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MASTERMAN READY

(ABRIDGED AND RETOLD)



CAPTAIN MARRYAT



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PREFACE



Masterman Ready is the first, the most famous, and certainly the best of the short series of stories for children which Marryat wrote. The style of direct narration is clear and attractive.

Children almost praise Masterman Ready. Foster says: "I know no book of its kind so popular as Masterman Ready. Children won't read it once but a dozen times."

Ready is the practical man, and the theoretical, we find in the father of the family. Arousing the curiosity of the children Marryat stimulates them to seek information.

The story begins with the narration of the Seagrave family, who have been unfortunately wrecked on a desolate island. An old weather-beaten seaman by name Ready keeps them company and looks after their welfare to the end.

The character of Ready is well portrayed, so also of the Seagraves. Mr. Seagrave and his family acquit themselves very well in their disabled position. Their fortitude in their desolation is admirable. William's character is one which every boy should try to follow.

The book has been considerably abridged and retold for use by pupils of the secondary schools.

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MASTERMAN READY

CHAPTER I

THE SHIP AND HER CREW

It was in the month of October 18—that the *Pacific*, a large ship, was running before a heavy gale of wind in the middle of the vast Atlantic Ocean. The captain of the ship was a good seaman. He did what he considered best for the safety of his vessel and then put his trust in Providence who is ever watchful over us.

Besides the captain of the ship and the two men at the wheel, there were two other persons on deck. One was a young lad about twelve years old, and the other, a weather-beaten old seaman, by name Masterman Ready. He had been more than fifty years at sea, having been bound apprentice to a collier which sailed from South Shields when he was only ten years old. He had served many many years on board a man-of-war and had been in every climate. He had many strange stories to tell. He could navigate a vessel and, of course, could read and write as well. The name of Ready suited him well, for he was seldom at a loss. In times of difficulty and danger, the captain would not hesitate to ask his opinion. He was on board as second mate of the vessel.

The captain was a good navigator and seaman, and moreover, a good man, of a cheerful, happy disposition, always making the best of everything. When accidents happened, he was

always more inclined to laugh than to look grave. His name was Osborn. The first mate of the ship, whose name was Mackintosh, was a Scotsman, rough and ill-tempered, but paying strict attention to his duty. He was a man whom captain Osborn could trust, but whom he did not like. There were in addition thirteen more people, hardly a sufficient number to man so large a vessel.

Master William, for that was the name of the boy who was with Ready on deck, was the eldest of a family who were passengers on board, consisting of the father, mother, and four children. His father was a Mr. Seagrave, who, having for many years held an office under government at Sydney, was then returning from a leave of absence of three years. He had purchased from the government several hundred acres of land. Mrs. Seagrave was an amiable woman, but not in very strong health. The family consisted of William, who was the eldest, a clever, steady boy, but at the same time full of mirth and humour; Tommy, who was six years old, full of mischief and always in a scrape; Caroline, a little girl, of seven years; and Albert, barely one year old. He was under the charge of a black girl, by name Juno, who had followed the Seagraves to England. Besides, there were two dogs, belonging to the captain and Mr. Seagrave.

Ready was always giving some advice or other to William, who was curious to know everything and he was not ashamed to own his ignorance. They were nearing the Cape of Good Hope, and June's heart beat fast, as she thought

of meeting her parents. She told them how she had been parted from them when quite a little child.

The next morning the *Pacific* arrived at the Cape and anchored in Table Bay. Mr. Seagrave, accompanied by Captain Osborn, went on shore with William and Tommy. They directed their steps towards the Company's Gardens, and saw some of the wild beasts confined there in cages. William was much delighted and Tommy clapped his hands with joy at seeing them. But an untoward accident happened at the end. Just for fun Tommy threw a stone at one of the lions. All of a sudden, the lion gave a tremendous roar and sprang at Tommy, bounding against the iron bars of the cage. Tommy shrieked and tumbled head over heels, and, fortunately for him, was out of reach of the lion's paw. After seeing some other animals, they returned to the vessel. When Tommy's mother was told of this adventure, she declared that she never should be able to trust him out of her sight.

CHAPTER II

A TERRIBLE STORM AND LOSS OF LIFE

THE following morning, the *Pacific* stretched her broad canvas to the winds, and for many days she continued her passage with a fair wind. But this did not last long. All nature appeared as if in repose for nearly three days. On the third day of the calm, the barometer fell so low as to

induce Captain Osborn to believe that they should have a severe gale. Every preparation was made to meet it, should it come on.

They had no time to lose. Their preparations were hardly complete, before the wind had settled to a fierce gale from the north-east. The sea rose rapidly; top sail after top sail was furled; and by dusk, the *Pacific* was flying through the water with the wind on her quarter. About three o'clock in the morning, the wind suddenly fell, only to grow more furious presently, splitting the foresail into fragments. Every minute the waves poured over the ship, sweeping all before their weight of waters. One poor man was washed over-board. Before long a blaze of lightning burst upon their vision, leaving all of them in utter darkness, and accompanied with a peal of thunder at which the whole vessel trembled fore and aft. The foremast had been rent by the lightning; the ship was in flames; and all was wreck, confusion and dismay. Fortunately the heavy seas which poured over the forecastle soon extinguished the flames, or they all must have perished. Still there was much delay and confusion before they could clear away the wreck of the masts. After making inquiry they found that four of the men had been killed by the lightning and the fall of the foremast, and there were now but eight remaining, besides Captain Osborn and his two mates.

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Sailors are never discouraged by danger as long as they have any chance of relieving themselves by their own exertions. Night came, but there was no repose and the men were worn out

with exposure and fatigue. Captain Osborn and Ready had often gone down to afford some assistance and comfort to the passengers in the cabin. Mrs. Seagrave, worn out with fear and anxiety, had become seriously unwell, and the children were persuaded to remain in their beds.

The third day of the gale dawned, but the appearance were as alarming as ever. The leaky state of the vessel proved how much she had already suffered from the violent shocks she had received, and it was apparent, that, if the weather did not abate, she could not possibly withstand the force of the waves much longer. The countenance of Captain Osborn showed great anxiety. Even if the lives of the passengers could be saved, he might lose a valuable ship and cargo.

They were now approaching where the sea was studded with low coral islands, upon which they might be thrown by the waves and wind, without having the slightest power to prevent it in their present disabled condition. Every one was praying to God on bended knees and talked about the inefficiency of humanity to combat the fury of the wind and the sea. Mr. Seagrave was very fearful about his poor wife who was completely worn to a shadow. Ready told William that it was never too early for one to think of his Maker, for "in the midst of life we are in death." Mr. Seagrave, after his bitter experiences during the storm, was of opinion that his boys should never go to sea if there was any other profession to be found for them.

Mr. Seagrave and William went down below into the cabin. The captain and his men in the

meantime were not idle on the deck. The carpenter was busy fixing a step for one of the spare top-masts. Since the ship had sprung a leak, four hands were working at the pumps. Before night the gale blew, again the sea rose with the gale, and the leaking of the vessel increased so much that she had a great deal of water in her hold. As if these were not enough, a new disaster took place, which was attended with more serious results. Captain Osborn was giving some orders to his men on the forecastle, when the main top-gallant mast and sail came down on the deck and struck him senseless.

As long as the captain commanded them, they had so high an opinion of his abilities as a seaman, that they performed their work well and cheerfully. Now that he was senseless and incapable of action, they consulted among themselves. The men no longer felt themselves under control. They would obey neither Mackintosh nor Ready. They disliked Mackintosh so much that they paid no heed to his injunctions or requests. But Mackintosh's courage and determination were well known in times of danger. So the seamen again consulted together and asked him what he proposed to do, as the ship was in a precarious condition. Mackintosh suggested that ~~the~~ ^{by} fitting out the one boat they had with ~~every~~ ^{all} they required, they should escape.

Ready ~~was not~~ ^{advised} a party to this proposal as his ~~conscience~~ ^{views} did not allow him to leave the passengers on the cabin to their own fate. The seamen ~~followed~~ ^{adhered} the principle that 'charity begins at home', and, though they felt sorry for

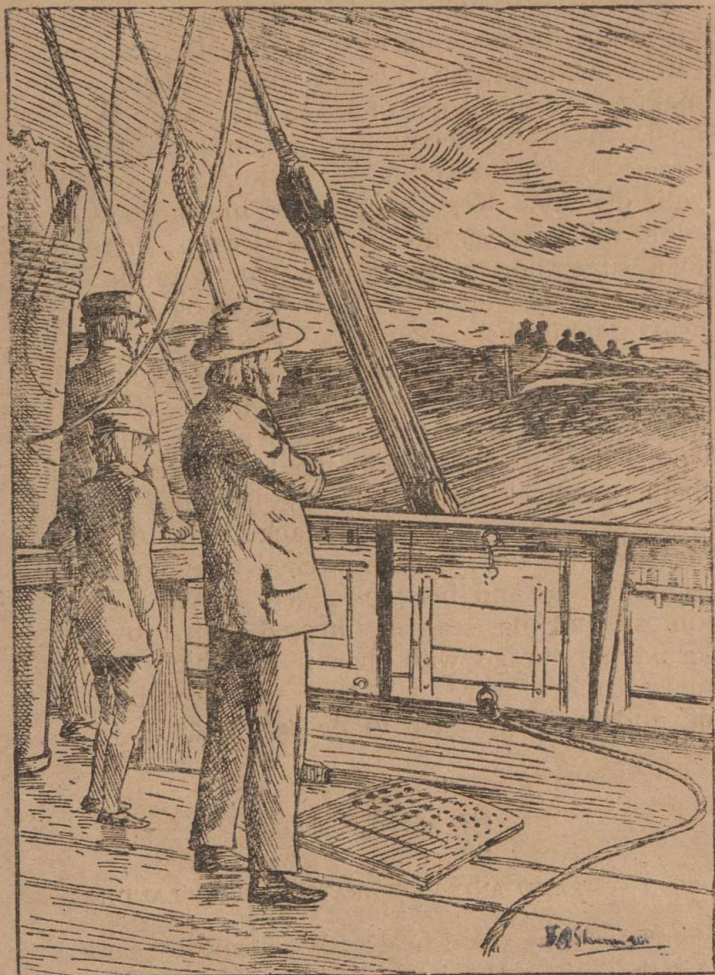
the passengers, they could not help it. Ready knew that it was vain to appeal. Mr. Seagrave came on deck, just when the seamen were making arrangements to leave the ship. When he learnt from Ready how he and his family were to be abandoned to their fate, he was struck with dismay. Ready comforted him as best he could. There was no use, said Ready, in reply to a suggestion of Seagrave, trying to prevail upon Mr. Mackintosh as there was not a harder heart among them than his.

As they were speaking, the sailors came aft, and lifted up the still insensible captain. Ready, who was asked to follow them, replied that he would stick to the ship to the last. He wished them goodluck with all his heart. But he exacted a promise from Mackintosh to take measures for their being searched for among the islands if he and his men were saved. Mackintosh and the seamen pressed him, for the last time, to go with them; to which Ready turned a deaf ear. The boat was now pushed off and they made sail to the north-east.

CHAPTER III

SIGN OF LAND AND PREPARATIONS FOR LANDING

MR. SEAGRAVE stood by Ready when the seamen left the ship. His heart was too full for utterance; for he imagined the boat increased her distance from the ray of hope departed. He thought of his wife and children and the by his side



THE BOAT WAS NOW PUSHED OFF

were all doomed to perish. His countenance was that of a man in utter despair.

Ready spoke. "They think that they will be saved, and that we must perish, Mr. Seagrave; they forget that there is a Power above, who will Himself decide the point."

"True," replied Mr. Seagrave, in a low voice; "but still what chance can we have on a sinking ship, with so many helpless creatures around us?"

"If I thought," replied Ready; "our situation hopeless, I would candidly say so; but there is always hope, even at the very worst. We must always have trust in God, without whose knowledge not a sparrow falls to the ground. Our immediate business is to find a place of safety among the islands before the ship sinks, which, however, will take some time. Go to your wife with a cheerful face and encourage her with the change in the weather and the hopes of arriving in some place of safety. If she does not know that the seamen have quitted the ship, leave her in the dark as to what has taken place."

Mr. Seagrave expressed his heart-felt thanks for Ready's devotion in that exigency and promised to follow his advice to the very letter. When Mr. Seagrave reached the cabin he found his wife in a sound sleep. Sending William to Ready on the deck, he looked after the children. Ready at once explained to William the position in which they were placed. He pointed out to him the necessity of his doing all he could to assist him and his father and not to alarm his mother in her precarious state of health. After

taking a light breakfast, all went on deck, including Juno and the children, leaving William with his mother. Poor Juno was very much astonished at the condition of the vessel, but Mr. Seagrave cautioned her against saying a word to Mrs. Seagrave. However she could not help thinking of their perilous position and the fate of the children.

