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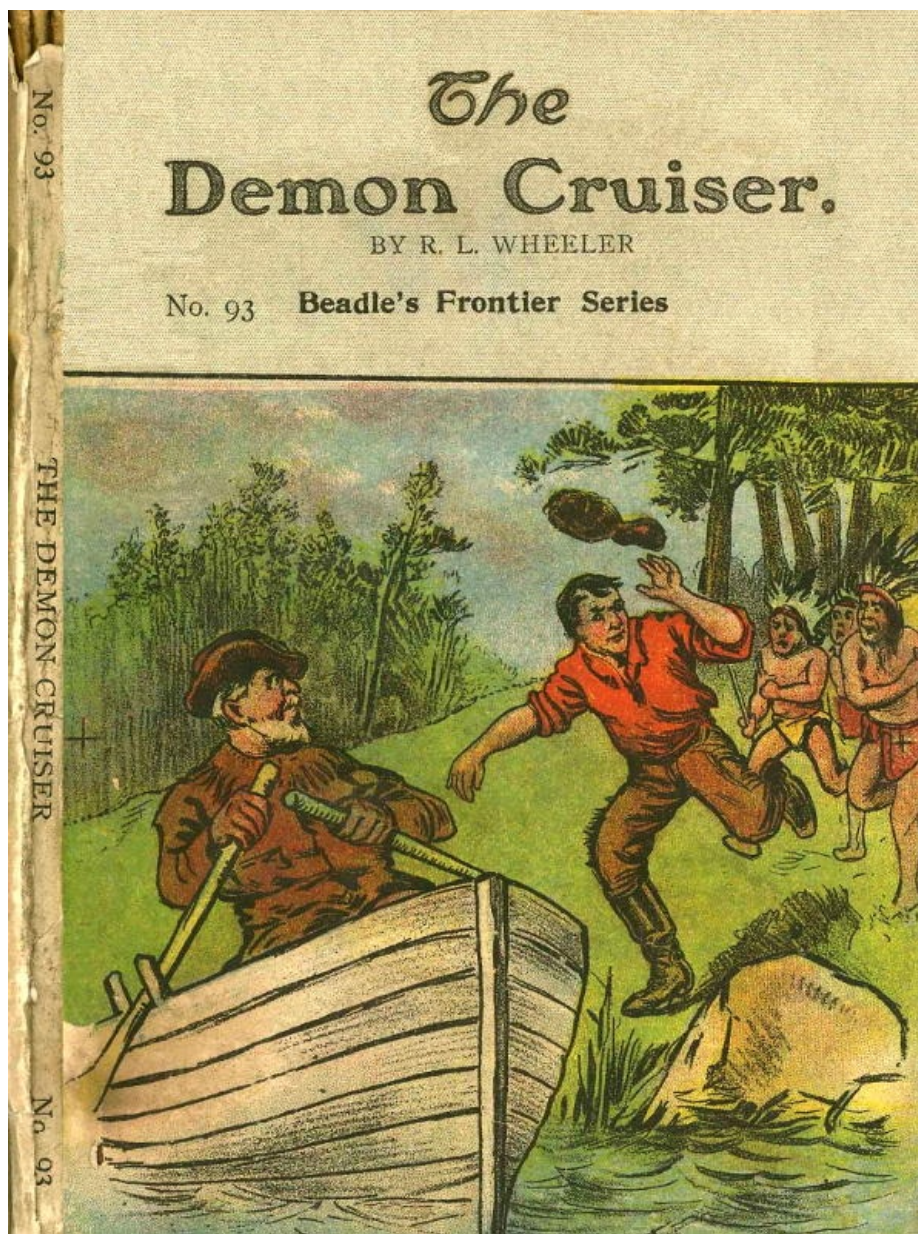
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**THE DEMON CRUISER.**

**BY**

# R. L. WHEELER.

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## THE DEMON CRUISER.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### A DARK DEED.

The ship *Maxwell*, Captain Roberts, homeward bound from Australia to New York, was bowling along upon her course under full sail.

It was a dark night, unrelieved save by the phosphor gleam of the seas around the vessel, and the light of the two lanterns hung up in the fore and mizzen rigging.

The *Maxwell* had one passenger—a gentleman named William Manton, who, having accumulated a fortune at Australia, was now returning to the United States, where his wife had died during his absence, but where he expected to find his daughter, Mary, and a young man of nineteen years old, living with an aunt in New York.

In an iron box the passenger carried his fortune—gold pieces, amounting in all to five hundred thousand dollars.

He kept the box locked up in his chest, which was provided with a patent lock, so arranged that it could not possibly be opened without a great deal of noise.

Occasionally Mr. Manton would go to this chest, and, taking out his money, look at it to see that all was safe. He was by no means either greedy or miserly; but he felt very anxious and careful about this money intended for his beloved child. That his death was not many years distant, he felt sure, as he had long suffered from an incurable complaint of the liver.

This might be detected now in his sallow skin, sunken cheeks, and hollow eyes, as in his room he

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bent over his box—counting the bright, yellow pieces of gold.

In every other respect, Mr. Manton was a fine looking old gentleman, being broad-shouldered and strong, with long arms, erect form, and piercing glance.

There was upon his face, at present, a look of intense satisfaction, as coin after coin, in hard, shining pieces passed through his hands.

"Ay," he muttered at length, "my girl will never be poor!"

As he spoke, a sudden chill passed through the old man's frame; a shudder as if an ice-bolt had come in contact with his body.

He could not divine the cause; but, had he taken pains to glance quickly behind him, up at a small opening in his door, he would have known that it was the magnetism of the pair of evil-looking eyes there which had chilled his blood.

The eyes belonged to a rough, square, dark-skinned face, the owner of which was the third mate, Mr. Brand—a man of Portuguese extraction, whom the captain had shipped at Australia, to take the place of his other third officer, lost overboard in a gale.

Brand was an excellent sailor, but a reckless, good-for-nothing fellow at heart; a cruel, bloody-thirsty wretch, who had committed almost every crime one can imagine, except murder!

Still it was evident the man had a conscience, as he would sometimes get to thinking of the evil course he had pursued, and resolve to reform.

Alas! for reformation! rum was his God, and in this he would soon drown all his better feelings, and keep getting worse and hardened until he grew to be a perfect devil!

Captain Roberts had known nothing of this when he shipped the third mate, who could play the hypocrite to perfection when he pleased. The fellow drank his rum in the privacy of his own apartment, and took good care never to appear on deck intoxicated, for Roberts was a stern, resolute, temperate man, who would never have forgiven his second officer for being drunk on duty.

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It was now Brand's watch below. In his apartment he had heard the click of Mr. Manton's chest-lock; a noise which had saluted his ears, since leaving Australia more than once. Determined to ascertain the cause, he had emerged from his room in his stocking feet, and made his way to Manton's door as shown.

As he watched the old man counting his money; as he saw the glitter of those bright pieces, his mouth fairly watered, and a fearful purpose began to gather strength at his heart.

Having seen Manton return the little box to his chest, the third mate stole back to his berth, and lay a long time awake, endeavoring to plan a scheme for obtaining the money.

"Wouldn't like to take the old gent's life," he muttered; "and won't—no I won't; for bad as Dick Brand is, he has never yet murdered."

The more he thought, however, the less fearful became the idea of murder.

The gold—the broad glittering pieces of bright gold, threw a glimmer over the dark suggestion creeping into and gaining force over his mind!

Clink! clink! clink!

He imagined he could still hear the noise of the pieces lightly striking against each other, as when the old man counted them!

The sweat came out upon his brow; he felt feverish and restless to commence the work now, to at once possess himself by a bold stroke, of the treasure!

There were no persons in the cabin but Mr. Manton, himself, and the steward, the captain, with the first and second officers being on deck, and not apt to come below until two bells—ten o'clock, which was yet an hour distant. The steward slept away off at the further end of the cabin, and being a sound sleeper, there was no danger of his waking from any noise less than that of a thunderbolt.

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Brand, however, to make sure, now rose, and going to the steward's door listened intently, when the heavy breathing of the man convinced him that his present slumber was no exception to the rule.

In the middle of the state-room the dark schemer paused, glancing up at the companionway. The spray occasionally entering this in drops, would give him an excuse for closing the slide, so that he could hear if any person should attempt to enter during the performance of his fearful work.

Then Brand asked himself what he should do after committing the deed.

Investigation would follow, and there were many ways in which he might be discovered.

"Curses upon it! I had not thought of that," muttered the wretch, fairly grinding his teeth.

He went back to his berth, not to sleep, but to endeavor to plan a safer scheme!

It seemed as if the evil one favored him!

At six bells—two hours after ten o'clock—while the captain and first mate slept profoundly in their respective apartments, adjoining the steward's, Brand heard a noise, and cautiously peering through his door saw Mr. Manton, half dressed, about to go on deck, as was often his custom, to take a mouthful of fresh air.

He locked his door carefully after him; then ascended the companion.

Brand waited a few minutes, then one moment exulting, and the next shuddering at the thought of the deed contemplated, he cautiously made his way on deck.

The rascal had carefully considered the purpose in view. He felt certain that no man aboard but himself, knew of the fortune carried by Mr. Manton in his chest. The passenger was not at all communicative, while the captain and his first and second officers were. Therefore, had they known of the box of money, they would have talked enough about it for all hands to become in a short time, posted on the subject.

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Brand's first step, on reaching the deck, was to ascertain the relative position of the officer of the watch, the passenger and the man at the wheel.

The latter, located near the steerage, was looking sharply at the compass, as it was his duty to do, while the officer of the watch had gone amidships, where he stood leaning over the rail, evidently in a reverie. As to the passenger, he had moved far off, and was leaning across the bulwarks astern, the better to get the benefit of the fresh breeze then blowing square into his face.

"Now, then," thought Brand, drawing from his breast pocket a small, sharp dirk.

Noiselessly as a snake, he stole behind the passenger, then, starting up and throwing a quick glance round him to make sure that everything was still favorable, he drew off to stab Mr. Manton in the back.

Chance willed that the latter should turn at this critical instant.

Involuntarily he seized the ruffian's wrist, and being a resolute man, grappled him by the throat with the other hand.

Fearful that the man would sing out, which he certainly would have done at once but for a cold lately contracted in the throat, Brand suddenly pressed this whole tremendous weight against the passenger, throwing him backward head over heels across the bulwarks into the sea.

A splash—a gurgling cry—a hand thrown up above the dark water!

Then no sound was to be heard save the ordinary noises of a vessel booming along with the wind and waves roaring, and yards, masts and timbers creaking.

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## CHAPTER II.

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### THE BOX.

After committing this dark deed, Brand, crouching in the shadow of the bulwarks, waited to make sure that the splash had not been heard by any other than himself.

Assured of this in a few moments, the third officer crawled back to the companionway and descended as cautiously as he had come.

Entering the state room, he made his way to Manton's door, determined as soon as possible, to possess himself of the treasure.

Procuring a bunch of skeleton keys, which he always carried with him, he endeavored to unlock the door.

Vain the effort; not one of the keys would answer.

The rascal then drew forth his penknife, and with some trouble contrived at last to pick the lock.

Entering and carefully shutting the door, he advanced to the chest, which he soon opened with the key belonging to it, found hanging up near the head of the berth Manton had occupied.

He drew forth the box, his eyes snapping with greed, his fingers itching to handle the glittering contents. The box was heavy, being made of iron and rather large, measuring about a foot in breadth and length.

An exultant grin crossed the man's face, giving to it an expression perfectly hideous, as, carefully closing the chest and locking it, he made his way back to his own apartment with the treasure box.

Arrived there, he held the box up before him, and examined it on all sides, but could discover no

way to open it.

"Ay, ay," he muttered, "I see how it is. The box has a secret spring, which I must find before I can get at the treasure. A blasted fine way of savin' money. I'd like to feast my eyes upon them shiners again, but guess I'll wait until I get housed before I do so, as one never knows who be a-watchin' him, and my bein' discovered a-counting these pieces, might lead to unpleasant questioning."

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He deposited the box in his own chest, upon which he sat down, after locking it.

He had obtained what he coveted, but somehow it did not bring him the expected satisfaction.

The gurgling cry of Mr. Manton kept sounding in his ears with a pertinacity truly appalling! The weird eyes of the man, gleaming and rolling in his head, also haunted the fellow's mind!

He rose, sat down again—then rose a second time, and threw himself upon his berth, trying to sleep.

After awhile he fell into a feverish slumber, and dreamed he saw the drowned victim come up, looking white and cadaverous, with clothes and hair dripping, hanging suspended right over his head!

In his terror he uttered a hoarse shriek, which not only waked him, but also the captain, who came rushing to his door, asking him what was the matter:

"Nothing—a nightmare I s'pose!" answered Brand, with a forced laugh.

The captain, satisfied, returned to his berth and slept again.

Brand, however, could not sleep. He was on deck before morning, when, with an involuntary shudder, he glanced astern, through the flying rack and scud of a gale which was rising.

Far in the distance he then beheld a bright light—a red, lurid glare, apparently shooting up from the sea.

It was a volcano, which for years had not burned, but was breaking out afresh on one of the Esmadura Islands.

Brand thought it was a ship on fire.

"We'd better veer round, then," remarked the officer of the watch.

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"Oh, no!" Brand exclaimed, involuntarily.

The vision of Manton's dead body, which might be discovered floating upon the water, rose before his mind.

The second officer informed the captain about the light, when, using his night-glass, the skipper soon ascertained and explained the cause of the fire.

Brand breathed a sigh of relief.

When morning came, Manton was missed at breakfast. Having always found him punctual, the captain was alarmed. He went to the room and opened the door when no answer was returned to his summons, to find the old man missing.

Search was made—of course in vain—Brand apparently the most zealous of all in his efforts to find the missing one.

"He's gone, shipmates, it's my opinion, where's neither weepin' nor whaling," said a voice behind Brand, while he was looking in the hold.

The third officer turned to behold Tom Turk, a queer old tar, with enormous head and body, and short, thick legs.

Brand looked at him, keenly.

"What did you say?" he inquired, sharply.

"It's plain English, ain't it?" said Turk, rolling his quid round and round: "there's neither weepin' nor whalin' in t'other land. The old man to my thinkin', was a good sort o' chap what has gone, sir, where p'raps neither you nor I will go, sir, seein' as we've our bad p'int!"

Brand eyed the speaker steadily, and was satisfied that he knew nothing of the dark deed committed.

Meantime the search was continued, until it was concluded that the old man, whose habit of rousing up at eight was well known, had fallen overboard.

Several months later the vessel arrived at New York Harbor.

Scarcely was she anchored when a boat containing, besides the rowers, a female and a young man, was seen pulling towards her.

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The boat was soon alongside, when the young man—a tall, fine looking fellow, sprang out to assist the lady at up the gangway. She was a beautiful girl, with brown hair flowing in curls over

her shoulders, a white rose-tinted skin, large, intelligent blue eyes and a form full rounded grace.

The moment she reached the deck, she glanced eagerly round her.

"Where is he? Where is Mr. Manton, my father, sir?" she said, addressing the captain.

The latter's countenance fell; in a few words he explained.

It was a terrible shock to the girl. Pale as death she staggered, and would have fallen but for the support of her companion's arm.

When she could stand alone, he inquired all the particulars of the captain, who promptly gave what information he could.

"Are you certain he was lost?" inquired the young man; "was there no way in which he might have saved himself?"

"I fear not," was the reply. "We must have been two miles from land at the time."

"Papa was an excellent swimmer," faltered the young girl. "He might have reached the land."

The captain, however, shook his head, saying he felt quite certain that his passenger was not saved.

Further remarks were exchanged, when the captain added that the passenger's chest, unmolested, was in the cabin as it had been left.

