysabel Sixty's Loyalty—An Opportunity—Exciting Work—Capturing the General—Off for the Gulf—Running the Battery—The "Seminole"—Conclusion.

MOTOR STORIES THRILLING ADVENTURE MOTOR FICTION
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NEW YORK, June 12, 1909.

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Mischievous Ned.

By EBEN REXFORD.

Ned was like most other boys, I suppose. Some days he felt so good-natured that his spirits were positively "catching," as they say about colds and the mumps, and you couldn't have had the blues if you had made up your mind to do so, if he was round. But the very next day was apt to be one of his cross days, and he could be as cross and disagreeable as any boy ever could.

One morning he got up feeling very much out of sorts.

"Ned's going to be cross to-day," said Harry, when they gathered round the breakfast table. "It's sticking out all over him now."

"I don't know as it's any of your business," answered Ned promptly. "I'd a good deal rather be cross than make a fool of myself by trying to say smart things when I couldn't."

Which shot, considering that Harry hadn't tried to say anything "sharp," was rather uncalled for, and didn't hit anybody in particular.

"Don't let me hear any more such conversation," said Mrs. Haynes, taking her seat at the table. "You are both of you old enough to behave yourselves as gentlemen ought to."

Ned found any amount of fault with the victuals. The buckwheat cakes had too much soda in them; the sirup wasn't fit to eat; the butter looked as if an old squaw had made it; the potatoes were a little the worst ones he ever tasted. And the result of his fault-finding was, that he was sent away from the table with an unsatisfied appetite.

When he was outside the dining room, he realized that, poor as the breakfast might be, it would have been better than none, and began to wish he had said less, and eaten more.

After breakfast the hired girl began to wash the windows. Ned watched her standing on the stepladder, and thought what fine fun it would be to tip it over when she was on it, but concluded he wouldn't try it just then, as Bridget was apt to be cross as well as himself, and he remembered that some of the practical jokes he had played off on her had resulted in tingling ears, and having his ears boxed was about the worst kind of punishment for Ned. But as Bridget came out of the sitting room with the stepladder, which she was taking to the veranda, in order to wash the windows from the outside, she stumbled over him in the hall, and came so near falling that she had to let the ladder go and catch at the stair railing to save herself. And the ladder in its fall struck against a bracket on which a little vase stood, and away went both of them, and the vase was shattered into fragments.

"You good-for-nothin' spalpeen!" cried Bridget, giving him a slap across the ears; "you got forninst me on purpose, an' now see what you've done! That illigant mug all broke to pieces, jist on account of your bad ways. I've a good mind to tell the missus."

"You needn't 'a' stumbled over me," said Ned angrily. "If you'd look where you were going, you wouldn't go round smashing things up in this style. I'd turn you off if I was in father's place."

"Would you now?" demanded Bridget, her arms akimbo. "Indade I'd like to see ye doin' it. If you don't take yerself off, I'll box ye, mind that, now; an' I'll do it up in illigant style."

Ned concluded that discretion was the better part of valor at present, and repaired to the veranda.

Presently Bridget came out with the stepladder, which she adjusted before one of the windows, and then went in after water.

A bright idea struck Ned. Bridget had been saucy and impudent. He would be even with her. He'd learn her to slap his ears!

He pulled a long piece of stout cord out of his pocket and tied it to one leg of the stepladder, and then hid in the shrubbery.

Presently out came Bridget. She mounted the ladder, unconscious of any danger, and began washing the window vigorously.

All at once the ladder seemed to jerk itself out from under her, and with a whoop that would have done credit to any Apache brave, she landed in the middle of a great lilac bush, before she realized whether her sudden descent was caused by a collapse of the ladder, an earthquake, or one of Ned's pranks. She strongly suspected the latter; but, looking around from her dignified position in the lilac bush, she could see nothing of him, and there was nothing about the innocent-looking ladder, as it lay on the ground at the veranda steps, to indicate that it had been meddled with. But as she proceeded to alight from her elevated pedestal, she heard a chuckle somewhere in the shrubbery, which satisfied her that her suspicions were correct.

Harry came along pretty soon, and wanted Ned to join a party of children who were going down to the old mill after berries.

But Ned answered, very shortly, that he "wasn't going to do any such thing," and Harry went on, without stopping to coax him any.

That made Ned madder than ever. It was quite evident that they didn't want him, and only asked him because they couldn't very well help doing so.

"I'll have some fun with 'em," said Ned, setting off in the same direction, about half an hour afterward.