Their greatest hopes were to gain some island. Ready pointed out some floating seaweed to Mr. Seagrave. "Look there, Sir," said Ready. "That by itself would not be quite proof that we are near land. But those birds there, hovering over the waves, never go far from the shore. I will go down for my quadrant. At all events, I can find out the latitude we are in, and then, by looking at the chart, shall be able to give some guess whereabouts we are if we see land soon." Ready observed, reading off his quadrant, that they were among a cluster of islands or very near them. Shortly after midday they perceived an island at a distance. They thanked the Lord for all His mercies, for within a few hours the ship would sink below the waters. Ready hurried up to the helm and steered a course for the land. By degrees they could make out that it was a low coral island, covered with groves of cocoanut trees. They were now within a cable's length, and yet the ship did not ground; a little nearer, and there was a grating at her bottom. It was the breaking of the coral trees, which grew below like a forest under water. At last she struck violently, and then remained fast and quiet upon a bed of coral rocks.

"All is well so far, Sir," said Ready to Mr. Seagrave, "and now let us return thanks to Heaven."

Ready, Mr. Seagrave and the children knelt down on the deck and remained a short time in prayer.

Being awakened by the noise under the ship's bottom, Mrs. Seagrave was frightened and she sent for her husband. Mr. Seagrave then entered into a detailed account of all that had passed and used all his efforts to console her.

As it was getting late, he hastened back to Ready. Ready, who never lost his courage and presence of mind during difficult times, gave him encouraging news. With a water-tight boat, he proposed to land them all in safety on the island. Mr. Seagrave now gave way to repinings at the hard fate that had doomed them to life on such an island.

"Shall we receive good of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?" quoted Ready. "Besides, who knows whether good may not proceed from what appears evil? And trust in God, who, if He thinks fit, will restore you once more to your friends and increase your happiness tenfold."

At last Mr. Seagrave said smilingly, "I must put myself under your orders; for, in our present position, you are my superior. Knowledge is Power."

The next morning Ready placed a long-board on the hen-coop and wrote on it, with a bit of chalk, all the articles that were to be carried to the shore. There was plenty of livestock, con-

sisting of three dogs, two goats, Billy the kid, five pigs, fowls, three or four pigeons, a cow, the Merino ram and sheep belonging to Mr. Seagrave. The first things he wished to carry to the shore after landing all others, were a spar and top-gallant sail for a tent, a coil or two of rope, a mattress or two for Mrs. Seagrave and the children, two axes, hammer and nails, and something to eat.

As soon as Ready had executed his intentions and had fed the animals, he went to the cabin and called Mr. Seagrave and William. It was not till dinner time that Ready, who had worked hard, could patch up the boat. Then a rope was made fast to the boat to hold her to the ship, and was launched over the gunnel by the united exertions of all. To their great satisfaction, it appeared to leak very little. Ready put into the boat a sail, an axe, a musket and some cord. Mr. Seagrave came and both got into the boat and pulled on shore.

When they landed, they found that they could see nothing of the interior of the island, for the cocoanut groves were very thick. But to their right they perceived, at about a quarter mile off, a small sandy cove with brushwood growing in front of the cocoanut trees.

"That", said Ready, pointing to it, "must be our location, as the Americans call it."

In a few minutes they arrived at the cove; the water was shallow and as clear as crystal.

"What a lovely spot this is!" exclaimed Mr. Seagrave.

"Providence is bountiful, Mr. Seagrave," replied Ready, "and supplies our wants when we least expect it."

Ready, after closely inspecting it, found a little rise on which, for the present, he proposed to fix up their tent. They returned to the ship, and soon after their arrival on board, Mr. Seagrave cheered his wife with the account of what they had seen. He obtained her consent for Ready's arrangement.

While he was down below, Ready put some tools and a couple of shovels into the boat, and once more both Mr. Seagrave and Ready landed at the sandy cove, leaving William alone to look after his mother in the ship. In two trips they had carried everything to the little knoll. Pointing to two trees far enough apart, Ready said that they would answer their purpose very well. By lashing the spars up to them and then throwing the sail over, they decided to make a tent for madam, Juno and the younger children, and another for Master William, Tommy and themselves.

Having succeeded in lashing the spar high enough, and throwing the sail over the spar, Ready and Mr. Seagrave spread it out and found that it made a very good-sized tent. Asking Juno to smoothen the inside of the tent, and Mr. Seagrave to cut pegs to fasten the sail down to the ground, Ready walked down to the beach and, stepping into the boat, pulled on board of the ship. He had asked Mr. Seagrave to fire off the gun if his assistance were required.

CHAPTER IV

LANDING

READY, on his return to the ship, acquainted Mrs. Seagrave and William with what they had done on the island. Mrs. Seagrave naturally felt anxious about her husband being alone on shore. Ready informed her of the precaution he had taken if anything should occur.

Scarcely had Ready got some canvas and other articles out, when the report of the musket was heard and Mrs. Seagrave rushed out of the cabin in the greatest alarm. Ready at once seized a musket, jumped into the boat and pulled on shore as fast as he could. On his arrival, quite out of breath, he found Mr. Seagrave and Juno busy with the tent and Master Tommy sitting on the ground crying very lustily. It appeared that Tommy had meddled with the loaded gun, and had touched the trigger. The gun went off, and as the muzzle was pointed upwards, the charge had brought down two large cocoanuts. Mr. Seagrave, who was aware what an alarm that would produce on board the vessel, had been scolding him soundly and Master Tommy was crying, to prove how very penitent he was.

Ready, finding nothing wrong, returned to the ship immediately, explained matters to Mrs. Seagrave and then recommenced his labour. He made two more trips to the ship, bringing with him more bedding, a bag of the ship's biscuits, another of potatoes, plates, knives and

forks, spoons, frying-pans, and other cooking utensils, and a variety of other articles.

They had but two hours more of daylight, and Ready proposed that Mrs. Seagrave should come on shore. Thereupon the lady came up on the deck, and with some difficulty, she, the baby, Caroline and William were placed in the boat and then shoved off. They landed safely, and Mrs. Seagrave was carried up to the tent as she was very ill, and laid on one of the mattresses. But, in their hurry, they forgot to bring fresh water, the greatest necessary in life. So Ready returned to the vessel as fast as he could and brought two kegs of water, which William rolled up to the tent. Poor old Ready was indeed quite tried out; but he felt much revived when he ate something. Then all offered a thankfulness and retired to bed.

Mr. Seagrave was the first to rise from his bed on the following morning. He found old Ready and his children still in sound sleep.

"Excellent old man!" thought Mr. Seagrave, "if ever we return to the busy scenes of life, your kindness and your Christian feelings shall have their reward, as far as it is in my power to repay you. What a heart of oak is hid under that rugged bark! Had it not been for his devotion—his utter sacrifice of self—where might I and all these dear helpless creatures of mine have been now? Sleep on, good man and may Heaven bless you!"

He stepped out of the tent and looked around him. The sky was clear and brilliant. A light breeze ruffled the surface of the water

and the tiny waves rippled one after another upon the white sand of the cove. To the left of the cove the land rose, forming small hills, behind which appeared the continuation of cocoanut trees. To the right, a low ridge of coral rocks rose almost like a wall from the sea, and joined the herbage and brushwood at about a hundred paces, while the wreck of the *Pacific*, lying like some huge monster, formed the prominent feature in the landscape.

When William came to meet his father, they were told of the difficulty of making fire. The two thereupon went on board the ship. This time, they brought the telescope, the whole quantity of clothes, some of the books, particularly the Bible and the Prayer Book, which Mrs. Seagrave much liked to have. When they arrived at the tent they found that every one was awake except old Ready. Mrs. Seagrave had passed a very good night and felt herself much refreshed.

William made some touch-paper, which he touched with one of the glasses from the telescope and they soon had a good fire. Mr. Seagrave brought from the beach three big stones to rest the sauce-pan on, and in half-an-hour the water was boiling and the tea made. While they were at breakfast, William told Ready how they had gone on board and what they had brought on shore and how Juno had dipped all the children in the sea. Ready asked Juno not to do that again as there were plenty of sharks about those islands.

As the weather was fine, the whole day was spent in landing every variety of article, which they thought could be useful. All the small sails, cordage, twine, canyas, small casks, saws, chisels and large nails, elm and oak planks, were brought on shore before dinner. After they had taken a hearty dinner, they went to work again. The cabin tables and chains, all their clothes, some boxes of candles, two bags of coffee, two of rice, two more of biscuits, several pieces of beef and pork and bags of flour, some more water, the grindstone and Mrs. Seagrave's medicine-chest were then landed. When Ready came off again, he said, "We had better, before it is dark, get all the animals on shore; but they are awkward things in a boat. All of them can swim, but sharks abound here. We will try a pig, at all events, and while I get one up, do you and William tie the legs of the fowls and put them into the boat."

Ready went down below and the squealing of a pig was soon heard. He came on deck with it hanging over his back by the hind legs, and threw it into the sea over the gunnel. The animal floundered at first; but, after a few seconds, turned its head away from the ship and swam for the shore. But soon a shark got him, and disappeared under water. Pitying the fate of the poor animal, they tied the legs of the other four pigs and put them into the boat. Then they got into the boat with the sheep and the goats and bags of corn. Though the boat was leaky, they safely reached the shore. The goats and the sheep remained quiet, but the pigs

and fowls ran away. The beach itself was quite covered with the quantity of things they had brought on shore.

They were not at all sorry, after their hard day's work, to find that Juno had prepared coffee for them. They discussed about the things they must do before the rainy season set in. After a good deal of consultation, they proposed to fix up another tent or two to stow away all the articles brought on shore. But they were specially lucky in the cocoanut trees found in such abundance there, the many uses of which Ready now expounded to them.

CHAPTER V

EXPLORING THE ISLAND

WE shall, hereafter, omit to record the regular daily routine of our party on the island; but we must narrate how William and Ready explored the other side of the island to which they afterwards removed.

When breakfast was over the next morning, they held a council of war and decided upon an exploring party for the next day. The first question they considered was of whom the party was to consist. After much discussion, it was settled that William should go with Ready. When they would be away, Mr. Seagrave was asked to sharpen the axe and the hatchet on the grinding stone.

Next day Ready was up before the sun and awakened William. They dressed in

silence, because they did not wish to disturb Mrs. Seagrave. The knapsacks had been already packed with two bottles of water, some quantity of beet and biscuits. Ready took the axe and the gun and William carried a small spade on his shoulder. Having equipped themselves with these, just as the sun rose, they turned into the cocoanut grove and were soon out of sight of the tents. "Now, Master William, do you know," said Ready, stopping after they had walked twenty yards, by what means we may find our way back again? You see this forest of trees is rather puzzling, and there is no path to guide us? We must do as the Americans always do in their woods—we must *blaze* the trees."

"Blaze them! what, set fire to them?" replied William.

"No, no, Master William. *Blaze* is a term they use when they cut a slice of the bark off the trunk of a tree. They do not blaze every tree, but every tenth tree as they go along, first one to the right and then one to the left, which is quite sufficient. They do it as they walk along without stopping." Ready was anxious to find fresh water on the island, as the water they had would not be sufficient for long. "Necessity is the mother of Invention," said Ready, "and it is very true, Master William, for it sharpens a man's wits. Hence we may find water by some means or other."

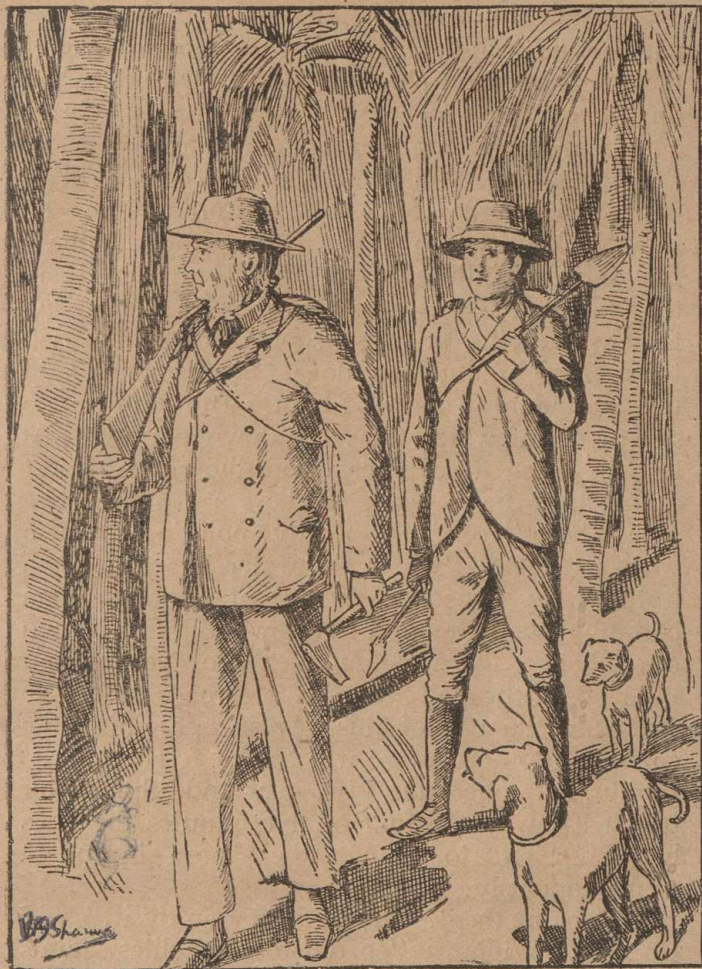
They were now proceeding to the leeward side of the island. "Why do you call it the leeward side?" asked William.