At this, Brand, who stood not far off, turned aside his head and felt uneasy.

What more probable than that Manton had written to his daughter, telling her about the box with him. Just where he kept it, and how much it contained.

If that were so, however, it was evident that at present all considerations were drowned in the grief and excitement the girl felt at the sudden news of her parent's loss. [Pg 18]

With a mute but expressive look, she turned towards the young man, her companion, who at once helped her down the gangway, telling the captain that the chest would be sent for.

"Good riddance!" thought Brand; "I must get away from this craft as soon as I can."

Next day he applied for his discharge, which the captain granted. An hour later, Brand and the chest were lodged at a seaman's boarding house in — street.

Carefully locking his door and pulling down the window curtains, the third officer drew the iron box from the chest. After a long search he found the secret spring, which proved to be one of the small brass nails with which the box was studded.

Trembling with greedy expectation, he pressed against it, when the lid flew open.

Then a strange cry burst from his lips.

The box was empty!

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## CHAPTER III.

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For several moments the man continued staring at the empty box, wholly unable to account for the singular discovery.

Then he sat down and ruminated. No living soul aboard the vessel had known of his possessing the box, therefore he was certain that the money could not have been extracted after he obtained it.

The only inference was that the money was not in the box when he took it.

Where then was it?

Vainly the man puzzled his brains: he could arrive at no definite conclusion.

Weeks passed.

Manton's chest must by this time, have been received and opened by his daughter. Brand had seen several of the ship's officers, but it was evident they had not heard of Manton's daughter missing anything from the chest.

Brand, therefore, breathed easy on this score, believing that, after all, the passenger had not written a word to his daughter about the box.

Two weeks later, by recommendation of Captain Roberts, who had found Brand to be an excellent seaman, the latter obtained command of a ship called the *Quadrant*, bound to Australia and the East Indies.

While Brand was preparing his vessel for sea, he had a visit from the owner.

"Captain," said the latter, "you will cruise awhile off the islands, in the neighborhood of Australia, and visit some of them before going into Sydney."

"What for?" inquired Brand.

The order had really been an unpleasant one to him, as if brought afresh to his imagination, the drowned body of his victim, Mr. Manton, floating about on the water.

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"Because," answered the owner, "the daughter of that passenger aboard the *Maxwell*, Mr. Manton, cannot be persuaded that her father was really lost. She is anxious to investigate the matter; to search all the islands she can, especially that one upon which was seen the volcano!"

Objections rose to Brand's white lips; but he dared not give them utterance, fearful of exciting suspicion.

"The lady," continued the owner, "will be accompanied by a young man—her affianced, who has been in the United States navy, and is a good sailor, from whom, in case of emergency, you may derive assistance. He is one of my clerks; a worthy young man, whom I hope you will treat with all due courtesy."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered Brand, who could be pleasant enough when he chose.

Next day he went about shipping his crew, among whom was old Tom Turk.

Brand admired the latter's skill in seamanship, and this was his only reason for taking him, as in every other respect he disliked him.

The vessel ready a fortnight later, got under weigh, and was soon plunging her bows into the dark waters of the Atlantic.

On the quarter deck, by the side of Mary Manton, stood Harry Granville, her lover, endeavoring to cheer her spirits, which had drooped ever since the fearful news of her father's disappearance from the *Maxwell*.

Brand, superintending the work aboard the vessel, watched the lovers askance. The presence of the daughter of the very man he had pushed overboard, made him feel uneasy.

Every time he encountered the great, earnest blue eyes, it seemed to him as if they could see, away down into his soul, the dark secret he intended to carry with him to his grave!

Favored by fair winds the vessel, in a few months arrived in the latitude where the tragedy had taken place.

"Here is where the passenger fell overboard!" said Brand, addressing Harry Grenville, one evening, just after sundown.

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The young man went into the cabin, whence he soon reappeared with Mary, whose eyes were suffused with tears, while she gazed earnestly upon the water, as if there hoping to see the form of her parent reappear.

Brand, walking his quarter-deck, kept his eyes steadily averted from her face.

Gradually darkness stole round the vessel, when, far ahead, a bright, lurid light broke upon the vision of Mary Manton.

"What is that?" she inquired of her lover.

He informed her that it was a volcano.

"Then that is the volcanic island where we are to search," said Mary.

"Yes," answered Harry, "but you must not hope to discover anything. From this point no man could hardly hope to swim to that island."

Mary sighed heavily.

At the same moment, she noticed that her lover's head was inclined sideways.

She was then sensible of a distant humming, roaring noise, growing louder and louder!

"It is the volcano, is it not?" she inquired.

"No," answered Harry, "it is a storm coming up."

He sprang to the companion and glanced at the barometer, which, however, for some reason, had fallen but little.

"The instrument must be out of repair," said Harry.

Then he stepped to the captain's side, and questioned him when he was informed that the barometer was injured.

"I need no such toy," continued Brand, "to tell me when a storm is a-comin' up! I've heard the wind pipe too often for that."

"We are going to have a hard blow, pretty soon," said Harry—"don't you hear?"

"That's the volcano, youngster!" answered Brand gruffly.

"You are mistaken."

"Peers I know my business!"

"I am sure it is the gale we hear. You would do well to take in sail."

"I hope I'm master abroad my own craft," said Brand, sneering.

"We will leave it to some of your oldest seaman," said Glenville, wishing to avoid a quarrel, if possible.

Several of the old tars, among them Turk, were called up. They agreed with Glenville.

"I've heerd the roarin' of a volcanic, before now," said Turk, "which, beggin' pardon, sir, is no more like a gale a-comin' up than this is like the thump of a handspike," taking out his quid and throwing it violently to the deck.

Brand, however, skillful seaman though he was, refused to be convinced, until suddenly he beheld driving down upon him from windward, a long line of white water, showing like a wall through the gloom.

Then the unmistakable notes of the tempest were heard by all aboard.

"Go below," said Harry to his fair companion.

She obeyed trembling; at the same moment, with a whis and a rush, the storm was heard sweeping along towards the vessel.

"Hands! by halliards! clew up everything lively there! Mind tacks and sheets," screamed Brand, in a voice like the scream of a wild beast.

Top-gallant sails, topsail, foresail and mainsail were soon clewed up, and the seamen's forms were distinctly seen running up through the gloom.

Too late! While the poor fellows were yet upon the yards, the storm, with the din of a thousand furies, struck the devoted ship.

At first nothing could be seen or heard, save the rush and the roar of the tempest.

The spray shrouded the ship as in a white cloud, flying all round her, blinding and bewildering the men, while the roar of the sea, the creaking, snapping and straining of yards and masts, the creaking of the timbers, the cannon-like report of the sails, slatting all over the vessel, with the whipping about of ropes, tacks and sheets, created a din such as only the sailor, caught unawares in a storm, can realize.

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Vainly Brand, claiming to a rope near the mizzenmast, endeavored to make himself heard; his voice was as a mere whisper in contrast with the shrieking and howling of the storm.

Meanwhile far down, with her rail buried, the ship tore away through the mad waters, swift as a thunderbolt, pitching meanwhile with a violence which threw several men off the yard into the white and black mist of spray and storm, bubbling, boiling and rolling beneath.

Harry Glenville had sprung aloft to cheer and encourage the men.

Vainly endeavoring to make himself heard, he was suddenly thrown from his position, and must have gone overboard but for his catching the backstay and by this reaching the deck.

No need now of men to pull the sails. With a sharp tearing sound, like the blasts from a thousand bass trumpets, every strip of canvass aboard the vessel was torn to shreds and carried far off into the rack and scud.

Soon after there was a crash, when down came the fore and main topmasts, falling over the side, and dragging the ship down, so that half of her decks were buried, while the seas continually broke over the other part.

In a few minutes Brand, with the help of his speaking trumpet, was enabled to make himself heard by shrieking into the very ears of the men.

"Clear the wreck!" was his first order, which Tom Turk at once sprang to obey, axe in hand.

Harry Glenville, similarly provided, was at the side of the old tar, to whom he had taken quite a fancy, and who he had reason to believe, appreciated and was glad of his notice.

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The two soon gaining the wreck, went to work, having previously fastened ropes round their middles to prevent themselves from being washed overboard.

With a few blows they renewed the encumbrances, when the vessel partially righted.

The wind was now blowing a perfect tornado, keeping the spray down almost upon the surface of the sea, which was nearly as flat as a floor.

The ship also feeling this pressure, instead of now rolling and plunging, was forced down into the stormy sea almost to the middle of her bulwarks, while her bows were completely buried.



Harry had taken off the rope, and was about returning aft, when the water forward swept by an erratic movement of the ship, caught him and carried him from his feet!

Like a shot he was whirled over the bulwarks, when he caught a small, rotten piece of rope hanging from the shrouds.

Brand, who was not far off, might easily have saved him by springing and grasping his hand.

For reasons which may be imagined, he resolved to leave the man to his fate!

The rope being, as stated, a rotten one, broke!

"My God! he is gone!" shrieked the hypocritical captain.

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## CHAPTER IV.

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### LASHED AND ADRIFT.

"Guess not!" answered the voice of old Tom Turk, "he's as safe as a marlinespike in a rack!"

So saying, the old fellow by a dextrous movement, threw a bowline hitch he had quickly formed at the end of a rope, over the young man's head, and drew him safely aboard.

Mary, who, hearing of her lover's peril, had ventured on deck in spite of the storm, sprang towards him.

"Ay, ay, now, lass!" exclaimed Turk, "mustn't be in too much of a hurry to go, as there's a mighty danger of our all goin' before long. Bless your pretty eyes! that's what I call a collapse!" as Mary impulsively threw her arms around her lover's neck, in her joy at his safety.

On went the vessel, booming, crashing, thundering on her course, with all her timbers quivering, as if about to fly apart.

"Oh, Harry!" exclaimed Mary, "will this storm ever be over!"

"Yes! be not afraid!" he answered, as he helped her into the cabin.

There he beheld a sight which was truly appalling. The water was washing and swashing about the cabin floor up to his very knees, while articles of furniture were floating about like so many chips!

The young man conducted the girl back again, and having safely secured her to the mizzenmast, by means of a rope, he went over to the captain.

"Your ship has sprung a leak!"

"What?" exclaimed Brand, almost bounding off his feet.

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Harry repeated the information, when Brand, peering into the cabin, discovered that he had spoken correctly.

The vessel, it was evident, had sprung a leak somewhere beneath the counter.

Pumps were immediately rigged, and their dismal clanging was ere long heard like a knell through the storm.

The carpenter being sent below, half an hour later, reported the water gaining.

Brand stared at him half stupefied.

Then, with eyes rolling wildly in his head, he shrieked out:

"I might have known I'd have no luck in these accursed waters!"

He drew back, shuddering from head to foot. The blue eyes of Mary Manton were turned full upon his dark, distorted face!

"Why?" inquired a voice at his elbow, when, turning he beheld Harry Glenville.

He gave the young man a black look! then uttered a horrible oath!

"Blast you, young eavesdropper, are you a-goin' to follow me about like a spy?"

"I don't understand! You talk foolishly!" said Harry.

"Do I?" inquired Brand, with a sneer, apparently recovering his calmness all of a sudden. "Well, I'll tell you what I meant. I meant on account of the infernal storms one often meets with in these latitudes. It matters little, however, we are all doomed to Davy Jones now, unless we can get off in the boats!"

"Ay, ay, the boats are probably our only recourse!" answered Harry, with great coolness.

Brand admired him in spite of himself.

"Why, now, blast it! it seems to me you take matters easy, youngster!"

"This is not the first storm I've seen!" answered Harry.

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"No! but when you know that it's p'raps to be your last, one would think you'd feel uneasy, to say the least."

"A difference in temperaments," answered the other; "but come! don't you think we'd better be getting the boats ready? The lashings are loose and they'll soon be adrift, if we don't hurry."

"Ho, ho! so you're getting anxious, after all, my young shaver!"

"Not in the least for myself," answered Harry contemptuously, "but there is another in my charge."

As the young man spoke, the ship suddenly fell off, when, with a crash and a roar like a thunderbolt, a huge cataract of water was borne directly across the vessel, carrying away the wheelhouse with the man at the helm, the caboose, a part of the forecastle, and last, but by far not least, all the boats, which, as Harry had stated, were become loosened in their lashings.

This catastrophe held every man mute after he had saved himself from going overboard.

White and dumb the sailors saw the last means of their leaving the doomed ship borne away from them.

"It's all up with us!" screamed Brand—the first to break the silence.

"We are lost! we cannot be saved! Is it not so?" cried Mary, clinging to the arm of her lover.

"There is no telling!" he answered; "but hope for the best."

Just then the ship falling off yet further, headed directly for that great mass of red lurid light, gleaming like a bonfire of demons through the bleak darkness of the night and the storm.

"Ay, ay, there's the volcano," cried Harry.

"Yes, how like a beacon of hope it seems!" exclaimed Mary.

"Ay, a hell-beacon!" growled the captain, as he passed into the cabin.

What business had he in the cabin at such a moment, when his ship was going down into the dark waters! [Pg 28]

Rum!

He would drink, drink, drink, drowning the dragon of conscience which, in this dread moment, seemed gnawing at his very vitals.

Up to his waist in water, he found the swimming chests containing his grog, and breaking it open, poured the fiery contents of one of the bottles down his throat.

The next moment he felt a rope drawing tightly round his breast beneath the armpits, became aware then of being hauled up through the companionway, while the voice of old Tom Turk rang in his ears:

"Hold there, Cap! Blast me, sir, but this ain't a square above-board bizness, do you see—a drinkin' of grog when there's peril! How do you know, but some of t'others aboard would like a few tauts, when opportunity drifts to em."

The captain would have responded the minute he was hauled up, with a blow of the fist, or at least an oath but for the terrible catastrophe which now seemed impending.

Humming, gurgling and roaring, a strange noise, growing louder every moment, was heard in the hold.

"God help us all!" screamed the carpenter; "no more use at them pumps. What you hear is the water surgin' into the hold."

Mary clung closely to her lover, while the men with axes at once went to work, chopping down pieces of timber for the purpose of forming a raft.

"How far should you judge we are from yonder island!" said Harry, now pointing to the red gleam which seemed to send a track of lurid fire shooting through the darkness.

"Well," answered Tom Turk, "it's hard tellin' at night though I'm shouldn't say we're more than a league from it. It's symbolical," continued Turk, gloomily crossing his arms over his breast, "to many of us as shall go below instead of aloft."

"I dare say you have sinned as well as others, you old rascal!" cried Brand, fiercely addressing the speaker. [Pg 29]

"There's no denying that," answered Tom; "I have sinned when I was a little chip, but not since the days o' my apple steelin', from orchards and such like. Ever since, I have behaved myself like a martyr, confinin' myself to but eights tauts of grog at a time—when I could get it, that is; which

ain't under present state of affairs."

Meanwhile the men hurried to construct the raft, which was at last completed in a clumsy manner, owing to the hurried nature of the work.

It was high time it was finished, for every part of the craft except a dry spot on the quarterdeck, was now buried, the water reaching half way up the stumps of the shattered masts.

The raft was secured alongside, after which Harry helped Mary to the floating platform, taking care to lash her securely to the timbers.

In a minute all hands were upon the raft, and Brand was about severing the rope with his knife, when, with a sudden lurch, down went the ship dragging the floating platform with it.

The men drifted off into sea! but Mary being lashed to the raft went down with it!

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## CHAPTER V.

[Pg 30]

### THE ISLAND.

As the young girl disappeared beneath the dark waters, two persons dove after her, determined to accomplish her rescue or perish in the attempt.

Those two were Harry Glenville and old Tom Turk.

Could they reach the girl and bring her to the surface, they might easily manage to lash her to some one of the many planks and spars floating around them, and faintly revealed in the lurid gleam streaming along the waters from the volcano, now less than two miles distant.