The berries the children had gone after grew in an old meadow. In this old meadow, through which a brook ran, there was a mill, which was said to be haunted, and every child was afraid to go near it in the daytime.

Ned picked his way through the bushes on the edge of the meadow, and got into the mill on the opposite side from where the children were picking berries.

So busily were they engaged in gathering the ripe fruit that they were not aware how near they were getting to the mill, till a sepulchral groan made them look up in undefined terror, and there, in the farthest shadowy corner, was something awfully ghost-like.

"Repent of your sins!" exclaimed the ghost, uttering the first and only thing he could think of; and then, with wild shouts of fright, the children started off in a stampede for the road, spilling their berries and tearing their clothes.

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Little Susie Mayne lost her sunbonnet, and Will Blake lost his shoe, but they didn't dare to stop for such trifles.

When they reached the road, panting and breathless, they looked back, half expecting to see the ghost after them.

But instead of a ghost, there stood Ned, waving a sheet and apparently highly pleased at the success of his project.

"I should think you'd be ashamed of yourself," shouted Will Blake. "I'll tell Johnny, an' he'll lick you."

"Don't you wish he could?" answered Ned defiantly. "If any of you young ones go to being saucy, I'll just come over there and trounce you."

The children set off toward home, but, coming to another meadow, where strawberries were quite plenty, they concluded to stop and fill up their baskets.

"Mr. Belding's awful ugly old cow runs in this meadow, I heard father say," said Harry. "We'd better keep a lookout for her."

But in five minutes they had forgotten all about the cow.

Suddenly they all started.

"Moo, moo-o!" sounded in the bushes close by, and they heard an awful racket as if half a dozen cows were coming.

"Oh, dear!" screamed all the girls, and made for the fence, with the boys at their heels.

Susie Mayne tumbled down and bruised her nose so badly that it bled, and Harry dragged her toward the fence in anything but a comfortable way.

"I'd be ashamed to run at every little noise before I knew where it came from," called out Ned, making his appearance from the bushes. "Cowards! cowards!"

The boys were for clubbing together and giving him a whipping, but concluded to leave that to the big boys. The girls all pronounced him, without a single dissenting voice, to be the "meanest boy they ever heard of," and then they all went off in high indignation.

Ned climbed up on the fence, and sat there for some time meditating what to do next. Pretty soon Mr. Belding's Sammy came along without seeing Ned, and got over into the meadow, and began picking berries.

Now, Ned hated Sammy Belding, and he thought it would be fine fun to throw stones at him. He calculated the chances of getting caught, and concluded if he stayed over the fence he could get enough start while Sammy was climbing to take him out of danger. So he filled his pockets with stones, and began throwing them at Sammy.

At first Sammy looked around in astonishment, and couldn't make out where they came from. But by and by he pretended that he was paying no attention to them. But if you could have looked under his broad-brimmed hat, you would have seen that he was keeping keen watch.

Ned continued to throw stones. All at once up jumped Sammy, and made for the fence. Ned was taken entirely by surprise, but turned to run as soon as he realized that Sammy had discovered him. But he caught his foot on a stick, and down he went, and before he got on his feet Sammy had him, and proceeded to give him a good pounding, out of which he came with a black eye and a bloody nose. It was too bad the children couldn't have been there to see it.

"Throw stones at me again, will you?" said Sammy. "I'll teach you to mind your own business, if you don't know how."

Ned went home as soon as Sammy got through with him. He was hungry, and his whipping had discouraged him somewhat.

Harry had got home before him, and had reported his bad conduct. The result was that he was ordered to weed out three onion beds that afternoon. That made him groan in spirit. He hated weeding in the garden about the worst of anything in the world.

But there wasn't any help for it, and he went at it.

The old rooster came along pretty soon. Ned knew he never did any harm, as he was too well-behaved a bird to scratch in the garden, but he wanted to vent his spite on something, so he up with a big stone and shied it at the rooster's head, not once thinking that it would hit him. But it did, and with one shrill squawk the fowl gave a leap into the air, kicked about wildly, and fell dead.

Ned was frightened. What would his father say? He had been very careful of the rooster, because

he came of a choice breed. What should he do with him? While he was debating the question with himself, who should come along but his mother.

"Why, Ned!" exclaimed she, seeing the poor old rooster lying there, with one claw stretched up pathetically, as if to call a sympathetic attention to his tragic fate. "How did this happen?"