"Because, among these islands, the winds almost always blow one way. We landed on the windward side; the wind is at our backs; now put up your finger, and you will feel it even among the trees."

As Ready said this, all of a sudden, the dogs barked, and out rushed all the pigs, brought from the ship, grunting and galloping away, with the dogs in pursuit of them. Ready and Willian recommenced their journey after a short rest. They found that the ground was not so level as it had been. Sometimes they went gradually uphill, at others down. At last they reached the top of hill, clear of the cocoanut trees, and from there, surveyed the whole scene before them in silence. The sea was very near to them and the surroundings appeared very beautiful.

William exclaimed that that part of the island was very pretty and his mother would like to live there. The form of the coast was that of a horse-shoe bay, two points of land covered with shrubs extending far out on each side. The line of the horizon, far out at sea, was clear and unbroken. They admired the corals, which grew like trees under water. Near the sea, they saw many turtles, which they thought would be useful for food in the future. Till now, the dogs had not drunk a drop of water, and were licking the sides of the bottles. Ready cautioned William against giving any water to the dogs, as he proposed to make good use of their intelligence in finding out a place where good water could be obtained.

Good story is masterman feed
S. J. [unclear]



READY TOOK THE AXE AND GUN . . .

Ready and William slept that night in that part of the island. They slept as soundly as if they had been on shore in England, and, when they awoke next morning, it was broad daylight. The poor dogs were suffering for want of water and it pained William very much to see them with their tongues out, panting and whining as they looked up to him. Ready told William that it was kindness to the beasts and to them too, which made him refuse water to them. As they were going on, they soon came to the dell to their right and the dogs put their noses to the ground and sniffed about. But finding no symptoms of water, they lay down panting. At last they went to a place where the run of water appeared to have been. "There are one or two places here," observed Ready, pointing to them with his finger, "where the water has run down in the rainy season: We must examine them carefully tomorrow and not now. I want to find out whether there is any means of getting our little boat through this reef of rocks. So we will pass the rest of this day in examining the coast and tomorrow we will try for fresh water." Ready, at once dug two feet and the water trickled down. In four or five minutes the dogs had sufficient to plunge their nose in and to drink copiously.

"Look at them, Sir, how they enjoy it," said Ready to William; "so did the Israelites, fainting in the desert, when Moses struck the rock of stone and the water poured out in torrents for their relief!"

They then wanted to make the spring cool, clearing it out, up among the trees, where

the sun's rays could not reach it. It was really a capital place to live in.

A good many fishes were also seen surrounding that place, and they were glad that they would be never in want of them, if they were ever short of food. The hole which Ready had dug was full of water, and the water proved very sweet. Overjoyed at this discovery, they covered up the articles, which they had agreed to leave behind them, with some boughs under the notched cocoanut trees. Calling the dogs, they set off on their journey back again to the cove.

CHAPTER VI

PREPARATIONS FOR REMOVING TO A FINER PLACE

GUIDED by the marks made on the trees, William and Ready made rapid progress on their return and in less than two hours found themselves clear of the wood. As they proceeded, the rustling and waving of the boughs of the trees and ever and anon a gust of wind, followed by a moaning and creaking sound, as well as the leaden colour of the sky, showed that ere long they would experience a fierce storm or heavy rains.

Soon after reaching the huts, the first precaution they took was to haul up the boat as far from the beach as possible. The next thing Ready did was to prevent the rain from coming into Mrs. Seagrave's tent, by throwing some more canvas and cord on it. During the time

they were at work, Ready had made Mr. Seagrave acquainted with what they had discovered and done in their exploring expedition.

As the sun went down, the weather threatened still more. The wind blew strong and the rocky beach was lashed by the waves. The whole family had retired to bed except Ready, who was watching the weather. Just then Ready gave vent to the following musings:

"Had this happened but one week since, the whole family, including myself, would have been buried fathoms deep, awaiting our summons. But the winds and the waves were restrained by His will and by His will we were saved. What are the iron bolts and fastenings of weak man compared with the force of God's elements? They will snap as yarns before their might." Presently the darkness became intense, and the rain came down in torrents.

The storm now raged furiously, the lightning was accompanied by loud peals of thunder, and the children awoke and cried with fright, till they were hushed to sleep again. It was about midnight, that the wind burst upon them with greater violence than before. A loud crash was heard by Ready and Mr. Seagrave, followed by the shrieks of Mrs. Seagrave, and Juno. The pegs of the tents had given way, and the inmates were exposed to the fury of the elements. Mrs. Seagrave, Juno and the little girl were at last carried away and taken into the other tent. Fortunately no one was hurt.

At daybreak, Ready went out of the tent, and found the gale had spent its force and had already much abated. It still rained, but only

at intervals. Ready turned his eyes to the wrecked ship. It was no longer there, but the fragments of it and the contents of the hold, were floating about in every direction. Before the rainy season set in, they availed themselves of the fine weather and made the tent fast with fresh cords and pegs. The beds and bedding were wet, which they exposed to dry.

Then they went down to the beach. As the waves threw up the casks and timbers of the vessel, they stopped them from being washed back again. This occupied them for the major part of the day, and yet they had not collected a quarter of the articles that were within their reach. Mrs. Seagrave and the children were given the tent, which had not been blown down. The damaged tent was fitted up as well as it could be and the other people occupied it.

Next day, the sun shone bright and the air was fresh and bracing. They found more fragments of the wreck cast on the beach. Ready and Mr. Seagrave worked till breakfast time and had by that time saved a great many casks and packages. By their exertions, they had gathered more than enough of timbers and planks for any present use. Ready now turned his attention to the boat, which required thorough repair. As it would take some days for him to repair it, Mr. Seagrave determined to go to the other side of the island with William, so that he might examine it himself. When they reached their destination, Mr. Seagrave exclaimed that the spot surpassed that on the other side, not only in variety, but also in extent. After

spending some time in examining it, they returned home before nightfall.

Every thing was now prepared for their removal to the leeward side of the island. Ready had given the boat a thorough repair, and fitted a mast and sail to it. William and Mr. Seagrave collected a great many articles on the beach, and, with their shovels, covered them over with sand, it being impossible to carry them from the beach without more time than they could spare. Neither were Mrs. Seagrave who was now getting quite hale and hearty, nor Juno idle. They had made up everything that they could in packages ready for moving to the other side of the island.

On the eighth day after the gale, they were ready to shift, and a consultation was held before starting. It was arranged that Ready should carry all the packed articles in his boat, and after transporting them safely, he should return for another load of the most necessary articles. After that, the family should walk through the grove to the other side of the island and remain there with Mr. Seagrave. If the weather permitted, it was also decided that the boat should make as many trips as possible, till they had brought all the things required.

It was a calm lovely-morning when Ready and William pushed off the boat with a full load. The boat soon reached the sandy beach near the cove and was unloaded. They experienced some difficulty in carrying up the things from the boat to the beach. After safely landing the articles, they returned to the tents to receive the congra-

tulations of the whole party on their first successful voyage. As for Mrs. Seagrave seeing the lovely spot, Ready told her that it would take a day or two more, since they had not finished the tent. No sooner was the tent made ready for her and the children, than she might start along the grove to the new residence.

CHAPTER VII

PROPOSAL TO BUILD A HOUSE WITH A GARDEN AND A POND

BEFORE the family were up next morning, old Ready had his boat loaded and had made sail for the other side of the island. After taking a light breakfast, he carried up the things which he had brought and commenced arrangements for setting up the tent. About ten o'clock, William and Juno made their appearance, leading the goats and the sheep through the grove.

"We have a great deal of work to do, more than we can get through before the rainy season," observed Ready "but, this time next year, we shall be more comfortable. In the first place, we have to build a house. Then we ought to make a garden, and sow the seeds which your father brought from England. We shall want a store-house for all the things we have got, and all that are on the beach and in the wood. Besides these, we should have a turtle pond and a fish-pond and a bathing place for Juno to wash the children in. These are enough for a.

year's hard work, and, as we go on, we shall find more wants. I hope my life will be spared till these are done and completed at all events. I should like to leave you all comfortable and able to live without me. I am turned sixty-four, Master William; that is a very old age for a seaman, and hence this prayer to God to save me for some time more, so that I may be useful to you."

Sending away William and Juno to reach their old home through the grove, Ready worked hard in fixing up the tent. After a hard day's work, he proceeded to the tent, where he found the whole party anxiously listening to William's details of what had been done.

At day light, next day, the other tent was also removed and put into the boat with the remaining articles. Ready laid the fowls on the top of all and set off alone for their new location. After he had gone, the rest of the party prepared for their journey through the cocoanut grove. William led the way, with the three dogs following him. It took more than four hours for the party to reach their new home, very hot and fatigued.

Meanwhile Ready arrived at the point, and after carrying everything up, the old man sat down to rest himself. Mrs. Seagrave was so much exhausted that she went into the tent to repose a little, before looking at the place which was to be their future residence. When she was somewhat refreshed, she wanted to know how salt could be procured, if their stock was consumed. Her husband told her that a good

amount of salt could be obtained by boiling or drying sea-water in the sun. To ascertain whether sea-water really contained salt, they prepared soup from it and it was pronounced excellent by everybody. After returning thanks to God for His various mercies, they retired to bed, and, being tired out by the fatigue of the day, they were soon fast asleep.

Mr. Seagrave and Ready were the first to rise on the ensuing morning. The first object they thought of was to have a good supply of fresh water. They proposed to sink into the earth one of the water casks. By that means they would always have the cask full of water for use, the spring filling it as fast as they could empty it. William rolled up an empty cask, which Ready sank into the water by boring three holes at the bottom. As soon as the top of the cask was level with the surface of water, they filled in all round with the spade and shovel and the well was completed. Thus one good work was done for that day.

The next morning, as soon as breakfast was over, Mr. Seagrave and Ready laid down a plan of operation. The two most pressing needs, with the exception of building the house, were, Ready said, to dig up a piece of ground and to plant the seeds and potatoes and to make a turtle-pond so as to catch the turtles and put them into it before the season was over.

"You are right," replied Mr. Seagrave; "but which ought to be done first?" "I should say, the turtle-pond, sir," said Ready, "as it will be only a few days' work for you, Juno and

William—I shall not want your assistance next week. I shall fix upon some spot, not far from here, where the trees are thickest in the grove, and cut them down so as to clear out a space in which we will by and by build our store-rooms. And as soon as the rainy season has gone by, we can remove all our stores from other side of the island. It will occupy me the whole of the week, cutting down trees and sawing them into proper lengths, ready for building the house. We must make our windows and perhaps our fireplace afterwards; but at all events we will be under cover and have dry beds."

"Can you really manage to get it up in time? How soon do you expect the rains will come on?"

"In three or four weeks,—the season is not always exact,—but certainly not much later. After next week, I shall have the assistance of two of you, if not of all. Now, I think of it, I must return to the cove."

"What for?"

"Don't you recollect, Sir, your two-wheeled carriage, packed up in matting, which was thrown on the shore in the gale? You laughed when you saw it and said it would be of little use now. But, Mr. Seagrave, the wheels and the axle will be very useful, as we can make a wide path to the place when I cut down the trees, and wheel out the logs much more easily than we can drag or carry them."

Mr. Seagrave and Ready then walked down to the beach, and, after surveying the reef for some time, Ready said, "You see, Mr. Seagrave,

we do not want much water for a turtle-pond, as, if it is too deep, there is a difficulty in catching them when we want them. What we want is a space of water surrounded by a low wall of stones, so that the turtles cannot escape, for they cannot climb up. The reef here is high out of the water and the space between the reef and the beach is deep enough and the rocks on the beach nearly fill up that side and will prevent them crawling away by the shore. We have, therefore, to fill up the two other sides and then our pond will be complete."

Mr. Seagrave and Ready then continued their way to fix upon a spot for a garden, leaving William and Juno in the tent to put the things in order. They at last came upon a spot, convenient to make their garden. After clearing the brushwood they decided to sow a portion of the seeds. They now arrived at a place on a rising ground, where the trees were very thick. Ready's intention was to cut all the timber that they wanted for the construction of the house from that part of the grove and to leave an open square place in the middle, on which to build their store-house. He was not for postponing things. He wished to begin the work at once.