Down under the sea, Turk and his friend finally came upon the girl, when, with one blow of his knife, hold ready in his right hand, Harry severed the rope holding Mary to the raft.

Now, however, he felt the force of the downward suction of the doomed ship, and was unable to ascend with his burden to the surface of the sea.

In this situation the young man preserved his presence of mind, holding to Mary with a firm grasp, his right arm round her waist, while with the other he paddled under water, hoping soon to get out of range of the suction force dragging him down.

In about a minute, he became aware that he was ascending with great rapidity, and then comprehended that the whirlpool formed by the sinking craft had subsided, shooting him and his precious charge upward with the bubble caused by the collapsing of the waters.

He was soon at the surface of the sea, to behold his shipmates all around him clinging to spars and fragments.

He swam to a spar near him, and, with the ropes dangling therefrom, lashed the girl to it; then looked down upon her white, upturned face, closed eyes and drooping hair, almost fearing that she was dead!

[Pg 31]

Far along the waters the light of the volcano, streaming luridly, illumined that pale face and shining hair with unearthly radiance.

"Mary, speak to me!" exclaimed the young man. "Tell me that you are alive—that you hear me calling you!"

Vain the supplication. Her closed lips remained mute, the eyes were not opened, the sad pallor of the face remained unchanged.

Suddenly he became aware of a noise like a porpoise blowing, and turning, beheld Tom Turk, who had just risen alongside of him, clinging to the same spar to which he hung.

"Phew, bless my eyes!" ejaculated the old sailor, "this is sartinly a most uncomfortable siterwation for them as has always sarved their captins faithful."

Then he looked closely at the young girl.

"Don't be afraid," he exclaimed, "the gal is all right. That waxy look, I'm sartin, ain't from death. She'll git over it! I never saw one of the female sect in this siterwation afore, except once off the Cape of Good Hope where I was wrecked in the bark *Tempest*. The poor creatur' was in the water tied to the bottom of a boat a whole day, but the water bein' warm, as it is here, she got over her hardship, and I believe is now livin' perfectly healthy with a famerly of small children."

"It seems to me, Turk," said Harry, suddenly, "that we are receding from the volcanic inland; instead of approaching it."

"I was a-thinkin' of that same," answered Turk; "in fact the wind has hauled round a little, and is now a-blowin' from the island, instead of towards it."

This troubled the young man much. He now had little hope, in fact, of Mary's being saved.

Meanwhile, through the din of the storm, the voices of Turk's shipmates were now and then heard, as they drifted along, attached to their respective spars. [Pg 32]

With the strange coolness of seamen in the most perilous situations, many of these men even ventured so far as to laugh and crack jokes as they were tossed about on that stormy ocean; so true it is that "Jack never despairs while there is a plank under him."

Gradually the voices became more detached as the poor fellows were separated further and further from each other by the intervening seas, perhaps never again to meet on earth!

Mary Manton now opened her eyes. The plank to which she was attached had by this time drifted out of range of the stream of light, but Harry and Turk could see the gleam of those bright orbs through the darkness.

"Why! where am I? Harry! Harry! where are you?" exclaimed the poor girl, while shudder after shudder convulsed her frame.

"I am here, Mary!" he answered. "Cheer up! You are with friends. We may, in time, succeed in reaching land."

"Oh, I am so glad you are safe!" she exclaimed, impulsively, resting her bright head on his shoulder. "Do you think we are far from land?"

"I hope not," he answered. Then, raising himself halfway out of water, and glancing far ahead through the gloom. "God be praised! I think I see land, now! at all events there are breakers."

Turk looked in the indicated direction, to behold a long line of white water gleaming through the darkness.

"Ay! ay!" he shouted, in a ringing voice, "there is land, sure enough. Cheer up, lass, we are near land after all."

"I am afraid our shipmates will not succeed in reaching it," said Harry, "as they must be far to leeward of us by this time."

"There's no tellin'," answered Turk; "but I'm afraid not. I hope, hows'ever, the poor lads will be picked up, between this and to-morrow night, by some passing craft." [Pg 33]

All night long the three were borne on, at the mercy of winds and waves, nearer and nearer towards the line of white water.

The sufferings of poor Mary were meanwhile intense, and were fully appreciated by the two men, notwithstanding the girl's efforts to hide her pain and seem cheerful.

Poor child! drenched through and through, cold and feverish by turns, with a terrible pain in her head, and half smothered by the seas continually breaking over her, no wonder that she suffered!

Almost unconscious when the gray dawn stole upon the waters, she heard the ringing tones of Harry Glenville, breaking like music upon her half-bewildered senses.

"Land O! right ahead!"

Then Harry, loosening her lashings so that she could turn her head, pointed out to her a lofty cape, covered with shrubbery, beneath which was a beach covered with beautiful cocoanut trees, now waving wildly in the gale!

"Thank God!" she murmured, and endeavored to smile.

The effort, however, was too much. With a faint but glad cry, she fell back, half fainting, upon her lover's shoulder.

The drifting spar was now close upon the reef, scarcely five fathoms ahead.

In less than half an hour it struck against one of the rocks, when Harry and Turk, loosening their fair charge from the spar, surveyed the water between the reef and the island.

Concluding that it was shallow enough to enable them to wade, they made their way toward the beach, carrying the girl between them.

Soon landing, they found a clear stream, in the heart of a breadfruit thicket, with a bank of soft turf upon which they laid the young girl.

Then Turk, with a knowing wink, drew from his pocket a small flask, containing a red liquid. [Pg 34]

"Though temperance!" said he, "although I ain't never signed no pledge, still I will indulge in a draught of this, by way of celebratin' our wonderful preservation!"

Before drinking, the old tar put the neck of the bottle between the lips of the young girl, pouring some of the brandy down her throat.

The effect was instantaneous; color came to her cheeks, and she opened her beautiful blue eyes, which were turned upon her lover before she spoke.

"Harry! Where are we now? Are you perfectly safe—uninjured—"

"Ay, ay," interrupted Turk; "that's the way with her sect, always a-thinkin' of t'others before themselves."

"I am perfectly well, and uninjured," answered Harry, as he helped Mary to her feet. "Come, Turk," he added, to the old sailor, "let us get some kind of a shelter up for this poor child!"

A fire was first kindled, dry wood having been found in a hollow behind some stones. Then Harry procured a log and made a good seat for the girl before the fire, that she might dry her saturated garments.

"This is comfortable," said Turk, as he again raised his flask to his lips; "here we are all out of them perils which—"

Harry quietly seized his arm.

"Turk," said he, "we may need that brandy. I will buy it of you."

At this the movements of the old tar were peculiar.

He put the flask down on a flat rock; then he spread his legs apart like a pair of compasses, and thrust both hands in his pockets, looking at his friend with eyebrows elevated almost to the top of his forehead.

"This," said he, slowly, "is an insultin' proposition. Avast! avast! about buyin' my grog! D'ye think I would sell it, if it'll be of any use to the gal? No; she is perfectly welcome to that and to a gallon, had I as much in my possession."

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"Nay, Harry," said Mary sweetly, noticing the wistful glances the old tar cast at the bottle, even while delivering his magnanimous speech.

"Mr. Turk shall keep his liquor. I will not need it! See, I am quite strong!" and she rose briskly to her feet.

"Mr. Turk," muttered the old sailor, "that Mr. which I ain't heard for many a year, sounds mighty queer. It's too respectful to sich an old hulk as me, Miss. Please drop it and call me plain Tom Turk."

"Tom Turk it shall be, then," answered the young girl.

As she spoke, there was a rustling in the shrubbery near the fire.

"Savages!" gasped Mary; "let us fly."

She shrank back, when parting the bushes a familiar form emerged to view.

It was Captain Brand.

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## CHAPTER VI.

[Pg 36]

### THE VISION.

"You here!" exclaimed Harry, starting back.

"And why not?" inquired Brand, with a sinister smile, "haven't I as good a right to be saved as yourself?"

"Certainly, and I am glad you have saved yourself. Still your appearance surprised me a little, as I had thought that no persons except ourselves, had succeeded in reaching this island from the wreck."

"It was a narrow escape for me," answered Brand; "the current which runs round the extremity of this island, caught me, and I would have been whirled past the land, do you see, but for my catching the spur of a rock by which I just succeeded in drawing myself ashore."

"Bad eggs always float," said Turk, making a grimace.

"What mean you, you rascal?" cried Brand; "are you regrettin' my escape?"

"Not exactly, still I'll own I'd rather some of t'others had been saved and you have gone instead."

"Blast you for an unmannerly old dog," shouted Brand; "I've half a mind to give you a taste of a rope's end. Just remember you are under my orders, now, as you were aboard ship."

"I differ with ye there," answered outspoken Turk; "so much in fact, that if you should try to rope's end me, I should have to keel haul you."

And Turk, as he spoke, showed a formidable looking fist, hairy and covered with protuberances like those one see on the knots of an oak.

Brand's eye flashed fire, and he made a step forward.

Then he controlled himself, muttering something in an inaudible voice.

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Meanwhile, the eyes of Mary were turned upon the intruder with a mingled expression of fear and dislike.

There was evidently in those eyes some startling resemblance which made the captain feel very uneasy, for he half turned his head, while a ghastly hue overspread his face.

"So," said Harry, breaking the awkward silence, "we did not reach our destination, the volcanic isle, after all."

"No," answered Brand, gloomily.

"Can we not get to it from here?" inquired Mary, eagerly; "I know not why, but I feel as if we should there find my poor, lost papa!"

"Never," thought Brand; "your papa has been food for fishes long before now."

In a few minutes they were at work erecting bowers.

Turk was moving away, with Brand about to follow him, when, turning and catching a sudden glance at the captain, he snatched up his bottle and pocketed it.

"You need not be afraid," said the skipper, with a sneer; "I have a supply of gin of my own," showing a big black bottle, partially protruding from the inside pocket of his jacket.

Turk pulled Harry's sleeve.

"The captain's gin," he whispered, "better than this ere brandy of mine, would make an excellent cosmopolite for the gal in case of sickness."

"You may keep your brandy if you wish," answered Harry, sternly.

At this reproof, old Turk colored and scratched his head like a schoolboy detected in some grave offence.

Then he ran forward, and grasped the young man's hand.

"I wouldn't taste a drop of my grog for the world, since the gal may want it. Still do ye see, human natur' is human natur', and I'm bound to say that I have been selfish in this matter, to the great sorrer of Tom Turk."

Two bowers were soon erected of twigs and leaves; one for the accommodation of the men, the other for Mary.

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With their jackets and a multitude of dried leaves, the men formed a pleasant little retreat for the young girl, who thanked them for their pains.

Towards sundown the gale abated. The men took advantage of this to construct, with some fragments of the wreck drifted ashore, a raft, upon which they paddled out to the reef, where several barrels and boxes from the wrecked vessel had drifted. These were found to contain hard bread and salt beef, enough to last them for several weeks.

With some difficulty they got the valuable articles over the reef, and they were paddling them to land, when they saw Mary, whom they had left upon the beach, beckoning to them with an air of fear and excitement.

"We had better let the provision go," said Harry.

"No!" exclaimed Brand, "I am captain here. The gal has probably got scared at nothing."

"Come, Turk!" said Harry, "if this fellow don't choose to follow us, we will leave him."

So saying, the young man plunged into the water, closely followed by the old tar, greatly to the indignation of Brand, who, clenching his fists, muttered to himself:

"I will be even with them, yet."

Meanwhile the beach now being but twenty yards distant from the raft, Harry and his friend were soon ashore.

"Perhaps I was mistaken," said Mary, as she fled to her lover's side, "but I feel quite certain I saw the head of a savage, protruding over the shrubbery near my bower," pointing as she spoke, towards a clump of bushes about forty yards from the sylvan shelter.

Instantly Harry bounded toward the spot, armed with a stout club picked up from the ground.

Turk was about following, when a thought seemed to strike him. He retraced his step, and, taking from his pocket his bottle of grog, rolled it up in a green breadfruit leaf, and presented it to Mary.

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"Here, lass!" said he, "please take charge of this and—" here a suppressed sob escaped the old fellow, "if I never return to claim it, keep it as a testamentary of affection from Tom Turk."

Before the girl could reply, he was off after Harry, who, by this time, was close upon the clump of shrubbery.

The young man looked all around him, but could see neither sign nor trace of a savage.

Concluding the girl's fancy had deceived her, both men returned to assure her that such was the case. Mary, however, looked doubtful.

"It may have been fancy," she said, "but somehow I hardly think it was."

Harry endeavoured to quiet her fears, and was finally successful.

Meanwhile Turk was noticed to behave in a singular manner. He would walk all round the girl, looking at her, now and then, in a significant manner winking first with one eye and then the other.

Annoyed, Harry at length asked him what he wanted.

"Beg pardon, Miss," he stammered "but if you please, that bottle of grog!"

Mary blushed, and thrusting her hand in the pocket of her dress, pulled forth the flask, which she at once presented to the old sailor.

"Thank ye, Miss," said he, "it shall be preserved for your benefit."

So saying he pocketed the flask, and waded off to the raft to help get the box and barrel ashore.

This was soon done.

"We had better stand watch, to-night," said Harry, when the articles were brought to the shelter.

"Wherefore?" queried Brand.

"Because Miss Manton will feel much easier, if we do."

"Oh! very well, you can stand watch if you like, but I don't care to lose my sleep for nothing."

Night soon closed round the party.

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Harry took the first watch, while Turk rolled up like a ball, lay cuddled in a corner of the hut.

The storm having now subsided, the sea was almost calm. There was a full moon, but the clouds passing along over the sky, in detached masses, frequently veiled it.

Harry was pacing his beat, not far from the shrubbery in which Mary had fancied she saw the savage, when he suddenly paused, with his ear inclined to one side.

Steps, mingled with the murmur of voices, were audible, apparently approaching the hut!

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## CHAPTER VII.

### THE ATTACK.

To waken Turk and Brand was the work of a moment. Both sprang up to hear Harry's explanation.

"We have no arms!" said Brand, "and so we had better be scuddin' off as soon as possible!"

Turk thrust his hand in his pocket, and pulling forth his flask of grog, eyed it wistfully and anxiously.

"Sooner than this should fall in the hands of them savages," he exclaimed, "I had better put it, do you see where by rights it belongs, meanin' the stomach of Tom Turk!"

Up went the bottle, and the old tar seemed about drinking, when it struck him that the liquor might, after all, come in use for Mary, in case they should contrive to make their escape. With a heavy sigh he thrust the bottle back into his pocket.

[Pg 41]

Meanwhile the steps drew nearer.

Harry waked Mary, and at once escorted her to the raft. Not a moment too soon, for, with a sudden yell, a large party of fierce-looking islanders, tattooed from head to foot, and looming up like demons in the faint radiance of the moon, burst forth from a clump of shrubbery, about fifty yards distant.

Waving war clubs and spears, while their long hair streamed in red, fiery clouds down their backs and shoulders, the wild fellows certainly formed a hideous spectacle!

Before the raft could be unfastened, a shower of spears came whizzing round the heads of the little party.

"Shove off! shove off!" screamed Brand, as he seized the raft-pole to push the floating platform away from the beach.

"Not yet!" cried Mary, noticing that her lover, who had paused to collect the jackets left in the huts, and also a few of the biscuits, was not upon the raft.

In a moment the young man came panting to the beach.

Brand, however, not heeding the girl's exclamation was about shoving off, when Turk caught his arm.

"Avast there, captain! Don't be in too much of a hurry!"

Enraged, the latter glared upon the speaker, but this was no time for quarreling.

Harry now sprang from the raft. At the same moment two of the savages, ahead of their companions, arriving, seized the rope attached to the floating platform, which they endeavored to pull ashore.