"Well, you see," began Ned, at a loss for an explanation, "he came along, and I thought maybe he'd go scratching, and I shoed him, but he wouldn't go off. Then I threw a stone that way, and it must have hit him, 'cause——"

"You weren't afraid he would scratch, because he never did that," said Ned's mother severely. "I am very sorry to see you in such a bad temper to-day. Go right up to the garret and stay there till your father comes home. I don't know what he will say when he knows of this."

Ned took himself off to the garret, congratulating himself that that wasn't quite as bad as weeding onions. But he was terribly troubled about what his father would say. He couldn't get that out of his mind.

By and by he heard some one coming up the garret stairs. It sounded like Bridget's steps. A pan stood near by, which had been placed under a leak in the roof, and was full of water. Before he stopped to think what the consequence might be—he felt so ugly that he didn't care much—Ned seized the pan full of water, and just as a head made its appearance in the shadowy depths of the garret stairway he let fly pan and all in that direction.

There was an awful spluttering, as if the water had taken the visitor fairly in the face.

Ned turned pale. It wasn't Bridget, after all, but his father.

"Young man," said that worthy person, making his appearance, dripping from head to foot with water, and looking terribly severe, "I want to see you in the wood shed."

His tone struck terror to Ned's heart. The wood shed, on such occasions, was quite apt to prove a second inquisition.

Ned followed, not daring to do otherwise. He didn't even dare to look at his father's face. What took place in the shed I can't say, but directly after their visit to that part of the house Ned went to bed, and I hope he got up feeling better next morning.

TERRIBLE FATE OF A DARING INDIAN.

One of the most remarkable subterranean waterways in the world was recently discovered in the northern range of the Rockies in Montana, by the agency of a fatal accident, witnessed by me on an expedition in which Phil Barnes and Pierre Leger, two prospectors, were my companions, together with a Flathead Indian named Klikat.

On October 28, having struck northeast from Bonner's Ferry into a region entered by a few white men before us, we found ourselves within twenty-five or thirty miles of the Canadian boundary, and 7,500 feet above sea level. In front and on the right were perpendicular cliffs, which barred our advance. To the left was a precipice about 80 feet high, overhanging a roaring mountain stream, and extending fully two miles to the south.

As we stood there, looking around for some opening by which we might advance, there came to our ears a deep, roaring sound, alternating in force, stronger and weaker at intervals of a few seconds. It came in jarring sounds, with a volume like thunder.

"Me know what him is," said Klikat, with a pleased air of comprehension. "Him is Big-hole-in-the-water. You come look," he added, throwing himself flat on the rock with his head and shoulders hanging over. "Ugh!" he exclaimed, "Big-hole-in-the-water heap mad to-day. Him funny. Water go in ground; never come out."

Following Klikat's example, I threw myself on the ground, and peered down from the dizzy height. Barnes and Leger did likewise.

It was a curious sight that we beheld. Straight down below us there was a deep pool, inclosed on three sides by high walls of eternal rock, thus forming a perpetual barrier to the passage of the water. The noisy mountain stream poured great volumes into this natural basin, and then lost itself. The water in the pool swung round as on a pivot. In the very centre was a great funnel-shaped "suck-hole," fully eight feet across, the water rushing downward with lightning speed. In the centre of this funnel was a mass of snow-white foam, dancing and whirling and scattering flakes of itself around the dark-blue rim of the vortex. At intervals of fifteen or twenty seconds there would be a greater downward rush of water, and the pillar of foam would disappear with the increased speed of the current; then the roar would increase in volume, another pillar of foam would form, only to disappear a few moments later as the previous one had done. It was a grand, a terrible sight.

As I gazed upon it suddenly there was a low, crumbling sound, and then a mass of shelving rock right under Klikat broke loose and fell with a fearful crash. I started to my feet just as I saw the Indian making frantic efforts to cling to the edge of the cliff. But his hold was too slight, and, without uttering word or sound of any kind, Klikat fell headlong into the mad waters beneath.

Barnes rushed to one of the pack mules for a rope, but it was too late. Three, four, five times did

Klikat swing around in a spiral course, and then, with a sudden twist, he shot into the very centre of the vortex. Down he went with the pillar of foam, out of sight into the bowels of the earth, and the darkness of death.

The cavity filled with water and was silent. But it was short satiety. It quickly opened its dark and unfathomable depths again, and gave out a roaring snore that made the very mountains tremble.

Cautiously we three withdrew from the edge of the precipice. We gazed at each other silently and in horror.

Two weeks later we reached the Kootenai country, in British Columbia, and prepared to camp on the south shore of Lake Kootenai. It was while in the act of gathering driftwood along the shore for our first night's supper that Leger discovered a very ghastly object lying in the water within six feet of land.