After dinner every one began to do his allotted work. Mr. Seagrave worked hard, clearing a portion of the earth. Old Ready was felling down the trees and removing them.

Tommy, who was with his father, helping him to remove the brushwood, cried all of a sudden.

When his father asked him the reason, he would not answer, but only cried the more, until at last he put his hands to his stomach and roared most lustily. His father and mother could not imagine what was the matter with him.

Old Ready left his work, on hearing the screaming of Tommy, to ascertain the cause.

"Depend upon it, the child has eaten something, which has made him ill. Tell me Tommy, what you ate when you were down there."

"Berries," roared Tommy.

At last they found that he had been eating castor-oil beans, which caused all that pain in the stomach. On the suggestion of Ready, he was given a little warm drink and it soothed him to some extent. Nevertheless, Master Tommy was very ill for the whole of the day, and was put to bed very early.

Two more days had gone by. Mr. Seagrave had cleared sufficient ground to plant the half-sack of potatoes, that they had saved from the wreck. Juno and William were engaged in completing the turtle-pond. Mr. Seagrave and William had gone to the other side and brought with them the wheels and axle of the carriage and several other useful articles.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RAINY SEASON BEGINS

WILLIAM and Juno, by sheer perseverance, finished the turtle-pond and completed the walls

round it where they had not been raised high enough. As soon as the sun had disappeared, William and Ready went down to the beach and sat quietly on a rock. In a short time, they perceived a turtle crawling on the sand, and, desiring William to follow him, Ready walked softly to the waters' edge so as to get between the animal and the sea, then seizing hold of one of its fore-flippers turned it over on its back.

"You see, Master William," said Ready, "that is the way to turn a turtle. Take care that he does not catch you with his mouth, for, if he did, he would bite the piece out. Recollect that. Now the animal cannot get away, for he cannot turn over again and we shall find him here to-morrow morning. So we will walk along the beach and see if we cannot find some more."

"How shall we carry such large animals?"

"We need not carry them: we must put some old canvas under them and haul them along by that means; we can easily do that on the smooth sand."

"Why don't we catch some fish, Ready? We might put them into the turtle-pond."

"Well then, I will get a bit of candle to-morrow night, and fit up two fishing-lines. But I must go with you, Master William. We don't use much candle at all events." That particular night, they had turned sixteen turtles, large and small.

The next morning, before breakfast, all hands were employed in getting them into the pond. It was agreed that William, Ready and Mr. Sea-

grave should all go down to the garden and put in the potatoes. That night Ready sat up for two or three hours, working by candle-light. He was very busily engaged fitting up the fishing-lines with leads and hooks. At last two were complete.

William knew that his mother would be glad to have some fish. So when all had gone to sleep, he determined to try if he could catch some before he went to bed. The moon was shining bright and he succeeded in catching a few fish, though it was his maiden attempt at angling. Next morning, Ready reproved him for doing it without his knowledge, as there were many sharks near the beach. He wished to impress upon William that he was always at his disposal and that he would do anything for them all at any time.

Mrs. Seagrave was really glad to have fish for dinner. She congratulated her son on his success. After breakfast, they all set out for the grove, where Ready had been cutting down the trees, taking with them the wheels and the axle and a couple of stout ropes. Mr. Seagrave and Ready cut down the trees and slung them to the axle, and Juno and William dragged them to the place where the house was to be built.

Ready had cut out and prepared the door-posts and window frames from the timber which he had towed round from the cove. He now fixed four poles in the earth upright at each corner, and then, with the assistance of Mr. Seagrave, notched every log of cocoanut wood on both sides where it was to meet with the one

crossing it, so that, by laying log upon log alternately, they fitted pretty close, and had only the chinks between them to be filled in with cocoanut-leaves twisted very tight and forced between them. This latter was the work of Juno and William, when no more logs were ready for carrying; and by degrees, the house rose up from its foundation. The fire-place could not be made at once, as they had either to find clay or to burn shells into lime and build it up with rocks and mortar; but a space was left for it. For three weeks they worked hard. As soon as the sides were up, they got on the whole of the roof and rafters; and then, with the broad leaves of the cocoanut trees, Ready thatched it very strong and secure, keeping the thatch down with the weight of heavy poles slung over the top of the roof with stout ropes. At the end of three weeks, the house was secure from the weather; and it was quiet time, for the season had begun to change, the clouds now gathered thick and rain was commencing. They had a violent shower one day and then the weather cleared again.

The earth inside the house was then beaten hard, so as to make a floor. And then Ready and William took the last trip in the boat to fetch down the chairs and tables. The bedding and all the utensils were now taken into the house, and a little out-house was built.

Am. Spangon

CHAPTER IX

THE STORM

WHEN the rain stopped little, Ready went round in search of the goats and the sheep. He perceived Nanny lying down in the copse, with two new-born kids at her side. Mr. Seagrave said that they should make arrangements as to their respective duties and employments during the rainy season. Their future programme was to make a fish-pond, a salt-pan to be cut out of the rock, and to bring the stores on the other side of the island through the woods. They decided to explore the island thoroughly and to find out what it contained or produced. They also tried to find if they could have more grass for their live-stock.

Soon after this talk, Ready went to the other side in his boat and brought with him the remaining articles. Then Mr. Seagrave and William spent the time in catching fish. In less than two hours, they were fortunate enough in catching eight large fish. Hardly had they sat down to table, when the rain came pattering down on the roof, and in a quarter of an hour, the storm was as violent, and the thunder and lightning as terrific, as on the day before. All outdoor labour was suspended for some time and that night they slept soundly.

They rose the next morning to see fine weather again. They dried the canvas and stowed it away under the bed-places. A fowl house was knocked up for the creatures to live

in and it took the whole of that day. William enticed the fowls down to it with some split peas and Miss Caroline was put in charge of the fowls.

When all were at the breakfast table the next day, Mr. Seagrave and Ready speculated about the future. In case of danger, they wished to have a place of refuge and a site was selected in the thick part of the wood. After they had discussed the plan of the building, they commenced putting it into shape. The axes and the saw were in full use and tree after tree was felled. They worked hard till dinner time and they were not at all sorry at the prospect of sitting down to a rich turtle soup.

A heavy storm came soon after they had retired to rest. There was a crash of thunder which burst over the house and it shook every thing in it. A sulphurous smell pervaded the whole building. When Ready and Mr. Seagrave recovered their feet, they perceived that the house was full of smoke and they heard the wailing of the women and the shrieks of the children in their bed-places in the other tent. Ready who was the first to recover himself, said that the lightning had struck them and the house was on fire somewhere. All were unhurt except Juno, who was lying on her side motionless. She was only stunned. The lightning had come down at the part where the fire-place was intended to have been made. They found, after scrutiny, that a part of the kettle had been melted and Nanny, the goat, killed. The kids were, however, miraculously unhurt.

After thanking God for the preservation of their lives as well as that of kids, they thought of putting up lightning conductors on the top of the palm trees near their house. Fearing for the store-room and the loss of stores they decided to put up another conductor near the store-house. Without wasting more time, they at once began to fix up the conductors. When they were completed, they sat down to dinner. Juno had completely recovered from her swoon and could move about here and there now. As Ready had predicted, the rain came on again with great violence, and it was impossible to do any work out of doors.

CHAPTER X

WILLIAM LAID DOWN WITH HIGH FEVER

THE weather set in fine for several days after the violent storm. Juno was weak and suffering for some time. Ready had observed her several times returning thanks to God for having been so mercifully saved. He at once said that there was more good under that dark skin than under many a white one, and her prayers were as acceptable to the Most High as those of kings and princes.

They worked hard for a fortnight to complete the store-house. It was thatched and wattled in on three sides, leaving one open for ventilation. All the stores that they had saved from the wreck were put into the store-house and they were now ready to take up some other

job. A whole day was employed in piling up the cocoanut branches and wood. Ready made a square stack like a haystack with a gable top over which he tied the long branches, so that the rain would pour off it. It was, however, agreed that on the day after the building was finished, they should all have a day's holiday, which they certainly did require.

The day after the holiday was spent in completing the fish-pond and a bathing-place for the children. It was necessary that the place should be a little away from the sea as, otherwise, the children at any moment might be attacked by the sharks. The construction of the fish-pond proceeded rapidly, and, on the third day after the commencement, it was nearly finished. In the intervals of fine weather, they caught a great many fish and put them into the pond. One day, while Ready and Mr. Seagrave were fishing, William, sitting near them, said to his father, "Many of the islands near us are inhabited, are they not, papa?"

"Yes, but not those very near us, I believe. At all events, I never heard any voyagers mention having seen inhabitants on the isles near which we live."

"What sort of people are the islanders in these seas?"

"They are various. The New-Zealanders are the most advanced in civilisation, but still they are said to be cannibals. The natives of Australia and Van Dieman's Land are of a very degraded class—indeed little better than the beasts of the field."

A few mornings afterwards, Juno came in before breakfast with six eggs in her apron, which she had found in the hen-house.

"Tommy likes eggs very much," said Tommy, on seeing them.

His father replied, "He may as well leave off telling fibs. When there are plenty of eggs, Tommy will have one, if he is a good boy, and not otherwise."

Nothing more was said, but on the third and fourth days, the hens appeared not to have laid any eggs much to the surprise of Mr. Seagrave, as, when hens commence laying eggs, they usually continue for some days. On the fifth morning Tommy did not make his appearance at the breakfast table. This roused suspicion. But old Ready said, "I found some egg shells hid under some cocoanut leaves. So, this morning, I fastened up the door of the hen-house, and only left open the little sliding door by which the fowls go into roost; and then after you were up, I watched behind the trees and saw Master Tommy come out and go to the hen-house. He tried the door and finding it fast, crept into the hen-house by the little sliding door. As soon as he was in, I let down the slide and fastened it with a nail. So, there he is caught in his own trap."

"And there shall he remain all day, the little glutton!" said Mr. Seagrave, who was much amused.

Tommy remained very quiet for an hour, when he commenced roaring. But it was of no use. No one paid any attention to him. It was not till the evening that the door of the hen-

house was opened and Tommy permitted to come out. He looked very foolish and sat down in a corner without speaking.

“Well Tommy, how many eggs did you suck to-day?” said Ready.

“Tommy won’t suck eggs any more,” said the urchin.

A circumstance occurred at this time, which was the occasion of great alarm to all. One evening William was suddenly taken with shivering and the next morning he was in a violent fever. Ready, who was ever resourceful, offered to take from the sufferer a great deal of blood. And he did so like an experienced doctor, and it relieved William very much. The poor boy was for many days in great danger and the cheerful house was now full of gloom and silence. How fervent were now the morning and evening prayers of the parents for their dear boy’s recovery! Ready, though he was doing some work or other, was always offering up his petition to the Almighty that the boy might be spared to his afflicted parents. And those prayers were heard, for, on the ninth day, the fever left William. But he was so weak that it took him nearly a fortnight to move about. By the time that William was able to go out of the house, the bathing-place and salt-pan were finished.

When William had completely recovered from the attack of fever, one fine morning, they passed the garden, and observed that the seeds they had sown had already sprung up an inch or two above the ground.

CHAPTER XI

THE DISAPPOINTMENT

NEXT morning after breakfast, Ready and William set out, with the two shepherd dogs, on their journey to the south of the island to see what it contained.

Guided by the pocket compass and blazing the trees, they proceeded through the wood for some time in silence. It was hard work, but presently they found the wood getting thin, for the trees were more distant from each other. William had not yet recovered his full strength: so they rested a little.

‘What do you expect to find, Ready?’ asked William.

“That’s a difficult question to answer. I can tell you what I *hope* to find, which is, a good space of clear ground between the beach and the wood, where we may pasture our sheep and goats; and perhaps some other trees besides cocoanuts.”

Now they continued their journey, and, in about a quarter of an hour, they were clear of the cocoanut grove and found themselves among brushwood higher than their heads so that they could not see how far they were from the shore.

Here again they rested for a short time and opening their knapsacks, made their meal. After this, they again started on their discoveries. In ten minutes they were clear of the thick and high bushes, and could see the sea before them about half a mile distant. The intervening land was a fine piece of pasture, broken here and there

with patches of trees and brushwood. There was no sandy beach.

Here they discovered banana, pepper, guava, and, what was most important to people in their situation, yam trees. Yams are used in tropical countries, instead of potatoes, which they very much resemble. They found to their great delight, many pigs feeding upon the yams. Instead of six pigs, they saw them multiplied to thirty and running away snorting and twisting their tails.

As they neared the rocks, which rose from the sea about twenty to thirty feet high, Ready told the lad how the sea-birds laid their eggs on them, adding that the eggs were good to eat.

They then walked along the seaside for about quarter of a mile, until they came to where the rocks were not so high, and there they discovered a little basin with a narrowed entrance and forming a nice little harbour. And other good things they saw, such as the crayfish and a kind of oyster.