To prevent their doing so, Harry stepped to the edge of the raft, and with the pole endeavored to strike them on the head.

One of them seizing the pole, gave it a sudden jerk, thus pulling the young man off into the water! [Pg 42]

With a fierce yell, they then pounced upon him, dragging him to the beach!

Feeling that there was not a moment to lose, the young man, by a sudden movement, disengaged himself from their clutches; then, picking up a spear, drove it through the body of one who had lifted his war-club to beat out the sailor's brains!

The other now aimed at Harry's head a furious blow, which must have killed him, had it taken effect.

Not so, however, for old Tom Turk, seeing his friend's peril, had sprang ashore, and picked up another spear, which he thrust through the back of the native!

The scream of the dark-skinned fellow, as, throwing up his arms, he fell backward, rang down the sky with startling distinctness, while his friends, hearing that scream, and eager for vengeance, came dashing on, yelling like a pack of wild hyenas!

With a single bound through the water, Turk and Harry now gained the raft, and were soon helping Brand, who had not even left his place, push the floating platform out to sea.

Luckily there was an outer current tending towards the reef, and which drew the raft rapidly along towards the rocks. This soon was reached, while the baffled yells of the savages continued pealing along the waters.

As the raft was drawn through an opening in the reef, and the party put out to sea, Turk again drew forth his beloved grog, and eyed it wistfully.

"Ay, ay, bless your eyes!" said he, "you are too good to grease the gullets of them blueskins."

"Put up your grog, Turk," said Harry, "we have more important matters to think of."

"Ay, ay," said Brand, gruffly, "we've to think that we may be food for fishes!"

"Do you not believe we can reach the volcanic island, now?" inquired Mary, as she glanced towards the red light, gleaming, far away, along the waters.

"It's hard tellin'," answered Brand. "If there's no heavy sea and we can make head against the southern tendency of the current, we may contrive to reach the island." [Pg 43]

With their poles which were not flat enough for paddles, the party made slow progress.

An hour had passed, when, suddenly, Mary pointed far astern towards a long, dark object, apparently shooting out from the shore.

"What is that?"

"A canoe, by —!" ejaculated Brand. "We may as well give up, now!"

"No!" exclaimed Harry, resolutely. "We will not give up! If I mistake not," he added, pointing towards a dark mass, floating through the air to windward of them, "there is a fog coming up! This will screen us from our pursuers!"

"I am glad of that," said Mary, thankfully.

"I'm not so sure it will screen us!" said Brand, "them savages are cunnin' rascals!"

"Where there's hope," remarked Turk, "there's no use of throwin' clouds over the same."

The fog came fast, and finally thickening around the party, they seemed enclosed in a wall of darkness.

"Hark!" said Harry, suddenly, as the dip of the canoe's paddles were heard. "We must get the raft



round, and try another course!"

This, with some difficulty was done, when the clumsy vessel was urged along to the southward.

"Now, then, still as mice!" said Harry.

He was obeyed, those on the raft scarcely breathing.

A moment later something dark, indistinctly seen, was observed gliding along past the raft and within twenty fathoms of it!

It was the canoe!

The weary hours of night wore away.

Poor Mary had slept but little, although Turk and Harry had made her a comfortable couch with their jackets. [Pg 44]

Now, as the gray dawn stole upon the waters, the young girl looked round her with a weary sigh.

The fog had cleared, the faint rays of the sun were beginning to tinge the east, but, far and wide, nothing but sky and water were visible.

Sky and water, and nothing aboard the raft—not even a morsel of bread or a drop of fresh water.

Already the girl began to feel the cravings of thirst. With powerful effort, she endeavored to forget that she felt this want, but in vain.

The day wore away, the sun went down, night began to settle upon the waters.

The men strained their eyes vainly for land or sail.

Next morning the sufferings of all from thirst were intense. Brand, pulling forth his bottle of gin, drank deeply, not offering a drop to the rest.

Then Turk presented his grog to Harry.

"Give some to the poor lass!"

Harry did so. She tasted a few drops, but could not be prevailed upon to take more.

Turk looked wistfully at the flask, then thrusting it back, muttered:

"No—no! it must all be saved for that poor little girl, God bless her eyes!"

One—two—three days passed. Still adrift on the wilderness of ocean. No sail—no land—no fresh water.

God help the castaways!

Brand was almost mad. His eyes gleamed like a tiger's—he gnashed his teeth!

Harry, too, was scarcely sane! Turk alone remained cool and careful, although his sufferings were terrible.

And Mary?

Alas! poor girl—the flush on her sunken cheek burned deep and red—her eyes were feverish—her panting breath came thick and fast—she was too weak to sit up.

There was no more liquor in Turk's flask. He had given all—every drop to the young girl.

So there they all were, still drifting along, a burning sun over their heads, the water almost steaming around them. [Pg 45]

Gradually a sickly, yellowish mist went over the sun.

Harry watched it a moment, then sprang to his feet, shrieking out:

"Land, oh!"

"Where? where?" queried Brand wildly.

It was pointed out to him, all present saw it now.

There was surely a misty line—a headland, extending away to the south and west.

"God be praised," murmured Mary, faintly; "oh Harry! Harry! we shall get some fresh water now, and some beautiful fruit!"

The poor creature smacked her lips and clapped her hands as the spoke.

How tediously slow were the movements of the raft.

On it went, however, apparently nearing the land every moment.

At length it seemed scarcely a mile distant.

"We will soon be there, now," exclaimed Mary.

Suddenly a wail went up from the raft, a long, mournful wail—a half shriek of astonishment, and bitter disappointment.

The supposed land had suddenly vanished—blown away by a mere puff of air.

Alas! it was nothing but a fog bank!

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## CHAPTER VIII.

[Pg 46]

### DRIFTING ON.

As the delusive fog was swept away before the breeze, Brand uttered a howl, and throwing himself down, dashed his head against one of the planks of the raft.

"Eat—drink! I must have something! Come, it is time!"

And he drew forth a clasp knife, eyeing Mary at the same moment with a wolfish gleam in the eyes not to be mistaken.

The bare thought seemed to inspire Harry with a rage almost demoniacal.

He threw himself upon the man, wrenching the knife from his grasp, and hurling it into the sea.

Then he caught the captain by the throat, and seemed on the point of hurling him overboard.

Turk, however, interfered.

"That work won't do, lad! You'd be sorry for it when you got over sich feelin's as at present agitates you. Let him alone, sir. We'll all have sufferin' enough yet, I'll warrant ye!"

Thus prevailed upon, not only by the old sailor but by the mingled pleadings of Mary, Harry relaxed his hold of the fellow, who, with a baffled howl, sank down, glaring at the water, as if hoping to see his knife again rise to the surface.

Meanwhile a fresh breeze now came along, wrinkling the water, and falling upon the heated brows and parched lips of the raft's people, inspiring sensations of relief.

Harry took off his outside shirt, and with one of the raft poles, thus formed a sail.

"A queer piece of canvass, sartinly," said Tom Turk, mournfully; "but as there's a to'gallant sail, we may as well have a topsail, do you see?" [Pg 47]

So saying, he took off his shirt, which was also put upon the pole.

The impetus thus given to the raft can be hardly credited.

Away it went, rippling the water, at the rate of about three knots.

It was nearly sundown, when Tom Turk suddenly balancing himself upon his toes, was heard singing out:

"Land, oh!"

"Another delusion," bitterly exclaimed Harry, not even attempting to rise from his position by Mary's side.

"I'm sartin, this time!" exclaimed the old sailor; "fog never looks like them black things thereaway," pointing westward.

Harry and Brand were up in a moment, to discover that the old tar had indeed spoken truth.

Far away a number of rocks were seen, protruding from the sea.

"Better no land at all than that," growled Brand, in a disappointed voice. "We'll find no water there."

On went the raft, and in due time the rocks were gained. They were found to be about ten in number, and to rise several feet above the surface of the sea.

Brand was the first to spring ashore. Rushing forward, he was suddenly seen to throw himself down.

Harry and Turk were soon by his side, to perceive that he had found, in a hollow of one of the rocks, a quantity of water, evidently lodged there by a recent waterspout, and prevented from drying up by the shadow from an overhanging cliff.

It seemed as if the captain would never get his fill.

He drank and drank, drawing in the water with a noise like that of a horse at a trough.

At last he rose.

There was a gallon and a half of water still in the rocky basin.

What a contrast now was presented between the conduct of Brand and that of his shipmates. Turk filled his flask with the pure element, and presented it to Harry, who at once passed it to Mary. [Pg 48]

"Drink first!" said the poor girl.

Finding, however, that she could not prevail upon him to do so, Mary at length drank her fill.

The effect was magical. Her eyes brightened—the feverish hue seemed to leave her cheek—she breathed a grateful sigh of relief.

At the basin, Turk would not drink until his companion had first done so.

When all had partaken, there was still a quart of water left.

Turk went to the raft, and, procuring his flask, in which there still remained a few drops, he filled it from the hollow, and returning, presented it to Mary.

"This is for you, my lass," said he.

Meanwhile, Brand filled his bottle, holding about twice as much as Turk's.

Neither Harry nor the old seaman said anything; but they exchanged glances, which said plainly:

"When we want water for the girl, we will know where to get it."

Walking about the rocks, Harry suddenly uttered a glad cry.

In some crevices among the rocks, he beheld a number of fat-looking fish.

"It seems as if heaven has sent these especially for our benefit, at the right time," said the young man, joyfully, as Turk came to his side.

The old tar, however, looked sober.

"It is easy enough," said he, "tellin' how them fish came here."

"I don't understand you."

"Well, then, I'll tell you. These rocks, is covered up at high tide. That is how them fish came to be left here!"

"We have our raft," said Harry, joyfully, "so that if the rocks do overflow, we may thus get more fish!" [Pg 49]

"Ay, ay, it's all right, so long as the raft holds together," answered Turk, "which I'm mighty afraid, won't be long," pointing at the lashings holding the timbers together.

These lashings were, in fact, much worn; some of them could not long be made use of.

"We must try to fix the raft," said Harry, "I dare say we can contrive it so that we may keep afloat."

From the raft the hungry men soon turned their attention to the fish.

These were cooked with a couple of planks—there were plenty to spare—torn from the raft and split up against the jagged edges of the rocks, some of the fragments to be afterwards cut by Turk's pocketknife, and lighted by matches which, sailor-like, the old tar always carried with him in a small tin box, that they might be kept dry.

Meanwhile, Brand, while taking no part in these preparations, sat like a hungry tiger eyeing the cooked fish.

A portion was given to him; in fact, the whole party made a hearty and palatable meal.

Now, Mary, her wants having been relieved, again spoke of the volcanic island.

"I so wish we could fall in with some sail, which would take us there," said she. "Oh, if I could only see my dear papa!"

Brand shrugged his shoulders.

"Hark!" he suddenly screamed, as the night shadows gathered, "I fancied I heard a gurgling sound!"

Neither of the rest had heard anything.

"P'raps it was the wash of the waves against the rock," said Brand.

Next morning the whole party rose after a slight rest—the men having stood watch—to perceive that the water had risen nearly to the top of the first rock.

"The rock will soon be flooded," remarked Harry.

"Ay, ay, so I'm afraid," said Turk. "We had better try to make the raft stronger."

Unfortunately, the men having no rope with them, succeeded but poorly.

"Truth is," said Turk, aside to his friend, "I wouldn't trust ourselves two days on them planks!"

At this time the party stood upon one of the rocks.

Suddenly Mary pointed down at the water, through which, all around their position, a number of dark-looking fins now were seen, moving hither and thither.

"What are those things?" she inquired.

"Sharks!" answered Harry and Turk, as they simultaneously drew the young girl upon the raft.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### DRIVEN AWAY.

The water kept rising higher.

Meanwhile, the sharks swam all round the rocks, and the raft, now and then leaping forth, as if to clutch at the party.

The sight of these ugly-looking creatures, with their long heads, sharp fins, teeth, and dull, bloodshot eyes, inspired Mary with the most disagreeable sensations.

"Come!" said she, "let us leave this fearful place!"

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Turk shook his head.

"It is our only salvation, Miss, I'm afraid."

"Not much of a salvation, either," said Brand, pointing down at several of the ferocious creatures, which had begun to gnaw at the lashings of the raft.

Vainly the men endeavored to drive them away; they clung with steady tenacity to the lashings, biting with demon-like intelligence at the rope strands, as if aware that the severing of these would put the party in their power.

Finally the seamen were obliged to get off the raft on the rocks, and draw the planks after them, as the only means of pulling the lashings away from the teeth of the troublesome monsters.

The water, however, kept rising, so that it was necessary to get away as soon as possible.

The men did their best to strengthen the planks, then once more launched their raft, actually driven away by the sharks.

The tendency of the current and the wind now was to the westward.

"At such a rate," said Turk, "shouldn't wonder if we find ourselves, before two days, on the volcanic island."

For this island the party had looked every day, while they were afloat; but, for some reason or other, since the night of their first floating away from the island, they had seen nothing of the smoke or fire of the burning crater.

The seamen had attributed this fact to the murky atmosphere westward, shrouding the island from their view, while the raft had meanwhile been carried further and further from it by the tide.

When night came, after their leaving the rock, the bearings of which they endeavored to keep in mind, they again looked for the light of the volcano. The atmosphere, however, not having yet cleared, they could see no sign of it. Hoping that the current would continue in this direction and carry them to the island, they watched the west, keenly yet vainly for a sign of the shore.

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Mary slept little that night. In the morning Harry pointed out to her, far away, the land, evidently that which they were anxious to reach, looming up, the mist having cleared.

That it was the wished-for shore was made evident by a column of smoke, rising up from the summit of one of the lofty island peaks.

"Do you think we will reach it?" the young girl inquired.

"I think so; if the set of the current does not change to the south," answered Harry.

He was right; before night the party were close upon the island shore.

Mary's eyes lighted up with joy. Worn though she was by hardship and suffering, she could yet feel a thrill of eager, pleasant expectation, as she gazed at the beautiful shores of this island.

Scarcely a mile in extent, and not more than half that in breadth, the shores teemed with the

most luxuriant vegetation.

There were seen tall cocoanuts waving upon a bright, pebbly beach, rocks covered with flowers and vines, cascades flashing and gleaming as they glittered in the sunlight, and the broad waters of silver streams, gliding along through mossy grounds.

"Beautiful," said Mary, clapping her hands. "Papa! papa! are you there?"

She spoke half plaintively, half joyfully, clasping her hands like a little child.

Brand turned aside his head. Hardened as he was, the voice went straight to his ruffian heart, and he felt at that moment as if he would give worlds had he not committed the fearful crime which, after all, had been perpetrated for nothing.

Meanwhile Turk stood gazing steadily towards one of the island bays.

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"If I ain't mistaken," said he, "there's an old wreck of some kind there!"

"Ay, ay," cried Harry; "I see it—the wreck of a schooner, if we may judge by the two stumps of her masts."

It was almost sundown before the raft touched upon the beach.

"We will commence our search for traces of your father," said Harry to Mary, after all had refreshed themselves with luxurious bananas and the remains of their fish, "by visiting that old wreck. If your parent be here, he probably has visited the hulk, and perhaps left some sign of his presence; a pipe, matches or something of that sort."

"Who knows," said Mary, "but he has taken up his quarters there."

"I'm afraid you are too hopeful, lass," said old Tom Turk, "specially as it was believed by all aboard the *Maxwell* that the poor old man was drowned after he fell overboard."

"Yes," said Brand, shuddering; "I for one believe he was drowned."

"I will go with you to the wreck," said Mary.

"No," replied Harry, "it will be too much for you."

The young girl, however, insisting, the whole party started for the bay, which they could see from their position.