It was the corpse of a man—an Indian. The face of the dead was badly bruised and torn, and utterly disfigured.

"Heavens!" cried Barnes, as he cut a ragged cloth from the neck. "This is a remnant of my silk handkerchief, which I gave to poor Klikat to cover the gash he cut on his neck by that dead limb one day—do you remember? And see! Right here in this corner is my monogram—'P. B.'—worked in silk."

It was so. We all recognized the silken rag, and we all knew that the corpse before us was the dead body of Klikat, who had fallen into the funnel of that awful subterranean river, fully 250 miles away, far up in the Rockies of Northern Montana. And yet here was his corpse, drifted ashore on this lake, between which and the "big-hole-in-the-water" there is not the slightest connection, so far as mortal eyes can see. How came he to Lake Kootenai, and how long had he been there?

We buried poor Klikat on a bit of rising ground about fifty yards from the lake shore.

STUMBLING UPON GOLD MINES.

Gold was discovered in California in 1848, and in Colorado in 1858. The discovery was accidental in both cases, and the fact created the impression that mines were "lying about loose." Adventurers drifted about in hopes of stumbling upon a mine. Here are some instances of lucky finds.

Three men, while looking for gold in California, discovered the dead body of a man, who evidently had been "prospecting."

"Poor fellow," said one of the trio, "he has passed in his checks."

"Let's give him a decent burial," said another. "Some wife or mother will be glad if she ever knows it."

They began to dig a grave. Three feet below the surface they discovered signs of gold. The stranger was buried in another place, and where they had located a grave they opened a gold mine.

An adventurer who had drifted to Leadville, awoke one morning without food or money. He went out and shot a deer, which, in its dying agonies, kicked up the dirt and disclosed signs of gold. The poor man staked out a "claim," and opened one of the most profitable mines ever worked in Leadville.

"Dead Man Claim," the name given to another rich mine in Leadville, was discovered by a broken-down miner while digging a grave.

A miner died when there were several feet of snow on the ground. His comrades laid his body in a snow bank and hired a man to dig a grave. The gravedigger, after three days' absence, was found digging a mine instead of a grave. While excavating he had struck gold. Forgetting the corpse and his bargain, he thought only of the fact that he had "struck it rich."

An unsuccessful Australian miner went up and down Colorado for several months "prospecting" for gold, and finding none. One day he sat down upon a stone, and while musing over his hard luck, aimlessly struck a stone with his pick. He chipped off a piece, and sprang to his feet. The chip was rich with gold quartz.

He hurried into the little town of Rosita, and went to the assay office, where a teamster had just dumped a load of wood. He agreed to saw the wood to pay for assaying his chipped sample. The result of the assay sent him back to his "claim." When he had taken out of it \$500,000, he sold the mine for \$400,000 in cash and \$1,000,000 in stock.

But these "stumblings" are the exception to the rule that mines are found by painstaking, intelligent prospectors. They spend wearisome months in exploring mountains and gulches. They are mineralogists, geologists, and, above all, practical explorers, who can tell from a "twist" in the grain of the rock, or from the color of a spar seam, whether "paying gold" can be mined in the region.

YEAR OF THE COCK.

In China and Japan the year 1909 is "the year of the cock." It is regarded as a lucky year and is symbolized by a cock sitting on a drum. In statesmanship and literature this is called "the drum of remonstrance." Formerly such a drum was to be found in China in front of the imperial palace, to be struck by an official in charge whenever a letter of remonstrance was offered to the sovereign. This practice is said to have originated with Emperor Yao, a benevolent ruler who reigned from 2357 to 2285 B. C. His reign and that of Emperor Shun, who succeeded him, constituted a "golden age" of China.

It is believed by the Japanese that the cock has five virtues. His comb represents civilization and his strong feet denote military power. When he meets an enemy he fights well, thus demonstrating courage. When he finds food he calls friends, thereby showing himself kind and helpful. He keeps watch for the dawn, thus proving himself faithful.

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Transcriber's Notes:

Images may be clicked to view larger versions.

Retained some inconsistent hyphenation from the original (e.g. "conning tower" vs. "conning-tower").

Corrected some obvious punctuation errors.

Added table of contents.

Page 13, corrected "aligator" to "alligator."

Page 29, corrected "wtih" to "with" ("with an unsatisfied appetite") and "itno" to "into" ("shivered into fragments").

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IN STRANGE WATERS ***

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