There was now only three hours' day-light and they resolved to return home. One hour before sunset, they arrived at the house where they found Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave sitting outside. William gave a very clear account of all they had seen, and showed his father the specimens of the plants which he had collected. These were identified as the hemp, the brinjal and the grape-vine—all good things.

As soon as they had returned to the house—for it was time for supper—a consultation was held as to their future proceedings. It was

finally decided that they should see if there was a passage through the reef to the south of it, and that Ready and the rest (except Mrs. Seagrave and the children) should go through the wood, carrying with them a tent to pitch on the newly-discovered piece of ground, and set up a flagstaff at the little harbour to point out its position, returning home the same night.

The next job would be to rail in the yam plantation to keep off the pigs and at the same time to drive the sheep and goats through the wood, that they might feed on the new pasture ground. The old grass field was to be reserved for cutting and making into hay for fodder. No sooner were these important works completed, than they proposed to make a regular survey of the island both by land and water and draw a map of it, which Mr. Seagrave knew very well how to do. But man proposes and God disposes, as will be shown by the interruption of their intended projects.

As usual, Ready was the first to be up on the following morning. He was standing in the garden. He then raised his eyes and looked out to the offing, and, as usual, scanned the horizon. Applying the telescope to his eye he saw a ship at a great distance. The old man's heart beat quick. He decided after a short time that it must be by chance that the ship had come there; for none could know that they were saved, much less that they were on the island. He thought it would be cruel to raise hopes which might end in disappointment. Since he could not do without help, he sought the help of Master

William, as he trusted the boy very much. William readily gave his promise that he would not let out the secret.

Without wasting a minute and unperceived by those in the cottage, a tall slender cocoanut tree was raised and fixed in the ground, and the flags, with the ship's name *Pacific* in large letters upon one of them, were all ready for hoisting. They then made a smoke to attract the notice of those on board the vessel. All this did not occupy much more than an hour, during which the brig continued her course steadily towards the island. They were watching her in silent suspense, when they perceived Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave, Juno, Tommy and Caroline running as fast as they could down to the beach.

The fact was that Tommy, tired of work, had gone out of the house and walked towards the beach. There he perceived, first, the flags being hoisted and then the vessel off the island. He immediately ran back to the house crying out, "Papa! Mama! Captain Osborn come back—come back in a big ship." At this announcement, Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave ran down as fast as they could to the place where Ready and William were standing.

"Oh Ready! why did you not tell us this before?" exclaimed Mr. Seagrave out of breath.

"I wish you had not known it Sir," replied Ready; "but however it can't be helped. It was done out of kindness, Mr. Seagrave."

• Their joy knew no bounds, when they found the ship hoisting her ensign.

Mr. Seagrave embraced his wife, who threw herself sobbing into his arms, kissed his children with rapture and wrung old Ready's hand. He was almost frantic with joy. William was equally delighted. Juno grinned and laughed, while the tears ran down her cheeks, and Tommy took Caroline by her two hands and they danced round and round together.

But their joy was not to last long, for their hopes of rescue were all shattered. Just at this moment a heavy wind blew, carrying away the ship with it.

The ship gradually diminished to their view, so did their hopes depart from them. The wind was now fierce and heavy squall, with rain, obscured the offing and the vessel was no longer to be distinguished. How different was their return to the house from their joyous descent to the beach.

"She is leaving us," exclaimed William mournfully. "Hard-hearted wretches!" said Mr. Seagrave with indignation.

"You are wrong to say that Sir," replied Ready, "but the fact is, that if I was in command of the vessel I should do just as they have done. The gale rises fast and it would be dangerous for them to remain where they are. It does not at all prove that they intend to leave us. When the gale is over, we shall, I trust, see them again."

No reply was made to Ready's judicious remarks. The Seagraves only saw that the vessel was leaving them, and their hearts sank.

CHAPTER XII

READY'S EARLY LIFE

DURING the rainy season when they could not do much work out of doors, the evenings were employed in listening to the story of Ready's life. He began as follows:—

“My father was the captain of a merchant vessel, which traded from South-Shields to Hamburg, and my poor mother was the daughter of a half-pay militia captain, who died about two months after their marriage. My father owned one-third of the vessel. This property, as well as my grandfather's was bequeathed to my mother. What with the profits of the share he held of the vessel, and his pay as captain, my father was well to do. The other two-thirds of the ship were the property of a rich ship-builder and owner by name Masterman. Mr. Masterman, who had a very high opinion of my father and gained much money by his exertions and good management, was present at my father's marriage. When I was born he stood for me as godfather. He was a bachelor of nearly sixty years, without any near relations. Every one thought that he would leave his property to me after his death.

“A year after I was born, my father was drowned at sea, and my mother found herself a widow, with a child scarcely weaned, when she was about twenty-two years of age. It was supposed that my mother would still have sufficient to live upon, as the ship had been insured

at two-thirds of her value. But, to our astonishment, Mr. Masterman contrived to make it appear that it was his two-thirds of the vessel which had been insured. The consequence was that my mother had little or nothing to live upon. But her friends assisted her and she worked embroidery, and contrived to get on somehow until I was eight or nine years of age.

"Now I was a strong, active, hardy boy, and whenever I escaped from my mother or school, I took naturally to everything connected with the sea. My mother perceived my fondness for the sea and told me of the dangers and hardships of the life of a seaman, and reminded me of the cause of my father's death.

"Mine was a proud nature even when I was a child. My poor mother entreated me not to go to sea, for I was her only hope and comfort and all that bound her to the world. I was too young to know what pain I was giving her, and how anxiety was preying upon her, all on my account.

"I was little more than nine years old. On a windy day I found a man struggling in the sea near the wharf. Young as I was, I swam like a duck and put a rope in the drowning man's hand. He clung to the rope as only drowning men can cling and was hauled to the piles. Soon after, a boat picked us up. I found that the man I had saved was no other than my godfather, Mr. Masterman. It was indeed a bold act for a young boy like me. The sailors took me home in a procession, and my mother shed tears of joy on seeing me, though, in her

heart of hearts, she did not like this rash act of mine.

"The next day Mr. Masterman called upon us. He looked foolish and confused when he asked for his godson. I had a feeling then that I had revenged myself on him for his conduct, for there is no revenge greater than putting an enemy under an obligation. The impulse which induced me to act was good. The feeling which I indulged in afterwards took away the whole merit of the deed. Mr. Masterman offered to look after my welfare and bear all the expenses of my education. I could not bear that my mother should be under obligations to such a man and that he should pay for my schooling. But I couldn't help it.

"Now that I was put to a better school, I was deprived of all my former enjoyments and could no longer run about the wharfs or go on board the vessels as before. I had every prospect of receiving a good education, of succeeding Mr. Masterman in his business, and very probably inheriting his large fortune. But one false and foolish step in the young may affect their whole prospects in life. It was so with me. I am not at all discontented with my present position. An all-wise and gracious God disposes of us as He thinks fit or best. His will, not ours, be done."

CHAPTER XIII

READY'S ESCAPE AND REACHING A DUTCH SETTLEMENT

"I determined to run away from the school, and go to sea. By means of the trap door and the ladder which led out on the roof, I escaped when all the other students were fast asleep. Gaining the roof, I looked round and saw some ships in the port. I felt as if I was already free. I reached the ground by slipping down a large water-pipe, for you must know I was as light as a feather and as active as a cat. I started as fast as I could towards the port, and when I arrived at the wharf, I noticed a ship ready to sail, taking advantage of the ebb-tide. As I was thinking what to do, a jolly-boat was being pushed off by a man: I ran round and arrived there before the seaman had cast off the rope. Without saying a word, I jumped into the boat. The man in the boat told me that the captain of the ship wanted to have an apprentice and that I might be given the post. When I met the captain of the ship, he welcomed me and enlisted me as an apprentice. The ship, which was a collier, was soon out of port, and, before the day had dawned, I found myself sailing on the wide ocean. Indeed, before the day was over, I repented of my folly, which would distress my poor mother, and I wept bitterly. In my hurry I little thought of the consequences. I hope you, Master William, will never desert your parents.

"I was now on board the collier bound for London. We had a very fair wind and a quick passage. But I did not like the behaviour of the captain; he was very severe and brutal to the men; and the apprentice who was on board asked me to run away and get into another vessel. For the men informed me that the same fate would await me also after the indentures were signed. I made up my mind at once to quit the ship, and get into another large ship which was ready to sail, lying in the stream. There were two other boys of my age on the other ship, who told me that they were very comfortable on board the ship. I at once went on board with them and offered myself to the captain, who, after having my indentures signed, gave me a sufficient supply of clothing. Two days after this, our ship sailed for Bombay and China. Just at this time, I wrote an appealing letter to my mother asking her pardon, but I learnt later on that it never reached her.

"We arrived safely at Bombay. Three weeks afterwards we sailed down the Straits for China. It was war-time, and we were very often chased by French privateers. When we were off the Isle of France, a French frigate bore down upon us, and, after exchanging a few broad-sides, we were compelled to haul down our colours. A lieutenant was sent on board our ship with forty men to take charge of us, for we were a rich prize to them. All were taken on board the frigate, except the lascars and the boys who were to assist the Indiaman to get into the Isle of France. But, on the way, a British

man-of-war took possession of our ship, and we were again free and not prisoners in the hands of the French. After coming to port, we soon made sail for England, quite delighted at having escaped a French prison. But, as events proved, we only exchanged it for a Dutch one. Two days afterwards, as we were rounding the Cape, another French vessel bore down upon us and captured us. We were taken to Table Bay, for, at that time the Cape of Good Hope was in the possession of the Dutch, who, as well as the French, were at war with Britain.

"As soon as they had let go their anchor in Table Bay, we were all ordered on shore and sent up to a prison close to the Government Gardens. We were told that we should be sent to Holland in the first man-of-war, and we did not much like the idea. There were, as I told you before, some other boys, who were of my age and temperament. Of these Jack Romer and William Hastings were my particular friends.

"One day, as we were sitting together, I casually remarked, 'I would rather be living among savages than be shut up in a prison.' This had its effect on my friends and that was our first talk on the subject. We discussed this for many days among ourselves and at last resolved to make our escape. In this way we were only running into hardship and danger without the slightest chance of escaping. But there was no use putting old heads upon young shoulders. We saved up our provisions, and one dark night, we contrived to get over the prison

wall and then made off as fast as we could to the Table Mountain. Hastings who was the oldest and the sharpest of the three advised us as to what we should do. We had some sort of calculation, whereby to escape unspied by our enemies.

"We had walked about four hours and began to feel very tired. When the day dawned, we looked out for a secluded place to conceal ourselves in. Luckily for us, we soon found a cave with a narrow entrance. Without thinking, what it might contain, we went in and seated ourselves. No sooner had we lied down to take a nap than we heard a great screaming and barking outside. We were frightened out of our lives almost. We picked up a little courage and peeped out of the cave. There we saw nearly one hundred and fifty baboons, leaping and tumbling about. They were bigger than we were—indeed when they stood on their hind legs, they were much taller. They played such antics that we all burst into a loud laughter. And we had not ceased laughing, when two or three of them tried to pull us out; but we beat them off with our knives, wounding them all severely.

"At this juncture, a Hottentot had come there with his cattle, and had frightened away the baboons who were tormenting us. We therefore came out very happy at our release. This was our first adventure after our escape from the Dutch prison.

"Being now free, we came out of the cave and sat down under the rock, so that the Hottentot could not see us. Romer was for going back

and giving ourselves up again for he thought it was ridiculous to be wandering about without any arms to defend ourselves. But Hastings intervened and said that, if we went back, we should be laughed at. So, after much consultation, we decided not to give up our mad scheme.

"The next we considered was how to procure arms and ammunition. As we were talking this over, I peeped from behind the rock, and saw the Hottentot fast asleep with his musket by his side. Hastings, who was not willing to lose the chance, stole that as well as the powder-horn and ammunition without disturbing the man from his sleep. We were overjoyed at this piece of good luck. Then we continued our march for nearly a mile towards Table Bay, when we fell in with a stream of water. Here we quenched our thirst, and made a dinner of the provisions we had brought with us from the prison.

"It was nearly twelve o'clock at night, with a bright moon shining over us, when we approached a place with two or three farm-houses, with their cattle-folds and orchards. We then looked for a hiding place, where we might remain till morning. During the whole of the next day, we did not see any other people about the house, except the farmer, his wife, two children and a Hottentot woman. At about two, the farmer mounted his horse and rode away. No sooner had he gone than the Hottentot woman went down the valley with a basket on her head. We resolved at once to go down to the farm-house very cautiously from our hid-

ing place. We managed to reach the back of the farm-house unnoticed, when, to our great joy, the farmer's wife also went out of the house leading the children. We availed ourselves of the opportunity offered to us, and we soon entered the house by the back door and snatched a rifle, a musket, powder-horns and ammunition pouches. Having gained these and something for our food, we made our way safe back to our retreat. We only waited for the sun to set, before we started on our journey into the interior.