A short walk brought them to the wreck.

It was a schooner, and as had been supposed, with its two masts broken short off near the deck.

It lay almost upon its beam ends, firmly wedged in between two rocks.

By mounting a small, flat rock near the larboard gunwale, the party easily got aboard. Having done so, they entered the cabin. It was devoid of all articles of furniture, these probably having been taken away by some of the Indian visitors at the island.

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A candle, however, with an old piece of a clay pipe, a few nails, and an empty box, were found.

Turk took the candle, and endeavored to light it. This was done with some difficulty, after which the party passed into the hold. Here, saturated with salt water, which had broken in through the bottom of the schooner, were seen several coils of old rope and a few empty barrels.

"All of which," philosophized Turk, "will come in good use, 'specially if we can find some nails."

After a long search, he came upon a bag of rusty nails, lying upon one of the beams.

"With these," said Turk, "we can manage to make a boat, leastways a good raft."

The flickering candle shed lurid light upon the old, creaking beams of the schooner, as the party vainly searched the hold for signs of Mary's father.

"Thought it would be of no use," said Turk; "Poor old man, he was drowned, you may be sartin."

"Oh, papa! papa! would that I could find him!" wailed Mary, mournfully.

Brand shuddered, as he always did, when the girl's father was mentioned.

Seating himself on a detached coil of rigging, with his back turned to the rest of the party, he suddenly fancied he felt a strange, creeping sensation stealing over his body; a feeling, as if a multitude of worms, were crawling up his back.

Instinctively he turned half round, to see his companions, already leaving the hold, passing into the cabin.

Some strange instinct prompted him to turn yet further round, when he beheld a sight which for some moments kept him motionless, unable to utter a word.

In the faint light of the candle, streaming into the hold, he saw a long, lean neck, surmounted by a face as bloodless and apparently almost transparent, with hollow cheeks and protruding eyes, lifted above a barrel at the other side of the hold.

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A strange looking face it was; a face of unearthly transparency, apparently quivering like a vapor, while his eyes—those great, staring eyes, were fixed strangely upon the captain.

The latter, as mentioned, could not utter a word. To him the apparition was doubly terrible, as it was that of the man whom he had pushed overboard from the *Maxwell*.

Yes, there it was, sure enough, the face of the unfortunate passenger, William Manton.

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## CHAPTER X.

### HAUNTED.

As Brand, like one spell-bound, continued staring at the strange vision, he beheld the lean throat quivering, and heard issuing therefrom a gurgling cry exactly like that on the fatal night.

It was a horrible sound, especially to Brand, who, with one hoarse scream, bounded backward on beholding the apparition suddenly vanish, as if melting away in the air.

At the noise made by Brand, Turk, followed by Harry, rushed back into the hold.

"What is the matter?"

"Nothing," gasped Brand; "nothing at all."

There were big drops of sweat upon his brow, his eyes protruded, while great, purple rings spread around them.

"Nothing," said Turk; "ay, ay, now, but there must be something the matter with ye, Cap. D'ye feel hungry?"

Perceiving that he must make some excuse, Brand puzzled himself trying to think of some plausible one. [Pg 56]

"The fact is," said he, "I believe what we've gone through has unstrung my nerves. I thought I felt a snake around my legs, when it was nothing but a coil of rope."

His auditors believed him all the more readily that they had by this time concluded that the man, like most all thoroughly selfish people, was a coward.

In a short time they were out of the schooner, when Brand, who had previously lagged, was now the foremost.

In a short time they reached a level piece of turf about one hundred yards from the wreck.

This they concluded would be a good halting place, at least for the present, and so they commenced the work of erecting shelters.

This was soon done, after which they threw themselves down to rest, Mary, as on the other island, occupying a bower apart from the others.

The young girl slept but little that night. When she did fall asleep, her slumber was troubled with disagreeable dreams. The roaring of the volcano whose red gleam could be seen far up through the shrubbery, shooting from one of the island peaks, mingled with her fancies, and seemed the report of countless volleys of musketry.

At morn, after partaking of a frugal breakfast, the party consulted as to their next course.

Turk wanted to commence at once upon his boat, Brand, sullen, glowering and silent, seemed inclined to do nothing, while Mary and Glenville concluded to walk off by themselves to explore the island.

Striking through the shrubbery, the young people soon found themselves at the foot of the peak on which was the volcano.

They could see the smoke and the flashes of fire shooting up, could also feel the ground shake under them, as if the flames were careering beneath their very feet. Watching the volcano awhile, they moved on. [Pg 57]

"Let us explore the island thoroughly," said Mary, "we may yet come upon some trace of my parent."

"Why is it, Mary," inquired Harry, "that you seem so confident on this subject?"

"My father," answered the young girl, "was an excellent swimmer. I have heard him say he once swam across the East River, New York, while a boy.

"Then again the captain informed me that, in falling overboard, it was found that my parent had carried away with him a plank, which, from carelessness, had been left hanging loosely over the stern. Now what more likely than that with the help of the plank, and this island but two miles to

leeward, he should succeed in reaching it?"

Harry shook his head.

"Of course," said he, "such things have happened, but I have no idea that your father reached the island."

For several hours the two walked over the isle, which they found to be a beautiful place. There were flowers of almost every hue, clear, purling streams, rocks, caverns and cascades, while through the green shrubbery the banana and the breadfruit were visible.

The wanderers, however, came upon no traces of Mr. Manton, and Harry could see that his companion's hopes in this respect were almost extinguished.

Returning to the spot where the shelters were located, they found Turk already at work upon his boat, assisted by Brand.

"You are making good progress," remarked Harry.

"Ay, ay," answered Turk, "there's no chance for laziness, now. The sooner we leave this island the better, accordin' to my notion."

The old tar spoke solemnly.

"Ay," said Captain Brand, "that's my opinion. Hark! did ye hear that?"

A roaring, rumbling sound was heard, right under their feet; the ground trembled violently.

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"It is the subterranean fire of that volcano," said Harry. "I hardly think there is much danger."

He said this to quiet the fears of Mary, who turned pale and looked anxious.

"To my notion," said Turk, "it's devils a-lightin' their brimstone right under us, hopin' in that way to catch us. It's plain they're after some one among us, which I may premise by sayin' ain't me nor Harry, nor this young lass."

Brand frowned darkly.

"How know you that I'm not as good as the rest of you," said he.

"Honestly speakin', Cap, I don't think you are," exclaimed the old tar, bluntly.

"I've always led a good life," said Brand, shunning the great blue eyes of Mary.

There was a rumble like thunder under ground, then a report like the discharge of musketry.

"The devils is a-firin' off their muskets to celebrate that lie of yours, Cap," remarked Turk, as he turned to his work.

The party now felt anxious. The noises under ground continued, the island shook, while increased volumes of fire shot up from the volcanic peak.

Harry now assisted Turk in his work on the boat. There had been found that morning in the schooner an old hatchet with which Turk had knocked away a large quantity of timber from the wreck to be conveyed to the spot where he intended erecting his boat.

Working all day, the men made good progress.

Brand worked as hard as the rest. It was not the danger from the volcano alone that urged him on in his efforts, but the continual harassing fear, of again beholding that fearful apparition of his drowned victim.

At night the aspect of the volcano was terrific. There were the lurid flames, apparently shooting to the very skies, while whole showers of sparks were thrown out in fiery flakes that filled all the air, floating along like millions of fireflies over the sea, in the water of which the were reflected.

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Meanwhile the shocks became every moment more frequent, the ground shaking as if beneath the tramp of armed horsemen.

Harry had advanced into the thicket a short distance, when he became aware of a hissing sound, as if thousands of serpents were around him.

At the same moment, a broad, bright stream of something flashed up before him, apparently descending towards him with great rapidity.

Now he comprehended that it was a stream of lava, thrown from the volcanic crater, and rushing down the side of the steep cliff.

In fact he had not time to reach the spot where he had left his companions, when it came hissing and rushing into the thicket, which he had just left.

All night a careful watch was kept, the raft with additional timbers secured to it being in readiness for the party to leave at a moment's notice.

Nothing more than the shocks, with the fall of additional lava occurred, however, to disturb the party.

"I doubt if anything serious happens, after all," said Harry.

Turk pointed to a couple of fissures in the side of the cliff.

"That looks bad," said he; "in my opinion, this island goes in less than forty-eight hours."

Good progress was made on the boat this day.

At night watching the volcano, Mary suddenly uttered a wild cry, and pointed up towards an overhanging rock beneath the crater.

"What is it?" was the question.

"I don't know," said Mary, shuddering, "but just now I am certain I saw a form appear, and then suddenly vanish upon that shelf of rock."

"Are you sure?"

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"Yes."

Turk looked solemn; Brand turned deadly pale.

"It must have been a spirit," said the old tar; "some imp after you, Cap," he added, looking straight at Brand.

"Ay, a spirit," muttered the captain, his teeth chattering.

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## CHAPTER XI.

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### ON THE LEDGE.

"This must be looked into," said Harry, resolutely. "Who will go with me to the ledge?"

"No—no—do not go," pleaded Mary, "see how the fire rages! The peak may explode before you come down, and you be swallowed up in the flames!"

Harry however was determined to go.

"If nobody will go with me," said he, "I will go alone."

Mary advanced to his side.

"I will go with you," said she; "if you are to perish, I will die with you."

The young man, however, would not permit the girl to accompany him.

"If what was seen was mortal," said Turk, "why, then, I'd go with you; but I don't care to have anything to do with spirits and sich like, which can give you a poke in the stomach, do you see, and yet you not be able to square off to 'em."

"Very well, then, I go alone," said Harry, as he sprang away.

He had not reached the foot of the cliff, when he felt a hand on his arm, and turned to behold Turk.

"Fact is," said the latter, "I won't see ye go alone, but if there's any fightin' to do with ghosts, you mustn't expect me to help you, for when I aim at a nose, I like to hit it, which is impossible with the noses of goblins and sich like, as your fist will go right through 'em."

The two soon were at the foot of the cliff, which both now commenced to ascend. As they advanced, the rumbling beneath them seemed to increase, shaking the cliff to its foundation.

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At length they arrived near the ledge, where the heat was almost unbearable. On one side of them there was a wide cleft, in which a line of fire was seen, glowing like a red hot iron. The slightest mis-step on the part of the adventurers in their endeavors to reach the ledge, must precipitate them into the cleft.

To get to their destination, they must move along a narrow ridge not more than two inches wide, with nothing at the side of the rock to clutch except a slightly rugged surface which must afford them a very insecure hold.

"This is dang'rous traveling," remarked Turk, "worse than walkin' on a railroad track over a rottin bridge."

The two kept on, carefully making progress, until finally they were close to the ledge, upon which a sudden spring carried them.

Winding round the cliff, they could now see another ledge, but no sign of the strange figure. They clambered the rocky surface, exploring it on all sides, but saw no sign of what they were after.

"To my notion," said Turk, "that goblin has gone down to take a siesta, do you see, preparatory to



comin' up agin, which, I take it, is a good hint fur us to make leg-bail."

"What is this?" inquired Harry suddenly, stooping and picking up a singular object.

It was a cocoanut branch twisted into an odd shape, bearing some resemblance to a pronged fork.

"Ay, ay, now, there's the pitchfork for sartin!" exclaimed Turk; "that goblin has left his instrumental be—behind him, and we may yet come upon his tail!"

"Hark, Turk," said Harry, somewhat sternly, "you must not talk in that way. This is in fact, no time for joking. See there," pointing above them as he spoke, to where lurid flames were shooting out from crevices in the rock, thus preventing their ascent.

Gazing below them they beheld the dark tops of the trees, far beneath.

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There was no means by which they could reach the ground.

The flames meanwhile burning brighter and longer, every moment, until finally they scorched the flesh of the two men, whose situation from the intense heat, was becoming intolerable.

For a moment they stood looking at each other, puzzled to know what to do.

Then a sudden thought flashed across Harry's mind.

"There are coils of rope in the schooner," said he; "we can start from here to Brand, who, probably, is watching us, telling him to bring up and lower to us one of those coils of rope."

"Ay, ay, if he ain't afraid," answered Turk.

The two men shouting with united voices, pronounced the captain's name.

"Halloa!" was the response.

"We cannot get back the way we came. Bring us a rope from the schooner's wreck, and lower it to us."

Brand shuddered and turned pale.

Mary, who was near, besought him to hurry.

"No," he answered, in husky voice, "I do not care to go aboard that schooner!"

"Then I will go!" cried Mary, and away she went.

Bad as he was, Brand was yet man enough not to permit this girl to undertake such a difficult task.

He sprang after her, and soon boarding the schooner, advanced with lighted candle into the hold, casting fearful glances around him.

He saw nothing, however, to excite alarm, and so seizing a small coil, he emerged with it on deck.

He was about climbing over the bulwarks, when, chancing to turn his head towards the schooner's bows, he fancied he saw the phantom face of the drowned passenger as it was hastily withdrawn!

"P'shaw, this is mere imagination," muttered the captain, as he sprung over the rail to the beach, where he found Mary anxiously waiting for him.

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"Quick! make haste!" exclaimed the young girl.

It almost seemed to Brand, as he encountered the gaze of those wild eyes, that he beheld a second phantom, so alike were the eyes of father and daughter.

Throwing the coil over his shoulders, he hurried along to the cliff and commenced the ascent, followed by Mary, who, in her anxiety for her lover's safety, would almost have followed the man into the very flames.

In a short time they were at a point, whence the rope might be lowered to the two imperiled men upon the ledge.

Brand, therefore, uncoiling the line, lowered the end to them at a point where the flames could not come into contact with it, fastening the other part to a spur.

It was evident, however, that the two must make good speed, else the strands would become so weakened by the heat that there would be danger of their giving way.

The two men found the rope, where they lowered it over the edge of the rocky shelf, long enough to reach to the ground, about one hundred and fifty feet beneath them.

Then Turk commenced the descent, succeeding in reaching the ground safely.

By this time the strands were so weakened that Brand was obliged to haul the rope up, to prevent its parting, and secure another turn around the rocky spur.

Then Harry, grasping the lower part, commenced to descend. He had got within about one

hundred and twenty feet of the ground and within a few feet of the top of one of the trees, when from the branches, the captain, whose position afforded him a good view of the trees revealed in the volcano's lurid light, uttered a sudden wild cry, that rang above the din of the roaring fire.

Protruding from the foliage of the tree, towards which Harry was being lowered, the man beheld the long, lean neck and ghastly countenance of the apparition he so dreaded.

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So great was the effect of this vision upon him that he let go the rope which descended swift as a shot.

Where now was Harry Glenville?

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## CHAPTER XII.

### CAPTURED.

Mary, shrieking, peered far over the edge of the rock, vainly looking for her lover.

"Killed! killed!" she wailed, wringing her hands. "My God, he is dashed to pieces on the ground, by your letting go of the rope!"

"I?" exclaimed the captain, looking wild and half bewildered.

"Ay, God! it is so!"

The vision had by this time vanished. Partially recovering his self-possession, the captain hurried down the steep cliff, following Mary, who, like a maniac, ran on.

She soon gained the foot of the precipice, and was hurrying along in the direction where she expected to find the remains of her lover all mangled from his fall of sixty feet, when suddenly, she felt some person grasp her arm, and turning, beheld Brand.

"Let me go! Why hold me?" screamed the young girl, wildly.

"See, there!" he answered, pointing towards the beach, "that is the reason!"

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Looking in the indicated direction, she beheld, in the lurid glare of the volcanic fire, a long canoe, by the beach.

Evidently it was the same which had pursued them on that day when the two warriors were slain.

Bent on vengeance, the islanders had not yet given up the pursuit, but had searched for the fugitives ever since, at last coming upon their traces.