"We remained concealed until it was dark, and then Hastings and Romer, each with a musket on his shoulder, and myself carrying the rifle and a great loaf of bread, set off on our journey. We did not know whither we were going. On our way we saw no signs of cultivation, nor did we pass one house after we left False Bay astern of us. At about midnight we felt very much fatigued, and longed for a drink of water, but we did not find any. Now and then we only heard the howlings and cries of the wild beasts. At last we were so tired that we all sat down on the edge of a rock. We dared not go to sleep; so we remained there awake till daylight.

"Daylight came at last, and we walked on till we found a stream of water, where we took our breakfast. After this our courage revived, and we proceeded further; when we reached the Swartz or Black Mountains. When night came on, we made a fire to scare away the wild animals, and agreed among ourselves that one of

us should keep watch, when the others were sleeping. But Romer, whose was the first turn in the watch, was overcome by sleep, and he left the burning fire to die out. It was about midnight, when I was awakened by something breathing hard in my face, and I found myself lifted up by my waist-band and the teeth of some animal pinching my flesh. Controlling all my fear, I tried to catch at my musket, but I put out my wrong hand and laid hold of a still lighted brand out of the fire, which I darted into the animal's face. The beast being a hyena, a timid creature, let me drop directly, and ran away. I thanked God for my escape, for the animal could have easily carried me away.

"This affair, of course, made us more cautious afterwards. We travelled on for a week, and we entered a large plain. When we were in the forest, we had another narrow escape from a panther, which was shot through the head by Hastings.

"We now cared less for danger every time we ran into it. We were now obliged to hunt for our livelihood, as the food we had brought with us was completely exhausted. Once we killed an antelope, called a hartebeest, for our food. Just when we came to the place where it lay, we found ourselves not ten yards from a lion, who was lying on the top of the beast we had killed. We all took to our heels as fast as our legs could carry. Luckily for us, the lion did not take the trouble to follow us. That night we had to sleep without supper.

"We continued our journey without any destination in view. One morning we fell in with a party of natives, belonging to the Karroo tribe. With their assistance, we arrived at a Dutch settlement of three or four farm-houses."

CHAPTER XIV

READY RETURNS TO TABLE MOUNTAIN

"A Dutch farmer came out when he saw us coming and enquired who we were. We told him that we were English prisoners and that we wished to give ourselves up to the authorities. He took away our arms and ammunition, saying that he was the authority in that part. But very soon we found out that we had to deal with an ill-tempered brutal fellow. He gave us plenty of hard work, but by no means plenty of food. At last he began to treat us very cruelly and he would not trust us with guns. On one occasion we asked him to allow us a gun so that we might procure better food. For this he kicked Romer so unmercifully that he could not work for two days afterwards. We agreed at last that we should stand his treatment no longer, and one evening, Hastings bravely told him so. This daring put the farmer into a great rage, and he ordered two of his slaves to tie Hastings to the waggon-wheel, swearing at the same time that he would cut every bit of skin from his body by whipping him."

"Hastings, fearing that his end had come, made signs to us to rescue him by any means

from the fury of the farmer. As the Dutchman was going towards Hastings, we crept into his house and seized two muskets and a large knife. We came out with these weapons, just as he had struck the first blow with the rhinoceros whip, which was so severe that it took away poor Hastings' breath. We went up, and he saw us and we levelled our muskets at him and he stopped. The Dutchman turned so pale and frightened, that he did not utter a word and stood like a statue, while the slaves ran away. The thongs that bound Hastings were cut off by me, with Romer covering the farmer with his gun. As soon as Hastings was free, he felled the Dutchman down by striking him with a large wooden mallet, crying out, "That is for flogging an Englishman, you rascal!" While the man lay senseless or dead, we caught hold of some ammunition and other articles which might be useful. We then went to the stables and took three best horses there and escaped.

"We travelled throughout the night and at day dawn we rested our horses and gave them some corn. We then sat down to eat some of the provisions we had brought with us. For nearly a fortnight, we went on our journey and had pretty well killed our horses. At last we were compelled to stop among a tribe of Gorraguas, a very mild and inoffensive people, who supplied us with milk and treated us very kindly. We stayed for about three weeks with these people, and then we decided to find our way back to the Cape, and deliver ourselves up

as prisoners, for we were tired out with fatigue and constant danger.

"Two days after we had bid adieu to the Górraguas, we were passing through some high grass. Unfortunately for us we stumbled on a lion. Romer, who was in advance of us, fired at the animal. The lion was slightly wounded and very much enraged. It sprang upon Romer with a roar and knocked him off the saddle into the bushes. Our horses, which were frightened, wheeled round and fled, for the animal was evidently about to attack us. We waited at a great distance, till the beast was off, dragging the carcass of the horse. Then we rode back to the spot where Romer had fallen. You may easily imagine our sorrow to find him quite dead.

"Greatly depressed at the death of one of our companions, we pursued for journey, and three days after our friend's death, we first saw the wide ocean again. It appeared to us as if we had fallen in with an old friend of ours. For three more weeks we had nothing but difficulty and suffering. One forenoon, at last we saw the Table Mountain, and were glad to see it. We felt as if we had seen the white cliffs of old England. As we neared the bay, we observed that British colours were flying on board the vessels in the bay. We were extremely overjoyed to learn of the capture of the Cape by the British from the Dutch. We rode into the town and reported ourselves to the main guard. The governor sent for us, heard our story and sent us to the admiral who took us on board his own ship."

CHAPTER XV

READY'S REPENTANCE

"I was put down on the books as a supernumerary boy. I was on board that ship for nearly four years, and we were sent from port to port and clime to clime, until I grew a strong, tall lad and was put into the mizzen-top. I found my new post very comfortable. I did my duty well and the consequence was that I was never punished. The only thing which was a source of constant unhappiness to me was that I could not go to England again and see my dear mother. More than two or three letters had been written by me, but there was no response from her. At last I became so impatient that I determined to run away at the first opportunity that might offer.

"We were then anchoring in Port Royal, Jamaica, and there was a large convoy of West-India ships, laden with sugar, about to sail immediately. There was but one chance, and we (for Hastings was also with me) decided to get in to the other vessel, by swimming the sea between us, under cover of darkness. That was easy enough, as the ships were anchored not a hundred yards from our own vessel. However, the night before the convoy was to sail, we made up our minds to run the risk, even if the sharks attacked and devoured us. It was in the middle watch that Hastings and myself made our escape by swimming to one of the West Indiamen, very close to us. I had just caught hold of the cable

of the convoy and was about to climb by it, when I heard a loud shriek behind me. Turning my head, I perceived a shark plunging down into the waters with Hastings in his jaws and another making a rush at me. Fear gave me strength and in a minute, I was up at hawse-holes. The men on board helped me up, and then hurried me down below.

"I can hardly describe my sensations for some hours afterwards. My sorrow knew no bounds at the sad fate that had overtaken my friend, who had all along been my companion and adviser. Soon, however, when the Indiaman was under weigh, I felt very happy at the chance of being once more in my country and able to go to Newcastle and see my poor mother.

"The ship I was in was bound to Glasgow and we parted company with the convoy at North Foreland and arrived safe in port. The captain took me to the owners, who paid me fifteen guineas for my services during my voyage home. As soon as I received the money, I hastened to Newcastle in a coach. On my way, I learnt from a gentleman, who sat next to me, that Mr. Masterman, the ship-builder had died, leaving all his property to charitable purposes. He told me, also, that my mother had died of a broken heart, which made me fall on my back and I cried as if my heart would break.

"I was in an agony, until I arrived at Newcastle, where I could ascertain all the facts connected with her disease. The gentleman requested me to go with him, as he had something to reveal to me. I replied that I would

call upon him the next day and that I could not do anything until I had talked to the neighbours and visited my poor mother's grave. It was some relief to my mind to hear that my poor mother could not have lived, as she had an incurable cancer. Till her last moment, she had been thinking of me, and my name was the last word on her lips. Mr. Masterman had been very kind to her during my absence and she had wanted nothing. Then I went and sat by the side of the turf which covered her grave, and long and bitterly did I weep for her loss and pray for forgiveness.

"Next morning, I went to keep my appointment with the gentleman with whom I had travelled in the coach. He said he was the person employed at Mr. Masterman's death, and that he had found a paper of great consequence, as it proved that the insurance of the vessel had been made both on Mr. Masterman's and my father's share. By this, I was to get three thousand pounds including the interest for so many years. He set to work at once on my behalf, and having called together the Mayor and Corporation of the town proved the document. They immediately agreed that I was entitled to the money, and that it should be paid to me without any contest. I was myself so inflated with my good fortune that I forgot all the promises of amendment, all the vows of leading a good life, which I made over my poor mother's grave.

"As soon as the money was in my hands, I began to squander it in all manner of folly.

Fortunately I had not spent much, when the Scotch second mate of the Indiaman named Sanders, came like a guardian angel to save me. He proposed that I should purchase a part of a vessel, on condition that I was captain of her. Mr. Sanders, besides, told me that, if I would take him as my first mate, he would navigate her and that I could learn to do so in the very first voyage. So all was arranged.

"We set off for Glasgow and found a ship ready for launching. I offered to take one-fourth share of her and command her. The vessel was launched on my paying down two thousand pounds for my share. Then Sanders and I were very busy in fitting her out. Even after paying my share of the ship's value, I still had some two or three hundred pounds left. You don't know how much I was puffed up with pride at the idea of being captain of my own ship. I was well off, for my pay was ten pounds a month, in addition to one-fourth share of the profits of the vessel. That may be considered as the most prosperous portion of my life.

"My good fortune did not last long. Our ship sailed with a convoy for Barbados. Mr. Sanders proved a good navigator. From him, before I arrived at Barbados, I gained all the knowledge required to command and navigate my own vessel. Now that I felt I could do without his assistance, I not only kept him at a distance, but assumed the attitude of a superior. Mr. Sanders was very much annoyed, and on our arrival at Barbados, he told me that it was his intention to quit the vessel. I replied very

haughtily that he might do as he pleased. Mr. Sanders left me and I felt quite happy at his departure.

"I considered myself quite safe from any of the enemies' privateers, as I had guns on board my ship. While we were waiting for the convoy, which was not expected for a fortnight, it blew a very heavy gale. My ship, as well as others, dragged their anchors and we were driven out of Carlisle Bay. I made up my mind that, instead of beating up into the bay again, I could run for England without protection, trusting to the fast sailing of the vessel and the guns which I had on board. I forgot at the same time that the insurance of the vessel was made in England, as 'Sailing with convoy', and that my sailing without it would render the insurance void if any misfortune occurred. For three weeks everything went on well, and I had made sure of being in port before night, when a French privateer hove in sight and gave chase.

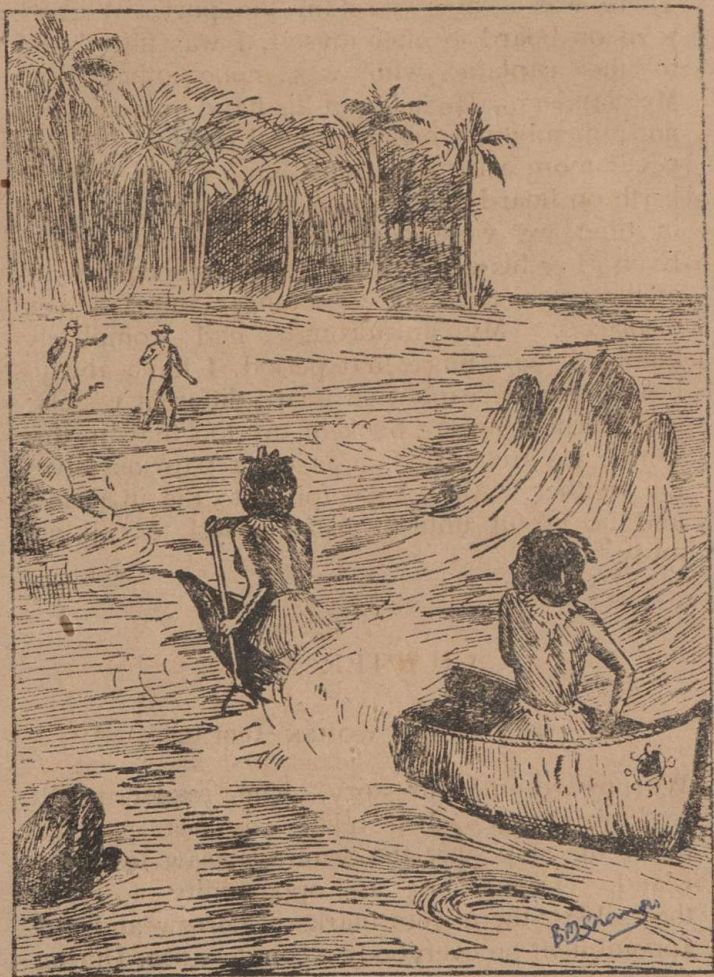
"The same night I was in a French prison. I was now a pauper, having lost the ship and all I had with it. I felt I had no one to thank but myself for the unfortunate position I was in, and I remained a prisoner there for nearly six years. I then managed to escape from the prison with three or four others. We suffered dreadfully and arrived at last in England in a Swedish vessel. Of course, I had nothing to do but to look out for a berth on board a ship. I tried for the post of second-mate, but without success. I was too ragged and looked too miserable. I now resolved to accept any job.