Now the forms of the fierce men were seen advancing swiftly in single file up the beach, on a course, which, had Mary kept on, must have brought her into contact with them.

"Never mind," she exclaimed; "let me go to his body! What care I if they do kill me, so long as I get a glimpse of his form?"

Brand, however, held her firmly.

He felt that he should at least partially atone for his crime by saving the daughter of the man he had sent to his death.

"Come! come with me! This is madness."

Mary struggled in vain. Brand drew her along with him into the shadow of a small cavern in the foot of the cliff.

"Hark!" he said, "you must not cry out."

Attracted probably by her cries, several natives soon presented themselves at the entrance of the cavern.

Brand, being unarmed, could do nothing. Several spears were pointed at his heart and that of his companion.

An islander—a huge fellow with great rings tattooed like bracelets all over both his arms; evidently a chief, interposed.

"No strike!" he exclaimed, in broken English, "this's too much quick death. Best take and chokee slow."

"What do you mean?" inquired Brand.

"Cussem Americanon!" said the chief, fiercely, "kill one two me men! Mus' pay for dat."

"You are mistaken," answered Brand; "I never killed a man. It wasn't me."

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"All same you with," answered the islander. "Ho! ho! never get way from me—me got long

canoe."

The two were dragged to the beach, bound with strong wythes, and were made to sit down upon the sand.

Then a brief conversation was held, after which, the chief said something to several of his men.

Away they went, climbing up a tree, and procuring several branches.

These they brought to the chief, who, passing them round the neck of the prisoners so tightly that both were nearly throttled, then turned again and spoke to his people.

Instantly the latter, seizing the two, dragged them up to their necks into the water, where they were firmly held with the incoming seas continually breaking over their heads.

A slow, torturing method this to make way with prisoners. It is however resorted to by many of the South Sea Island tribes.

At first the victim easily manages to catch his breath between whiles. Gradually, however, this becoming harder, and the difficulty increasing every moment, the wretches are eventually strangled to death.

Poor Mary! The hardships and excitement she had lately undergone were of themselves sufficient to deprive an ordinary woman of her strength. This young girl, however, had an excellent constitution and, when occasion required, a strong will. Now the intensity of her anguish regarding her lover had so worked upon her, that, with this new torture before her, she became unconscious.

Heedless of this, however, the native having charge of her, still held her upright in the water, until the chief again interfered.

"Makee muchee now long," said he.

The two were drawn out to the beach, Brand, however, being informed that the disagreeable ceremony would before morning, be repeated, until he was drownee, drownee, drownee. [Pg 68]

Soon after Mary came to her senses. At first somewhat bewildered, she soon remembered all.

"Dead! dead!" she moaned, "he is dead."

The natives heeded not her sufferings. On the contrary, they seemed to gloat over her distress.

An hour wore on when the prisoners were again led into water, the seas breaking high, continually went over their heads.

Mary soon drew her breath with difficulty—her brain went round and round, she felt that she was dying.

In fact, life must have deserted her in a few minutes, but for a singular interposition, the phantom-like figure which has been mentioned, appearing suddenly on the branch of a tree and waving its arms to the natives in a frantic manner.

"Berch, hounds and dogs!" it exclaimed in hollow voice; "what would ye do. I forbid this work. Terrible misfortune will attend ye, if ye keep on thus persecuting those prisoners."

Brand, hearing that voice, turned his head.

As he did so, the form suddenly vanished.

The natives stood looking at each other in surprise. Brand noticing their astonishment, thought he might turn it to good account.

No other consideration but that of saving his life could have tempted him to speak of the vision of the murdered passenger to a living soul.

"Indians," said he, "I would at once speak to your chief."

The men who held him understood him sufficiently to make known his request to their leader, who, forthwith, appeared floundering through the water.

"What want? Speak quick!"

"Well, then," said Brand, shuddering, "he whom you saw just now among the trees, was no mortal vision. It is a phantom!" [Pg 69]

"How know you that?"

"If the chief will take me a little ways off I will tell him," said Brand, not caring to have the young girl hear what he intended to say.

The chief did as requested, when Brand explained, saying that the phantom was that of a passenger who had accidentally fallen overboard from a vessel aboard which he (Brand), was third officer.

The superstitious natives are prone to believe weird stories, and the chief was no exception to the rule.

To his awe-stricken followers he at once explained what he had learned, when it was unanimously agreed that the lives of the two prisoners should be spared, at least for the present.

No good, the natives all agreed, could come of their disobeying the injunctions of a spirit.

Mary and Brand were therefore taken and seated near a bright fire, which had been kindled for comfort by their enemies.

They were treated to cooked breadfruit, cocoanut sauce, and other delicacies of the South Sea Islanders. Brand ate heartily, but poor Mary, almost maddened by her grief, would not even look at what was proffered her.

"Harry is dead! dead!" was the continual cry of her anguished soul.

Meanwhile the whole island was rocking like a floating ship. Showers of fire, roaring thunder, flew from the volcanic peak.

The natives looked at each other. Presently the chief spoke.

"The islee will be swallowed in fire," said he; "the spirit which spoke, did not tell right. It is a bad spirit, which Islander must not mind. It said if Islander spare white men's life, no harm come. See! here is harm. The island will be lost before Islander can find all their foes."

Such was the purport of the chief's words, uttered however, in a more incomprehensible manner than we have shown. [Pg 70]

"Yes," continued the speaker, "so we say we must killee! killee," pointing at the two prisoners; "must killee quickee, no slow now."

He held a brief consultation with some of his men, four of whom now advanced toward the girl and Brand, each of which was lifted between a couple.

"Quickee—go!" screamed the chief, when each of the pair, with their burdens commenced rapidly scaling the sides of the steep ascent.

Good need it now seemed, was there of their making swift speed.

They kept on with all possible dispatch, eventually pausing upon a lofty spire, far up on the very top of the mountain.

This spur, rising to a height of about forty feet from the edge of the volcanic crater, overlooked the chasm of fire, which, like the infernal lake itself, lay at its base, shooting its forked tongues of roaring, hissing flame high in air!

And now the prisoners comprehended the fate intended for them, for the natives driving them to and fro, preparing to fling them into that lurid, roaring, crackling sea of fire!

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## CHAPTER XIII.

[Pg 71]

### WALLED IN.

To repeat a previous question.

Where now was Harry Glenville?

On feeling himself descending, after Brand let go of the rope to which he was clinging, the young man, instinctively throwing out his arms, was fortunate enough to grasp the branch of the tree through which his falling form was crashing.

To this branch he clung, swinging a hundred feet above the ground.

Every moment he expected that the branch, which was a slender one, and which he held near the extremity, would part. He could hear it crack, every time he swung.

Above him, faintly revealed in the lurid light, he could meanwhile see a larger and stronger branch, which he hoped he might, by a sudden upward stretching of an arm, succeed in grasping. Still there was danger that he might miss his grasp, when he would certainly be precipitated upon the ground below.

Still considering whether or not to make the attempt, he suddenly heard the cheery voice of Tom Turk:

"Hold on hard, lad, and I'll be up there to help ye, in the tyin' of a square knot!"

"Make haste!" exclaimed Harry, "as I expect, every minute, that the branch I hold will give way."

"Ay, ay. Keep up a good heart. My climbin' days ain't quite over yet!"

As he spoke, Turk commenced rapidly ascending the tree, running up the trunk with the squirrel-like dexterity of a true sailor. [Pg 72]

He had with him the end of the fallen rope, thrown over his shoulder.

In a short time, he was upon the brunch, just above the swinging form of his friend.

The latter's weight had nearly parted the branch, strips of which were already beginning to peel off.

"Make haste, Turk!" repeated the young man.

"Ay, ay, lad! here's the rope!" cried Turk, lowering to his friend the end, to which he had fastened a bowline hitch; "jest slip that over your head, and under one of your arms, and I'll have ye up in half a minute."

Harry promptly complied, not a moment too soon, for with a crash, the branch now gave way.

The young man would have gone with it, in spite of the bowline hitch, which he had not yet been able to properly secure, but for his throwing up both hands and grasping the rope.

Turk, who had taken a turn round the upper branch, was thus enabled to draw him safely up.

In a few seconds both men were on the ground, about to move in the direction of the base of the cliff to meet Mary and Brand, when they beheld the forms of the natives, stealing along from their canoe.

"Ay, ay, now!" whispered Turk, "this is calamitous."

"We must save Mary at all hazards," exclaimed Harry, impulsively, as he bounded forward.

"S—sh!" whispered Turk, "jest see there! They have got the poor gal and that Brand already," pointing to the natives, lugging of their prisoners.

Harry would have sprang onward unarmed as he was, to attack the two savages, but for the cooler and more prudent Turk.

"Hold!" he whispered, grasping his friend's jacket, "can't do anything in a hurry, which do you see, will salle all."

Even as he spoke, another party of savages were observed, approaching them.

"Now, then, fur scuddin!" said Turk, "no use stayin' here to be speared to death, which is a most uncomfortable way of dyin', 'specially when you are afterwards b'iled in a pot for the blueskins' dinner." [Pg 73]

He drew the young man along to a clump of bushes near the base of an enormous tree.

"I've sighted this tree before," said he, "which I know is holler. It's big enough to hold you and me. Afterwards we can see to the gal, if there's any way to save her, whereas if we should try now, we'd only be killed, which sartinly would be a poor way for keepin' the lass."

Harry saw the sense of this remark at once. With the old seaman, he crouched in the bushes.

"Well have to get into the tree, mole fashion," said Turk, "see'n' as the hole leading to the inside of it, is scooped out underneath."

So saying he displaced some bushes, and bade his friend crawl into the aperture thus revealed.

Harry did so, and was soon followed by Turk.

In the hollow tree, the two now glanced up, to see through an opening in the trunk, broken half way off, the lurid gleam of the volcanic fire.

"Here we are, moles as is moles!" exclaimed Turk.

Meanwhile the shouts of the savages, who, it was evident, had now come upon the footprints of the two seamen on the ground, were heard outside of the tree.

"They will of course discover us, after all!" said Harry, "and we will have to die. Better to have fallen in defense of Mary."

Turk scratched his head. By the red gleam, shooting down into the hollow, Harry could see a troubled expression upon the old seaman's face.

"Ay, ay," he muttered, at length, "the Turks never was good at strategic p'nts. I had a grandfather, who, to save himself from a mad bull, throwed himself, in tryin' to leap over it, partly upon the creatur's horns, which, penetratin' the seat of his breeches, held him expended in that way until he was relieved by friends!" [Pg 74]

The old tar had scarcely thus delivered himself, when, chancing to glance down, he beheld the tattooed face of a savage, thrust under the trunk of the tree, peering up at him.

Before he could utter a word, however, the face was withdrawn.

Next moment a sound, as of men busy at work piling something around the tree, was heard.

Soon after all was still.

The two men held a consultation. Doubtless the savages were somewhere not far off, waiting for them to emerge.

Nevertheless, they determined to make an attempt to escape from their present retreat.

Turk was the first to stoop for the purpose of passing out, when an exclamation broke from his lips.

"What's the matter?" inquired Harry.

"Matter enough!" was the reply; "we are walled in with arth so that we can't get out!"

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## CHAPTER XIV.

[Pg 75]

### IN THE TREE.

For a moment the two stood eyeing each other, with looks of dismay.

"Can't we burrow our way out?" queried the young man.

"I'm afraid not. Them rascals knowed what they were doin' when they fastened us up. In my opinion, we are to be left in this hollow tree to be swallered up with the island when it goes!"

Harry glanced up. The opening in the top of the trunk was about fifteen feet above them. There was no way for them to reach it!

The young man bowed his face on his hand.

"I would have been willing—would have cheerfully died," said he, "in helping poor Mary; but to perish far away from that girl without having lifted a hand in her defense is very mortifying!"

"Ay, ay," said Turk, "and this is a lesson to me never to give advice in the futur'—if there be any futur' left for me on this arth! I'm as sorry as you can be, that I got you to give up follerin' the lass at once!"

For several moments the two men stood, glancing up through the opening in the trunk, which being directly beneath the volcano, afforded them a good view of it.

The huge crater was spouting showers of flame and sparks, which seemed to increase in quantity every moment.

Meanwhile the roaring noise of the subterranean fires was becoming louder. The ground shook with the thunder in its bosom, until the very tree in which the two men were ensconced began to tremble.

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"The 'castrophy' must soon take place!" exclaimed Turk; "wish you'd l'arn me to say a few prayers before we are swallered up! That is," continued the old tar, "I did l'arn my catechism, once upon a time, but it's so long ago that the idee has been blowed out of my head by the squalls and gales I've weathered, do you see!"

Harry answered not. His mind was full of bitter reflections, in the midst of which his Mary, suffering in the hands of the savages, occupied a prominent part.

"Perhaps we may burrow out of this!" he exclaimed, at length, "at all events, let us try!"

So saying, he stooped, and went to work with hands and nails.

He made some progress, but he had not dug a foot, when his hands came into contact with a hard substance, which resisted all his efforts to move it.

It was a heavy stone, almost a rock in size, which had been shoved against the opening.

"No hope!" he said, despairingly.

As he spoke, a wild yell was heard without, followed by the noise of approaching steps.

The steps drew nearer; there was a halt made alongside the tree, then followed a noise of dry branches being dragged along and piled round the trunk.

"Ay! ay!" exclaimed Turk, aghast, "them heathens ain't even goin' to give us a chance to die in them underground flames, but is agoing to pile faggots and burn us at once."

Harry shuddered.

Then the thought occurred to him that perhaps Mary had perished in a similar manner.

In a few minutes the crackling of flames, betokened that the old tar had guessed aright.

The fire was wreathing and twining around the trunk of the tree, the inside of which was every moment growing hotter.

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"Ay, ay," moaned Turk, despondingly, "we are all a-goin' to be baked alive, as if we were two clams instead of humanized bein's!"

Hotter became the seamen's narrow quarters every moment. Tongues of flames were now seen creeping through crevices in the trunk.

The sap oozed with a hiss like a serpent's, while the smoke entering the hollow, almost suffocated the occupants.

Heated, almost blinded, their flesh scorched, the sufferings of the twain were becoming fearful.

In the lurid glare each could see the eyeballs of the other rolling wildly in his head, and hear his panting breath drawn with difficulty.

"This is intolerable!" gasped Harry; "would that the rascals would spear us, and thus at once put an end to our torment."

There seemed, however, no probability of their doing this.

Meanwhile there were none of the manifestations of exultation and triumph peculiar to the North American savages.

Nothing was to be heard above the din of the roaring and crackling flames, save a low, guttural croaking of quiet satisfaction, such as might have been uttered over chunks of roast beef cooking on a spit.

"Ay, ay," muttered Turk, who for some time had been dancing up and down with pain, "I feel as if the gravy was already a-oozing out of my body."

As he spoke, he chanced to glance upward, when he was startled by the apparition of a face, half concealed by a great green leaf, (protruding downward from under an old cap) thrust through the opening in the top of the trunk, while the rest of the body was screened by the thick branches around it.

"Hist! Stand by! I'll save you both if I can!" said the stranger in a shrill, penetrating whisper, "on one condition!" [Pg 78]

For several moments the two men were so surprised that they could only stand motionless, looking up at the intruding face, without uttering a word.

Harry was the first to speak.

"Who are you! How came you there?"

"It don't matter. I am only half human, at any rate. On one condition I said I'd save you."

"Name it, name it, my man!" cried Turk, "and you'll see how quick we'll comply. But I'd think the savages would see you up there?"

"No; the branches and leaves are too thick. The leaf over my face hides it from them while my body is in shadow."

"Name that ere condition of yours then, quick!" exclaimed Turk.

"Well, it is that you save my money!"

"Your money?"

"Yes I cannot get to it now. I beg you will save me my precious money."

"Where is it!" inquired Turk, "if you'll jist tell me that p'raps I can——"

"It's in a little cleft in the right side of the trunk in a bag. You may feel it by putting your hand there. Oh! my money—my precious money! that must not be sacrificed!"

Turk felt along the trunk until finally his hand struck a deep cleft notched in the wood, when he felt the bag and drew it forth.

It emitted a clinking sound.

"Ay, ay, that's it!" whispered the stranger; "now unfasten the cord from it, and throw the end up to me, when I will draw you safely out of the hollow!"

Turk instantly proceeded to do as directed. Unwinding the cord which, though small in thickness, was as tough as a clothes-line, he was glad to perceive that it was long enough to reach to the top of the trunk. [Pg 79]

Meanwhile, in spite of his sufferings, he could not forbear peeping into the bag, which, he at once perceived was full of shining pieces of gold.

## OUT OF THE TREE.

"What avail is all this?" said Harry; "it is likely the savages have already heard our conversation. Besides, they will certainly see us, when we are drawn up out of the top of the trunk."

"It ain't likely they've heard us," said Turk, "as there's sich an infernal din with the roarin' of the fire here and the volcano above; but as to their seein' us, I dare say that may happen."

"Throw me the cord—quick!" cried the stranger, "and let me haul you up here with my precious gold!"

Turk threw the end of the cord.

"You may go first," said Harry to the old tar.

"Not a bit of it, lad!" answered Turk; "I ain't one of that sort, do ye see! There's no hurry for me. Your life is more valuable than that of sich an old lubber as your humble servant, Tom Turk."

Harry, however was firm.

He fastened the end of the line quickly under the armpits of the sailor, and ordered the stranger to haul away.

Assisted by his own efforts and by the pulls from the man above, Turk soon was drawn through the opening.

Then a savage yell proclaimed that he was seen, and the trick to effect of his release discovered by the natives.

"Quick, my lad!" shouted Turk, throwing down the line to his friend, as several spears whizzed round his head.

"Give me my gold!" almost shrieked the stranger, as he snatched the bag from the old seaman's pocket, and thrust it into his own, "and stand by to follow me, if you'd escape the natives."

[Pg 81]

"Jist hold on a minnit!" said Turk, clutching the man by the arm; "I don't know who you be; whether you be humanized or t'otherwise, but one thing is sartin, it's playin' us a very scaly trick fur you a-tryin' to get off, when you know that the life of a feller creatur' is still to be saved."

"Quick then, quick!" screamed the stranger, "don't you perceive that the natives are going to fling more spears?"

"They can't hurt ye, if you ain't human," said Turk—then he added, eyeing the stranger curiously, "if you have what's tarmed a caudal canpendage, that is a tail, do you see, as all non-human bein's has, I wish you'd show it, so that I may know whose acquaintance I have the honor of makin'."

"Whiz! whiz! buz-z-z!" came more spears, passing within a few inches of the speaker's head.

While talking, Turk had not neglected his friend, who by this time had passed the line round his breast and given the word to haul.

The two pairs of arms soon had him up, when turning, the stranger was seen running along a branch extending from the burning tree to another.

"There goes either the devil or a spook!" said Turk; "it's the queerest creatur' I ever saw, thinkin' of its gold under sarcumstances like the present."

"Follow me, follow me, if you would escape," the man was now heard screaming out at the top of his voice.

The seamen obeyed, gliding after the figure, which seemed to dart along with the speed of a squirrel.

Having gained the other tree, the strange guide descended half way, then, by a drooping branch, swung himself quickly to the ground.

Harry and his friend followed, the twain being pursued by the savages.

Every nook and corner seemed familiar to the leader.

On he went, dashing away with a speed which rapidly widened the distance between him and his followers.

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By powerful efforts, however, the two men continued to keep in sight.

Finally Harry paused. The steps of the savages were heard crashing along but a short distance behind him.

"Come on!" cried Turk, seizing the other's arm.

"No," answered the latter, "the man is evidently carrying us further and further from Mary. For my part, I shall endeavor to ascertain the fate of the girl, if I die for it."



All efforts of his friend to persuade him to keep on proved unavailing.

"Well, one thing is sartin," said the old tar, "where you go, there, sir, Tom Turk, who never yet deserted a chum, goes too!"

"Thank you," answered Glenville, squeezing the arm of his friend.

Stepping to one side, and crouching in the shrubbery, Turk persuaded Harry to do the same.

At this time, these two men were concealed from the savages by a high rock, round the angle of which they had passed.

The natives, when they made the turn, believing that the two had kept on, continued the pursuit in a straight line, seeing the form of the strange guide, faintly visible in the far distance.

When the savages had passed, making straight for the burning peak, Harry and his companion rose.

"Which way now?" inquired Turk.

"Towards the beach. There we may find Mary, either dead or alive, as there, it would seem, the greater number of the savages are gathered."

Accordingly, they moved toward the beach, cautiously keeping in the shadow of the shrubbery, when they finally found themselves within about fifteen feet of a spot occupied by a dozen warriors, all of whom stood upright, their glances bent upon the steep sides of the volcanic cliff. [Pg 83]

"What is that?" inquired Harry, suddenly, trembling in every limb.

"There are savages speeding up the cliff, and if I mistake not, I just saw the gleam of a light dress, as if the rascals were bearing a female between them."

"Ay, ay," said Turk. "I saw it too, and it was sartinly a most melancholy sight."

"That woman that we saw could of course be none other than Mary Manton," said Harry. "Come, we will at least die fighting for the girl."

Before his friend could say a word, he was speeding along toward the cliff, still keeping in the shadow of the shrubbery, so that the natives could not see him.

Now he and his companion eventually arrived at the base of the cliff.

The natives in pursuit of the guide had, of course got there before them, and were now seen speeding up the steep ascent in hot pursuit of the strange man.

"Come," said Harry; "come!"

As he spoke, he sped straight up the cliff.

"Well," muttered Turk, as he panted for breath, "this is hot work for sich old timbers as I be. The lad won't give me a chance to breathe. I may as well make up my mind to go to etarnity, the road to which is where we are now goin'; so I'll jist make one chaw of this plug," pulling from his pocket a great piece of tobacco, the whole of which he at once thrust into his right cheek.

On he went, until suddenly he uttered a loud cry, as Harry disappeared from his sight.

Believing that the young man had fallen into some one of the deep chasms with which the cliff abounded, he hurried on, and was somewhat relieved to perceive that the object of his fears had merely fallen into a small rocky pit, with the exception of a few slight bruises, hurting himself but little.

Springing into the pit, the old tar assisted his prostrate friend to his feet. [Pg 84]

At the same moment, clapping his hand to his brow, and uttering a wild cry, the young man pointed far above him.

Gazing in the indicated direction, Turk uttered a sort of despairing grunt, and sat down on a flat, protruding shelf of rock, as if completely overcome at the spectacle which now met his gaze.

This spectacle, which has already been described, was none other than that of the young girl and Captain Brand, far above the two adventurers, distinctly revealed in the lurid gleam of the fire-spouting crater, being swung back and forth for a fling into the red-flaming jaw of the horrible chasm!

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## CHAPTER XVI.

[Pg 85]

### THE FIRE-CHASM.

The fearful situation in which she now found herself was enough to appal a stouter hear than that of Mary Manton.

Poor girl! after all the hardships she had undergone, to find herself about to meet such a frightful doom, was, indeed, a trying ordeal for her delicate nerves.

Shriek after shriek passing her lips, mingled with the hoarsest cries of Captain Brand, and the triumphant screams of the savages, who, their forms and faces lighted by the volcanic fire, might well have been compared to the demons of the infernal regions!

Twenty times at least, as if to torture them by the fearful suspense, the natives swung their victims before they made the final one to throw them into the yawning chasm!

Meanwhile, Turk and his friend had started afresh, and were fast scaling the sides of the cliff.

The mountain was now fairly reeling with the inner convulsions. The lava had swollen on one side to a broad stream, rushing, hissing and streaming down the side of the steep cliff.

In fact the two men as they mounted, were constantly obliged to dodge to one side, to escape contact with some of the diverging rivulets.

On they went, now tottering on the verge of some deep gorge, and now scaling a narrow passage between enormous rocks, which reeled as if about to fall upon and crush them.

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Meanwhile the air was full of strange noises.

Hissing, roaring and booming, the report of bursting deluges of fire came out from the bosom of the mountain.

The fire spread fast—the sky itself seemed aflame with the warning of impending destruction.

"This is sartinly the most excitin' moment in my life," said Turk, who now gasped at every step. "I'm afraid that even when we git up to the summit where that poor gal is, there won't be any strength left in my bones to help the poor creature!"

"Come on!" answered Harry, in ringing tones. "On! on!"

And on they went, scaling the burning mountain with almost incredible speed.

At one time the view of the forms upon the summit was hidden by an intruding rock.

"Do you see her, now?" Harry anxiously inquired.

"No!" answered Turk, as he vainly endeavored to catch a glimpse of the fire-lighted forms.

"Alas! It was a bad day for poor Mary, when she set out in search of her lost father," exclaimed Harry; "poor girl! brave girl!"

"Ay, and a wild-goose chase, it has proved so far, and will prove a wild-gooser before its over."

Continuing on, the two men finally came to a point, where two paths, diverging between high rocks, met their gaze.

They were undecided which of these to take.

"My God! the girl will meet her fate, before we can get to her!" exclaimed Harry, as he dashed into the path on the right. "Come on, Turk! This path ascends and must be the right one, as the other seems to incline!"

Turk shook his head.

"P'raps you're right, and p'raps not!" he said. "If it hadn't been for them lava-streams, we might have kept straight ahead, and been at the end of our cruise in more senses than one, before the present moment."

[Pg 87]

The two kept on, but the further they went, the more puzzled they became, as the path they pursued soon led them among a perfect labyrinth of rocks, some of them overarched so that, with the exception of a lurid gleam of light, here and there, they were left in total darkness.

The labyrinth became more difficult.

Tangled bushes, vines, shrubs, and the roots of decayed trees impeded their way every moment.

Meanwhile the agony of the young man, searching hither and thither for some way out of his difficulty, was terrible. The sweat came out upon his brow, his veins seemed on fire with feverish excitement.

He knew all the time he was thus searching that Mary's doom must soon be sealed, if already she had not been hurled into the whirlpool of fire!

Turk also vainly exerted himself; but the more the two endeavored to find a way out of the labyrinth, the more hopelessly they became entangled.

At length they found themselves at the mouth of a cavern. The floor of this cave seemed to extend downward, while far ahead of them, they beheld the fiery gleam of the volcano.

"This is our way," shouted Turk. "Come, lad, come!"

He dove into the cavern, followed by his friend, both believing that when they should arrive at

the terminus of this sloping tunnel, they would find a way to the top of the cliff!

Encouraged by this hope, Harry sped on with a swiftness, which soon carried him far beyond his friend.

In a few minutes he had gained the further end of the cavern, when Turk heard his wild despairing cry ringing out like that of a wounded wolf.

In a moment he was by the young man, who pointed upward.

When Turk also perceived that they had made their way to this point, only to be aggravated by another sight of the tattooed forms of the savages and their intended victims, so far above them that they could not hope to reach the spot. [Pg 88]

In fact they now found themselves in one of those deep gorges, whose sides were too steep to be ascended, but which commanded a view of the raging fire.

Yes, there was the girl and Brand, still being swung hither and thither that their torments might yet be prolonged.

The sight almost drove Harry mad. He clenched his fists, and compressed his lips, as if, by the exertion of a strong will alone, he hoped to prevent the accomplishment of the fearful deed.

As to Turk, he danced about in his excitement performing a sort of fantastic hornpipe, while all the time the tears streamed down his wrinkled cheeks.

"Ay, ay," he moaned, "it is too bad. If I could lay down my life a thousand times for that poor gal, God knows I would willingly do it."

The scream of the imperiled one now rang down the cliff penetrating the hearts of the two men like a knife.

"Good God!" cried Harry; "oh, Turk! Turk! let us see if we cannot yet get to her, before the demons do their foul work."

The increased thunder of the volcano seemed to mock his voice. The air and sky reddened by the lurid gleam, seemed filled with a crimson mist rolling in clouds round the swaying forms, and shrouding them from sight.

As Harry spoke, Turk pressed his forehead against the rocky side of the gorge, while he pointed upward at the girl, whose hair, catching the red gleam, seemed another shower of fire.

"No use, Harry. See, they are giving the last swing! I know by the voice of that native who has just howled out the order."

In fact so shrill and piercing and savage was the islander's cry that its import could not well be mistaken.

Like the croaking shriek of a ravenous sea-bird, it came grating down the sides of the rock. [Pg 89]

"My God! there she goes!" screamed Harry; "Mary! Mary!"

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### UNEXPECTED.

With that cry from Harry Glenville was mingled the despairing scream of the young girl.

The two savages holding her, had swung her forward with great impetus to fling her into the red gulf, when a wild form suddenly came bounding forward from the summit of an overhanging rock, snatched the girl from their arms and made off with her with deer-like speed.

To explain this, it must be remembered that the gaze of all the savages present, had been concentrated upon the two intended victims, so that they had known nothing of the approach of the intruder, who, it need scarcely be told, was the singular island guide.

This person, probably from his greater familiarity with the mountain paths, had distanced his pursuers who, like Harry Glenville and Turk, soon became puzzled as to their course, and thus lost track of the fugitive.

Coming upon the fearful scene near the fire chasm, the strong man had found it easy to leap from his position, snatch the girl from the already relaxed grasp of her tormentors, and make considerable headway before the natives could recover sufficiently from their surprise to start in pursuit.

So astonished were all that the two who held Captain Brand, allowed the latter to disengage himself from their grasp and make off at a speed accelerated to almost incredible swiftness by his fears. [Pg 90]

The course taken by Brand led him at right angles with that followed by the stranger, so that the pursuers were obliged to separate.

This separation gave the fugitives an advantage, especially the strange guide, who seemed familiar with every nook and corner of the mountain.

On he went, seeming to carry his burden with a strength probably caused by some powerful excitement, although his gray hair, streaming back from under the broad leaf, partially concealing his face, proclaimed his advanced years.

Finally, however, he began to stagger beneath his burden, which, it was evident, was too much for him.

Seemingly bent, however, upon gaining some particular point, he kept on until he came to a small, dark hollow, between a number of jagged rocks, where he crawled therein.

"Hist!" he muttered, as the young girl opened her mouth, apparently on the point of speaking. "Not a word! I have my money! money! money!" he added, in the same penetrating whisper, as he thrust his hand in his pocket and felt the jingling bag.

The man had been mistaken about Mary's wishing to speak.

The poor girl's eyes were closed, her cheek as white as marble. She had fainted at the moment when the natives were at the point of flinging her to her destruction.

Seemingly unaware of this circumstance, her preserver, crouching down without again looking at her, listened intently, probably for the steps of his pursuers.

These steps, drawing nearer, finally went past.

The fugitive had served the natives a trick. Unseen by them, owing to an intruding point of rock, when he crawled into the small cave, they had passed him, believing he had gone on, far ahead.

[Pg 91]

He waited full a quarter of an hour, then, emerging, continued on.

At a place where two narrow paths diverged, he came upon Brand, crouching in the angle of a rock.

Here the light was indistinct.

"Who are you who have saved this girl?" inquired the captain, coming forward.

"Don't question me," answered the other, "but help me with this girl."

Brand started as suddenly. Then, recovering his self-possession, although trembling in every limb, he complied with the request.

"My money—my money—ha! ha! I *have that* safe!" muttered the stranger, as they proceeded.

"Your *what*?" gasped Brand, fairly turning as white as the senseless girl.

"My money," was the answer—"all safe!"