There was a fine vessel in the port. When I went on board to offer myself, I was introduced to the captain, who was none other than Mr. Sanders. He held out his hand immediately, not remembering my ungrateful conduct. I was never more ashamed in my life. I was given a berth on board and become his second-mate, and in time we were good friends till his death. Even after his death, I continued as second-mate of the vessel for some time longer and was then displaced. My misfortunes had completely humbled me. Since that period, I have always been common seaman on board different vessels; and learnt from the book of my life that, in this world, we are to live so as to prepare ourselves for another. All I hope for is to die in peace, and be useful until it pleases God to call me away."

CHAPTER XVI

THE ISLAND WOMEN APPEAR

WE now resume our story. The reader might remember that, when relief was near, a wind drove the ship, that the Seagraves saw from the island. Having lost an opportunity to save themselves, there were marks of sorrow and disappointment on everybody's countenance. During the night the wind howled and the rain beat down. The children slept soundly, but Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave, Ready and William were awake the whole of the night, listening to the storm



THE TWO PEOPLE HAD JUST STRENGTH ENOUGH
LEFT TO PADDLE THROUGH THE SURF

and occupied with their own thoughts. It was the most unhappy night that had been passed by them, since they first landed on that island. Still, with some lingering hope, Ready hurried up to the beach next morning and made a careful survey of the ocean with his telescope. He could see nothing, and when he returned home, he was glad to see Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave more composed than they were the evening before. Ready told them that it was useless holding out false hopes for the return of the vessel again to their rescue. The gale continued during the day and showed no symptoms of abatement when they again retired for the night.

The following day, both Ready and William went to the beach, and were looking at the ocean. They sighted, at a distance, a canoe with two islanders in it, much exhausted. The two people had just strength enough left to paddle through the surf, and when the canoe grounded on the beach, they dropped down quite exhausted. While dragging the boat up, Ready observed that the occupants were both women. Their faces were tattooed all over, which disfigured them very much. Otherwise they were young and might have been good-looking.

"Shall I run up and get something for them, Ready?"

"Do, Master William; ask Juno to give you some of whatever there is for breakfast; anything warm."

William soon returned with some thin oatmeal porridge, which Juno had been preparing for breakfast, and a few spoonfuls being forced

down the throats of the two natives, they gradually revived. They then hauled up the canoe as far as they could, to prevent her being beaten to pieces. They found nothing in it, except a piece of matting and the two paddles, which had been used by the women. The latter were very curiously carved, and so was the bow of the canoe.

This incident proved that they had very near neighbours who might probably pay them a very unwelcome visit at any moment. However, they foolishly thought that, if the savage women were taught to speak English, they might serve as interpreters for them when the islanders visited them and thereby save their lives. But, they were cautious and prepared to defend themselves in case anything untoward happened.

"Would their visit be so dangerous then, Ready?"

"Why Sir, a savage is a savage, and, like a child wishes to obtain whatever he sees; especially he covets what he may turn to use, such as iron, etc. If they came and we concealed a portion, and gave up the remainder of our goods, we might escape; but still there is no trusting them and I would infinitely prefer defending ourselves against numbers to trusting to their mercy.

"But how can we defend ourselves against a multitude?"

"We must be prepared, Sir; if we can fortify ourselves with our muskets, we would be more than a match for hundreds."

Thus fifteen days passed by. Every morning Ready and William did not fail to be at the beach with the telescope, and the whole of the day was passed in surmises, hopes and fears. In fact, the appearance of the vessel and the expectation of leaving the island had completely overturned all the regularity and content of the island-party. In the meantime the native women recovered from their fatigue and appeared to be very mild and tractable. Whatever they were able to do they did cheerfully and had already gained a few words of English.

They again talked over the exploration and it was arranged for the following Monday.

Suddenly a misfortune fell on them which upset all their arrangements. On the Saturday morning, Ready, as usual, went his rounds. As he walked along the beach, he perceived that the Indian canoe was missing. It had been hauled up clear of the water, so that it could not have floated away. Ready's heart misgave him. He looked through his telescope in the direction of the large island, and thought he could distinguish a speck on the water at a great distance. As he was thus occupied, William came down to him.

"Master William," said Ready, "I fear those island women have escaped in their canoe. Run up and see if they are in the out-house."

William returned breathless, stating that the women were not to be found and they had evidently carried away the vessel.

They communicated the intelligence to Mr. Seagrave, who in turn told it to his wife. This

event, he considered as worse than the vessel not coming back.

At once, by way of precaution, they decided to stockade the store-house so as to render it impossible for any one to get in. They arranged for their security against any sudden attack and to make the fortification their dwelling-house. After praying to God, "Whose will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven," that He must protect them in their need, they retired to bed.

CHAPTER XVII

IN SEARCH OF A NEW LOCATION

THE family on the island were in a most uncomfortable state of mind, after the escape of the savage women. They had suffered much by keen disappointment as there was not now the slightest chance of rescue. Now they were in constant dread of a sudden attack by a host of savages. What more do you want for their restlessness of spirit? Ready, who always believed in instantaneous action, said to Mr. Seagrave that they must no longer remain in a state of idleness. They should make sure that they should not be surprised by a visit from the savages. The idea of their being surprised some night, and Mrs. Seagrave and the dear children perhaps murdered in their beds, was awful for Mr. Seagrave to reflect upon.

"God will help us, Mr. Seagrave," said Ready, "but at the same time it is necessary

that we should help ourselves. He will give His blessings to our exertions, but we cannot expect that miracles will be performed for us. We have had a heavy shock, but it is now time that we recovered from it and put our shoulders to the wheel."

Mr. Seagrave had lain awake, night after night, considering their position and what they ought to do, but he had never been able to come to any satisfactory resolution.

Ready, pointing out that they had no means of defence against numbers, proposed that all of them should shift to the place on the south of the island, which they had discovered.

"One great advantage to us is the feed which we have found for our live-stock and the fodder for them during the rainy season; but principally the patch of yams, which will afford us good food during the winter."

"It is an excellent plan, Ready; we shall, as you say, be removed from danger for the time."

"Yes, Sir, those women may not have gained the island, for they had the wind right against them for several days after they went away in the canoe. But if they have, we must expect that the savages will pay us a visit."

As the weather set in fair and would remain so for months, Ready brought to their mind the necessity of pitching their tents on that new spot and removing the whole family there. They should be very comfortable in the place, and at

all events much safer, than if they continued to remain in their present house without any defence. They knew for certain that, if the island women had gained their destination, they must expect a visit from the savage positively.

"But, Ready, you don't mean to say that we are to leave this side of the island altogether and all our comfortable arrangements?" said William.

"No, Master William, not altogether. As soon as we have done our work at the yam plantation and made everything as comfortable there as we can, I think we may leave Mrs. Seagrave and the children in the tents, and work here. Let us abandon the house in which we live at present and fit out the out-house, which is concealed in the cocoanut grove, as a dwelling-house and fortify it, so as to be secure against the sudden attack of the savages. We must return here, for we cannot remain in the tents after the rainy season sets in."

Ready's scheme was excellent and well thought out, because one man with a gun behind a stockade was better than twenty, who had no other arms than spears and clubs. And with the help of God, they might beat the savages off. All agreed to this project and they were not for wasting even a minute. They had plenty to do. The whole party felt relieved in their minds after they had made this arrangement. They satisfied themselves that they would be using all human endeavours to ward off the danger which

threatened them. They might then put their confidence in that providence who would, if He thought fit, protect them in their need, and helplessness.

The subject was introduced to Mrs. Seagrave who cheerfully consented, when she perceived, how much more secure they would be in consequence of it. Their first business was to find a harbour, very near to the original place. Luckily for them, they were able to secure one such.

After the meal was over, Mr. Seagrave and Juno assisted William and Ready to carry down the canvas and the poles for the tent, with shovels to clear away the earth and pegs to fix the tents up properly. After loading the boat with all the necessaries, they shoved off and soon arrived at the small harbour. They tied the boat fast by the rope and carried everything up. The spot selected for fixing the tents had abundant bananas. Their choice fell on that place, first because the trees would prevent the tents from being seen from the sea; and secondly because the clumps would shade them from the sun during the hottest portion of the day.

They walked to the ground between the bananas and the yam-patch, which was wet and swampy. Two large holes were dug and water trickled in very fast and it was pronounced to be good also, though not as good and sweet as on the other side. By this time, the sun went down and they slept in the new tent that night.

The sun had not gone up high in the heavens, when Ready and William were again interested in their work and had set up another tent, carefully laid out for Mrs. Seagrave and the children. Then they cleared all the ground and levelled the inside nicely with their shovels. A fire-place was prepared for Juno. Having finished the tent, they regained their house. Later they made arrangements for their work, during the remainder of the day. They carried the provisions necessary for a day or two, the tables and chairs, the cooking utensils, and a portion of their clothes to the new place of residence in the boat. As for the fowls and chickens, it was decided to leave them behind, as Ready and William could look after them on their occasional visits.

Next day, they started for their new abode, walking through the cocoanut groves. When they neared the spot where the tents were pitched by the side of the bananas, they were equally pleased. It was quite a fairy spot.

Just as they were entering their new abode, a drove of pigs rushed past them. They were extremely delighted to see them and they thought of the prospect of killing the pigs and using their flesh for dinner. Ready, who went in pursuit of them, shot one dead and after removing the skin, hung it by means of a rope at the entrance of the tent. By mistake they left a loaded musket underneath it. Tommy, the mischievous boy, took up the gun and shot at the killed pig in sport, thinking that it would not fire. But to his utter surprise it went off, grazing the flesh

of the big. It was true that little Caroline was providentially saved, for Tommy in his mirth had aimed the loaded musket at her. But Caroline was so frightened, that she ran away as fast as she could. Tommy was astonished and frightened at the musket going off. But the butt end of the gun hit him right on his face, knocking out two of his teeth and bruising his cheek very much, besides making his nose bleed very fast. The greatest punishment which his father inflicted upon him, for meddling with the musket, was not to allow him to have any of the pig when it was roasted.

The day after this incident, Tommy's face presented a very woeful appearance. His cheek and nose were swollen and black, and the loss of the two front teeth made him look much worse. He was dearly punished for his boyish spirit. This experience did not however, prevent Master Tommy from getting into more serious mischief later, as you will read.

After breakfast, Ready proposed that he and William should take the boat and begin their labour of carrying the articles round from the cove to the bay where the house was, pointing out at the same time that there was not a day to be lost. It would take them nearly four days to get the work done. Mr. Seagrave agreed to work at the hedge and ditch round the yam plantations during their absence.

Ready and William made preparations for their departure. They took with them their blankets and a small pot for cooking. When all

was ready, they bade Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave farewell. Juno assisted to get the luggage down to the boat. They were now to pull to the bay, and leave their luggage and then go round to the cove. As they shoved off, William took the dog Remus also into the boat, for a reason which you will learn presently.

They hoisted the sail and as the breeze was fresh, went round to the bay in a very short time. They took their provision and stores up to the house, and made fast the door, called the fowls and gave them some of the damaged rice, which Ready had brought round with him. They found, to their great delight, that they had now upwards of forty chickens, all healthy and doing well; some, indeed, quite grown, and large enough to kill. But as they had plenty of provisions, it had been decided that they should not be touched as yet, for the eggs would be of more value than the fowls.

They then got into the boat again, and pulled away for the cove. The wind was fresh and against them, so they had a long pull. But, as Ready observed, it was much better that it should be so, as, when the boat was loaded, they could very quickly sail back again to the bay.

As soon as they arrived at the cove, they lost no time in loading the boat. The nails and iron work of every description, with the twine and tools, which Ready had brought on shore, composed the major part of the first cargo. A cask of flour and a box of candles, with some bolts of canvas filled the boat, Calling Remus, who was lying on the sandy beach at the cove,

they shoved off, hoisted the sail, and in an hour had regained the bay and passed through the reef. With the carrying of the articles from the boat to the shore, they stopped work for the day.

The next day the work was renewed. At noon, they were sitting to their dinner, when Ready was acquainted with the purpose, which the dog would serve. The dog was brought, with the idea of despatching letters to his mother, telling her of their safety on the other side. William accordingly wrote a letter to his mother, intimating to her the progress of their work and their safety. The letter was tied round the dog's neck with a piece of twine and William signed to him to go back. The dog at once set off as fast as his legs could carry him through the cocoanut grove. Scarcely had they carried up the whole cargo and made preparations for their sleep, when the dog made its appearance with a reply from his mother. Mrs. Seagrave acknowledged her son's letter and wished them well in their work. The dog Remus had thus helped to establish a postal system on the island, which was indeed a great advantage.