On they went, following a path which led them by the tunnel through which Harry and Turk had previously passed, from which they were emerging at this very moment.

Brand started back.

"You safe?" he exclaimed, staring at Harry, as if at a ghost.

"Ay," answered the young man.

Then he sprang to the side of the unconscious girl, peering down upon her still face.

"Not dead! not dead!" he cried, wildly.

Even as he spoke, the girl opened her eyes.

In the faint light they gleamed like stars, as they fell upon her lover's face.

"Harry!" she exclaimed.

In an instant she was on her feet, supported by her friends until she had fully regained her balance.

Then explanations followed.

"And who, my friend, are you who have thus benefitted us?" inquired Harry, now turning to grasp the hand of the stranger.

[Pg 92]

The latter, however, was nowhere to be seen.

"That chap I should sartinly take for the devil, do you see, if it 'twan't that I couldn't neither see his caudal cumpendage, nor account for his savin' the gal, which no devil, I take it, would have done."

Meanwhile, words may not express the joy of the lovers at their reunion. Mary had firmly

believed that Harry was dashed to pieces when Brand let go of the rope.

Alluding to this, Turk now said:

"How came you to do sich a trick, captain?"

The latter turned aside his head, trembling like an aspen as he recalled to mind the apparition he had seen among the trees.

"Accidents will happen," he said, in a husky voice.

"Well," continued Turk, "now that we have so far got clear of them infarnal blackskins, I trust and hope that we may contrive to get away from the island without seein' 'em, or, at any rate, before we are swallowed up in fire!"

At that moment, far ahead of them, they beheld the stranger, his face still screened by the broad leaf, beckoning to them.

So he had not deserted them, after all.

"We'd better follow him," said Turk, "as he seems to know every part of this island. To my thinkin', he'll get us out of this scrape, if it's possible to get out!"

The advice was followed.

The strange guide led the party along the narrow path with great celerity, until they finally arrived at the foot of the cliff.

By this time the whole island presented an appearance at once, wild and fearful.

The showers of fire from the mountain were increased ten-fold; the island rocked like a cradle. Every part of it seemed lighted with a ghastly radiance. A red mist hovered over it rolling along, volume upon volume.

Near the beach the water was seen breaking into thousands of bubbles, while further beyond it was dashed to a foam. [Pg 93]

Meanwhile the noises of shock following shock were become terrific.

A whole pack of artillery seemed to burst and boom, volley upon volley, beneath the quaking soil!

Suddenly there was a shock as of many thunderbolts, from the direction of the mountain, which was now seen split, apparently from top to bottom, into a great chasm, from which in great quantities burst forth streams of lava and long forked tongues of lurid flame.

The island was now as light as day. Far and near objects could be plainly distinguished, while overhead showers of flying sparks almost obscured the sky!

In the red glare, the forms of savages were now seen making all haste to descend the tottering cliff!

Appalled by the impending fate of the island, all the natives who had been left below, were seen at a distance beckoning to their companions to make haste.

The white people now were nearer the canoe than the savages themselves.

"Come!" screamed the guide, as he made towards the light vessel. "Come!"

He beckoned, as he spoke, to the young girl and the seamen, all of whom made haste to follow him.

The savages below, now, for the first time, caught sight of the white party, and made for them with great swiftness, yelling and brandishing their spears.

"There's sartinly no time to lose," exclaimed Turk, as he assisted his friend to help Mary along; "if them blackskins get at us now, they'll make sure work of it by pinning us to the ground."

The party hurried on.

They reached the canoe, while the islanders were yet forty yards distant, when, springing in, all the men seized paddles and went to work.

Spear after spear was hurled at them before they had gone more than a few fathoms from the beach. [Pg 94]

One of these missiles severed a lock from Mary's head, another grazed the shoulder of her lover.

"Quick!" shrieked Turk, "if we don't get away from here in a minute, we'll all be swallered in fire and water!"

This, in fact, seemed evident. The bubbles increased on the surface. The surges rolled wildly, swaying hither and thither—the booming thunder underground was become deafening.

Glancing towards the islanders, these unfortunates were seen running towards the raft, and then flocking up on it with all possible dispatch, while filling the air with dismal, howling cries.

"God help the poor wretches!" cried Mary.

"Paddle ahead, paddle for life!" screamed Turk, as the cliff, with a din as if the very earth were being rent in twain, tumbled to pieces, rock upon rock, apparently drowned in a sea of fire, amid which the forms of the doomed natives on the cliff were also seen to disappear. Sky air and sea looked as if aflame.

The whole universe seemed to rock and tremble.

The crimson waves rose high around the frail canoe; while the raft nearer to the beach, was at once engulfed with its living freight.

"God help us!" cried Mary.

"We are lost!" shouted Brand, shutting out the fearful aspect of sea and heaven, by putting a hand to his eyes.

"Hush!" said Harry, sternly, "I trust we may escape."

All round the island the waves were now seen trembling in great colliding, clashing walls of hissing boiling water.

From these walls streams of fire, like lightning flashes, shot continually upward.

The air was still full of flying sparks, and of lava stones which dropped in showers into the water.

For full half an hour the commotion continued, when, suddenly, the doomed island disappeared forever, while the agitated waves continued to bubble and boil long afterwards, over the spot where it had existed.

[Pg 95]

Gradually the fearful red lustre of sky and sea died away. A gloom, appalling from its strange suddenness, fell upon the sea.

The canoe with its occupants floated in darkness upon the agitated waters.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

[Pg 96]

### CONCLUSION.

The men in the canoe continued paddling ahead. There was no sleep for any of the occupants during that night.

When daylight stole upon the sea they looked toward the spot, far astern, where the island had been but where there was nothing now to mark the spot except a mass of agitated waters, gradually subsiding.

Straight and tall, at the stern of the canoe, sat the stranger guide, he whose features had previously been hidden and the breadfruit leaf, now thrust aside.

Brand, who had been gazing toward the place he occupied, ever since the day began to break, now was visibly agitated. He trembled all over, while his face was perfectly ghastly.

As the light increased, and the stranger's features became yet more distinct, the captain uttered a wild cry, and while his eyes rolled wildly in his head, sat as if transfixed to his thwart still gazing upon the man before him.

A moment he remained thus, then fell senseless upon his face.

Mary, who had hitherto been gazing away toward the west, turned at the cry Brand uttered, and seemed for a moment, like one spellbound as her gaze fell upon the stranger's face.

Then her eyes lighted up her whole countenance a gleam with joy.

"My father!" she exclaimed, "father! father! Oh! thank God, I have found him at last!"

Stretching forth her arms, she moved towards the guide, who, however, still sat looking at her half wonderingly and half pityingly, without seeming to recognize her.

[Pg 97]

Mary, however, knew him well. She could not mistake those familiar features, and the fact of his not seeming to recognize her, seemed to inspire her with the deepest grief.

"Oh, papa! papa! Look! behold! Here is your daughter! I am Mary, papa! Don't you know me?"

An expression of partial intelligence came to the man's eyes, then passed like a gleam of sunlight obliterated by the shadow of a cloud.

"Ay, ay, now!" exclaimed Tom Turk as he gazed at the man, "this is too bad! I know ye well enough as the passenger once aboard the *Maxwell*, and who was supposed to be lost; the father of this lass. It's mighty strange you don't know your own child."

"Mr. Manton," exclaimed Harry, stepping forward, and grasping the hand of him he addressed, "this is a great, great pleasure! Thank God we have found you at last, alive and well! Do not, I beg of you, afflict your daughter longer by playing off this joke upon her!"

"Joke! joke!" said Mr. Manton, running a hand through his gray hair and looking up in a bewildered manner, "I don't understand you! Ha! ha! it's all safe, my money!" he added, "all safe! safe!"

Harry looked sorrowfully at the speaker.

Glances of intelligence were exchanged between him and Turk.

Even Mary could no longer doubt the fearful truth, which had gradually been forcing itself upon her mind.

Her father was insane!

She flung herself at his feet—she grasped both his hands, and kissed them again and again—then burst into tears, sobbing as if her heart would break, at the vacant stare, which was the only response to her manifestations.

Harry endeavored to soothe her.

"I am confident," said he, "that your father is not a confirmed lunatic. He may be restored to his reason, if care be taken. I have seen worse cases than this cured." [Pg 98]

So excited were Harry and his friends over the discovery they had made, that, although the singular emotion of Brand had not escaped their attention, yet they had not noticed his being unconscious.

Now, however, Turk perceived it.

"A strange affair, this," said he; "had old Nick himself come to claim the captain, he couldn't have acted queerer than he has at the sight of Mr. Manton!"

In a few minutes, the captain recovered, staring wildly around him, until his eye was caught by the spectacle of the old man astern, when he started back with an affrighted cry.

"It is real flesh and blood, then," he exclaimed.

"Why, of course, Cap," answered Turk, "you don't suppose, I hope, that we'd take a ghost passenger!"

"Real flesh and blood," continued Brand, an expression of relief passing over his face, as he noticed the vacant stare of Mr. Manton, showing that the latter did not recognize him. "I am glad of it—ay, very glad. So he was not lost overboard, after all!"

"It seems not!" said Turk; "but I shouldn't have thought the discovery would have set you off into a faintin' fit?"

"Well, you see," said Brand, with a forced laugh, "the fact is I am a little superstitious—always was!"

This explanation hardly seemed to satisfy the old sailor, who shook his head without saying a word.

Meanwhile, the canoe, still urged along by Turk's paddle, was gliding through the blue waters, now just beginning to catch the tinge of the coming sunlight.

Suddenly the old sailor, who had long been gazing far away towards the west, sprung to his feet, screaming out! "Sail O!" with all his might.

"It's the same craft I saw t'other night from the cliff!" said he; "I didn't say anything about it, as I wasn't sure it was a sail in the imperfect light, and didn't want to awake false hopes." [Pg 99]

Harry Glenville now seizing his paddle, assisted Turk.

Meanwhile Brand, with an old handkerchief, continued to raise a signal, which it was soon evident, was seen by the vessel.

Previously standing away towards the southward, she now was seen to come 'round, bowling along, close hauled towards the canoe.

This at last was reached, and the occupants picked up, to learn they were aboard the ship *Empire*, of New York, homeward bound.

Every kind attention was bestowed upon the castaways, who, on their arrival home, a few months after, published a letter of thanks to the good skipper.

Mary took her father to a little cottage she occupied with an aunt.

A celebrated physician, accustomed to lunatic cases was called.

He pronounced Mr. Manton's case, a curable one, and, in the course of a year proved it so, by restoring the old man fully to his reason.

Words may not express the joy of Mary, who had awaited this happy moment to become the wife of Harry Glenville.

The old man was present at the wedding, in which he took the interest natural to the father of the bride.

On the very night of the ceremony, the old man, who had not previously touched upon that 'dark affair' aboard the *Maxwell*, was able to reveal events, so as to go into a full explanation.

He stated that, after being knocked overboard by Brand, he threw out his arms, clutching the plank which had fallen with him, and which, thanks to his being a good swimmer and to a favorable current, enabled him to drift down upon the volcanic island.

The hardship and excitement undergone, however, that night, so worked upon his brain, that he was affected with a fever which lasted a couple of days.

After that all was a blank to Mr. Manton. He could not remember what took place from that time to the present. [Pg 100]

Although insane, however, the man's instinct, or some other cause, had prompted him to stow his money away in the hollow tree.

"Ay, ay," said Harry, "it was evidently to obtain your money that that wretch Brand threw you overboard!"

"Of course," answered Manton. "But the rascal was nicely foiled, for, as it happened, it was always my custom, when I stepped on deck to put my money in the canvas bag, and thrust it into my pocket!"

"This carefulness of mine may be understood, when I inform you that I intended every cent of that money for my darling child, to whom I now present it with great joy at being able to place her above want during her lifetime!"

We have little to add.

After Manton's explanation, Brand was sought for, but could not be found, as he had cleared off to parts unknown.

He was never again heard of, if we except a rumor, that he had been lost at sea!

Tom Turk was favorably recommended to the ship owners by Harry Glenville, who was thus enabled to procure him a vessel.

The old fellow followed the sea until he was seventy years of age, when he settled down in an old cottage on the outskirts of New York, within a mile of the residence of Harry Glenville and his beautiful bride.

Mr. Manton still lives; in fact his native air has seemed to agree with him. He is nearly as straight as ever, while, in spite of his gray hairs, his cheek glows with the ruddy hue of health!

Often on still summer nights, with his grandchildren at his knee, he relates the story of the wicked Brand, who, for his many crimes, and especially for his dark attempt to take a human life, was long spoken of by sea men as the Demon Cruiser.

THE END.

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#### Transcriber's Notes

The Table of Contents has been added by the transcriber and it is placed in the public domain. Minor punctuation errors have been silently corrected.

Page [12](#): Changed "birth" to "berth."  
(Orig: He went back to his birth, not to sleep,)

Page [19](#): Changed "Sidney," to "Sydney."  
(Orig: visit some of them before going into Sidney.)

Page [21](#): Changed "steped" to "stepped."  
(Orig: Then he steped to the captain's side,)

Page [23](#): Retained "claining," but possibly meant "clinging."  
(Orig: Vainly Brand, claining to a rope near the mizzenmast,)

Page [23](#): Changed "several" to "several."  
(Orig: a violence which threw several men off the yard)

Page [25](#): Retained "dextrious", but probably meant "dexterous."  
(Orig: the old fellow by a dextrious movement,)

Page [30](#): Changed "swarm" to "swam."  
(Orig: He swarm to a spar near him, and, with the ropes)

Page 38: Changed "accomodation" to "accommodation."  
(Orig: one for the accomodation of the men,)

Page 40: Changed "apparrently" to "apparently."  
(Orig: were audible, apparrently approaching the hut!)

Page 42: Retained "from," but probably meant "for."  
(Orig: Harry now sprang from the raft.)

Page 47: Changed "ripling" to "rippling."  
(Orig: Away it went, ripling the water,)

Page 53: Changed "rock," to "rocks."  
(Orig: firmly wedged in between two rock,)

Page 55: Changed "strangly" to "strangely."  
(Orig: staring eyes, were fixed strangly upon the captain.)

Page 59: Changed "decending" to "descending."  
(Orig: apparently decending towards him with great rapidity.)

Page 59: Changed "aditional" to "additional."  
(Orig: with the fall of aditional lava occurred,)

Page 62: Changed "in" to "is."  
(("This in dang'rous traveling," remarked Turk,)

Page 63: Removed duplicate "it."  
(Orig: the drowned passenger as it it was hastily withdrawn!)

Page 68: Changed "rembered" to "remembered."  
(Orig: bewildered, she soon rembered all.)

Page 68: Changed "headed" to "heeded."  
(Orig: The natives headed not her sufferings.)

Page 69: Changed "superstious" to "superstitious."  
(Orig: The superstious natives are prone to believe weird stories,)

Page 69: Changed "eat" to "ate."  
(Orig: Brand eat heartily, but poor Mary, almost maddened)

Page 70: Changed "evntually" to "eventually."  
(Orig: all possible dispatch, evntually pausing upon a lofty spire,)

Page 70: Changed "hight" to "height."  
(Orig: This spur, rising to a hight of about forty feet)

Page 73: Changed "peal" to "peel."  
(Orig: strips of which were already beginning to peel off.)

Page 73: "salle" for "sally," is best guess for unclear word, meaning to rush out, assault.  
(Orig: do anything in a hurry, which do you see, will salle all.)

Page 78: Changed "conditon" to "condition."  
(Orig: "Name that ere conditon of yours then, quick!")

Page 85: Retained "hear" typo, but possibly "heart" or "head."  
(Orig: was enough to appal a stouter hear than that of Mary)

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE DEMON CRUISER \*\*\*

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