The next day they went round two or three times and landed as much cargo as possible. Just before the sun went down the horizon, William conveyed to his mother through the dog the work done by them on that day. The dog returned with an answer before they were in bed. Landing in some more useful articles, on Saturday, they returned to the tents, where all were waiting at the little harbour to receive them.

Their topic now turned upon the sagacity and cleverness of the dog, which had established communication between one part of the island and the other. During supper Mr. Seagrave narrated many instances to prove the sagacity of animals. He explained to them the difference between instinct and reason and the animals which were guided by these two qualities. He enlightened them by giving illustrations of elephants, dogs, horses and other kinds of animals. He told them that reasoning powers were chiefly, if not wholly, given to those animals which man subjected to his own service and for his use, thereby making them of more value. The powers given to that class of animals were at the service and under the control of man.

The next day saw William and Ready off to the cove to bring round the various articles that still remained. It had been settled that they were not to return for four or five days and that the dog Remus was to bring intelligence of their welfare every afternoon. They worked hard during these days and completed their task with the exception of a portion of the timbers of the ship. Every article had been brought to the shore, but had not been carried up to the storehouse, as it required more time. Having finished their labour, they arrived at the harbour a little later than usual.

Sunday, which intervened, was a day of repose, and as they had worked so hard, they felt the luxury of a day of rest. In the afternoon, they agreed that, on the coming Monday, they should make every preparation for quitting the tents

and returning to the house at the bay. It was their decision to leave the live-stock there, as the pasturage was so plentiful and good, with the exception of one goat, which they would take with them to supply them with milk. William and Ready were asked to carry the beds, etc., round to the bay in the boat, whereas Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave, with the family, were to walk through the woods, after taking a very early breakfast next day.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE STOCKADE

THE next morning was one of bustle. There was packing up and making every preparation for departure. Master Tommy, as was his wont, was in every one's way and doing more harm than good in his attempts to assist; but, however, as he meant well, nobody scolded him. Mrs. Seagrave and Juno packed up the breakfast and dinner things in different baskets. Having packed up articles of every description, the whole family set off on their journey through the grove, accompanied by the dogs.

William and Ready lost no time in getting through their work. The kitchen utensils, table and chairs were the first articles put into the boat. The goat was then led down, and they pushed off with a full load. They arrived at the bay long before the party through the land arrived. The articles were carried from the beach to the tents through the united efforts of all. As

they were very much tired, they went very early to bed.

Ready consulted Mr. Seagrave next morning, and with his co-operation marked out a square of cocoanut trees, surrounding the store-house, so as to leave a space within them of about twenty yards each side, which they considered large enough for the enclosure. These cocoanut trees were to serve as posts, between which were to be fixed other cocoanut trees, cut into lengths of about fourteen feet, so as to form a palisade or stockade. It was not easy to climb over them and it would protect them from any attack.

As soon as the line of trees had been marked out, they set to work, cutting down all the trees within the line, and then outside to a distance of ten yards, so as to give them sufficient room for work. Ready cut out cross-pieces to nail from tree to tree. Mr. Seagrave felled the trees. William and Juno sawed them off at a proper length with one of the cross-cut saws, and then carried them to Ready, who nailed them. After cutting a good number of trees, Mr. Seagrave helped Ready in fixing up the palisades. Ready, even when busily engaged, took an opportunity to speak to William.

"I think, Sir," said Ready, "that now we are here again, it will be necessary to keep a night-watch in case of accident. I shall not go to bed till it is quite dark, and shall have my glass to examine the offing the last thing. My idea is that it will be at the beginning of the rainy season that we shall have a visit from the savages, if we have one at all. It is only at that

time of the season the wind and weather will be favourable to them. Still, Master William, we must not be careless and must keep a good look-out even from to-day. It don't want to fret your father and mother with my fears, but I cannot help telling you what I really think and what we ought to do."

"I agree with you, Ready, and I will take care to be up before day-break, and examine very carefully with the spy glass as soon as the day dawns. You take the night part and I will do the morning part of the watching."

From the period Ready broached this subject to William, they were continually watching the sea from the dawn of day till it was too dark to distinguish anything.

For nearly a fortnight the work upon the stockade continued without any intermission, when a circumstance occurred which created the greatest alarm and excitement. One day as the party returned to dinner, they were surprised to note the absence of Tommy. At length they found him in the boat, which had drifted from the beach towards the sea and was a cable's length away from it, among the breakers of the reef. Indeed, there was no time to be lost, for the wind was off the shore, and in a short time, the boat would have been carried far into the sea.

William, perceiving the danger, ran off to the beach like the wind, followed closely by others. Throwing off his hat and jacket, he dashed into the water. He was already up to his middle, when old Ready caught him by the arm and said:

"Master William, go back immediately, your going can do no good, as you do not understand the thing so well as I do, and go I will."

William persisted in going, but obeyed, when Mr. Seagrave commanded him to come back. By the time William reached the shore, Ready had swum across to the first rocks on the reef, and was now dashing through the pools between the rocks towards the boat. Just at that time, they observed three sharks near the beach. Mr. Seagrave was steadily gazing at Ready's movements. There was only one chance of safety for him to pass through the deep water between the rocks. It was a moment of intense anxiety. Ready gained the reef and climbed on the rocks. In another moment, he was over the rocks, and had seized the gunnel of the boat. The next minute, he got into the boat after pushing it off.

He was not quite safe yet, for the boat had been beating on the rocks of the reef and had knocked a hole in her bottom and had begun to fill. Ready, tearing off his neck-cloth, forced as much as he could of it into the hole. This stopped the hole to a large extent. They had yet much to do and suffer, before they might expect to arrive at the shore in safety. With a large quantity of water in it, they had to pass through the passage, where the sharks were swimming. Ready, who was always ready with suggestions in times of danger, called out to Mr. Seagrave and William on the beach to throw large stones at the sharks. This was immediately done, and it had the desired effect of driving them

away. No sooner had the sharks swum away than Ready with Tommy landed safely on shore.

On their way home, everybody admitted that William could not have carried out everything so well as Ready had done if he had attempted to rescue Tommy. That evening the prayers of the party were more than usually solemn and the thanksgivings more heartfelt and sincere. Exhausted with the exciting scene of the day, they all retired early to bed.

Next day they learnt from Tommy that he had wanted to go round to the tents in the boat to eat some bananas and be back, before they found out where he had gone.

The stockade was now almost finished. They created a door of stout oak plank for the stockade. There was also a second set of doorposts inside, about a foot apart from the door, between which could be inserted short poles, one above the other, so as to barricade it within when required. This would make the door as strong as any other portion of the fortification. Ready then engaged himself in flooring the house with planks. As soon as all was complete, it was decided to alter the store-house into a dwelling-house. During the progress of the work, they were obliged to break off for two days to collect all their crops from the garden.

A fortnight more passed away in continuous hard work, and the house inside the stockade was completely furnished with all requirements. It appeared much larger than the one they were dwelling in. It was more comfortable also, being divided into three rooms by the deal planking.

The middle room, which the door opened into, was the sitting and dining-room, with a window behind. The two side rooms were sleeping-rooms, one for Mrs. Seagrave and the children and the other for the male members of the family.

Having now entered into a house guarded on all sides by a fortification, the island party was completely free from any anxiety or fear.

Ready put a big cask inside the stockade to fill it up with water. In times of danger, they could not go to the spring nearby to fetch water. Their time was now fully employed in shifting the bedding and utensils. A neat out-house of plank was set up as kitchen for Juno. Another whole week was employed in dividing the stores of least consequence from those of more importance. The salt provisions, flour and garden produce were put into the old house; the casks of powder and most of the cartridges were also stowed in for security. But a cask of beef, of pork and flour and all the iron work and nails, and canvas, etc., were also carried into the new house. Ready took care, by degrees, to fill the large water-butt full of water and had fixed into the bottom a spigot for drawing the water off.

Being now bent upon stocking every kind of article into the new building,—William and Ready succeeded in turning six more turtles to add to their stock. They asked Juno to hoard up as much of fuel as possible in their new residence. After taking a careful survey with the telescope in the evening, they came back, fastened the door of the stockade and went to sleep.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SAVAGES LAND

ANOTHER week passed away, during which Ready repaired the boat and William and Mr. Seagrave were busy digging up the garden. It was also a busy week at the house, as they had not washed the linen for some time. Mrs. Seagrave and Juno and even little Caroline were hard at work, and Master Tommy was more useful than ever he had been, going for the water as they required it and watching little Albert.

Some days passed by. One morning the stock was inspected and it was doing well and promising to increase. Many of the bananas and guavas had ripened and withered, but there were enough to carry home. Having filled up the boat with fruits and yams, Ready and William returned to the bay. Before they arrived, the sky clouded over and threatened a storm. It did not, however, rain till after they had landed, when a smart shower announced the commencement of the rainy season. The following day was beautifully fine, and everything appeared refreshed by the rain which had fallen. Just before the day dawned, the very next day, Ready and William went to the beach and applied the telescope to their eyes. As Ready kept the spy glass to his eye for some time without speaking, William said, "Do you see anything, Ready, that you look so long in that direction?"

"Either my old eyes deceive me, or I fear that I do," replied Ready, "but a few minutes more will decide."

"Yes Master William, I am right, I thought that those dark patches I saw were their brown grass sails."

"Sails of what, Ready?" said William hastily.

"Of the Indian canoes, Master William; I knew that they would come. Take the glass and look yourself. My eye is quite dim from straining it so long."

William sighted at a distance, twenty or thirty canoes of the savages with twenty or thirty men in each.

William cried out at once, "What must we do Ready? How frightened my poor mother will be! I am afraid we can do nothing against such a number."

But Ready encouraged him by saying that they could beat them off with their arms and ammunition, though they might be in large numbers. They had nothing but clubs and spears to fight with.

The savages, could not pierce through their stockade, nor could they climb over it, and they could kill them outright with their guns from behind their defence.

"They cannot land in less than two hours," said Ready. "However there is no time to be lost. While I watch them for a few minutes, run up to the house and beckon your father to come down here. Master William, get all the muskets ready, and bring the cases of powder and made-up cartridges from the old house into the stockade. Call Juno and she will help you.

After executing that important work, you had better come down and join us."

In a few minutes after William had gone, Mr. Seagrave made his appearance and examined the fleet of canoes with the spying glass. He exclaimed at once.

"It is, indeed, dreadful odds to contend against such a number of savages."

At length he put his trust in God, and determined to fight them to the last moment, even if the struggle continued for a few days. "Do you think we have any chance against such a force?" asked Mr. Seagrave.

"Yes, Sir. Three muskets behind a stockade are almost a match for all their clubs and spears, provided none of us is wounded. I believe we have everything we want in the stockade. Juno has sufficient fuel and the large butt of water will last us two or three weeks at least."

As they walked up to the house, they proposed to carry everything to the stockade from the old house. All the provisions and other useful articles were carried to the stronghold. When Mr. Seagrave broke the news to his wife, she received it calmly, and told him that it had not come upon her altogether unawares and that she would do what lay in her power. What she wanted in strength, she would make up in energy.

As they could have a very good view of the canoes from the old house, Ready examined them with the glass, every time that he returned from rolling up a cask to the stockade. Everyone worked hard; even Mrs. Seagrave did all she

could, as it was a question of life and death. In an hour they had got into the fortification all that they most cared for, and the canoes were still about six or seven miles off.

"We have a good hour before they arrive Sir," said Ready, "and even then, the reefs will puzzle them not a little; I doubt if they will disembark under two hours. We have plenty of time for to do all we wish to do. Juno, go for the wheels, and William, come down with the spear and we will have some of the turtles into the stockade. Mr. Seagrave, I do not require your assistance, so if you will have the kindness to get out the muskets and examine the flints."

"Yes, and then you have to load them," replied Mrs. Seagrave: "Juno and I can do that at all events, ready for you to fire them."

Then they rolled the casks, and upheaved them by the sides of the stockade, and fixed up deal planks to stand upon, just high enough to enable them to see over the top of the palisades and to fire at the enemy. Mrs. Seagrave and Juno were taught how to load a mustket.

Then they took a hasty breakfast, and went to their morning devotions, and prayed heartily for succour in that time of need. Mrs. Seagrave pressed her children in her arms, but kept up her spirits wonderfully.

"This suspense is worse," said she at last, "I wish that they were come."

During the conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave within the stockade, William and Ready were watching the motions of the savages.

A large number of them landed out of ten of the canoes, and the others were following their example as fast as they could, forcing their way through the reefs. The savages were all painted, with their war-cloaks and feathers on, and armed with spears and clubs, evidently having come, with no peaceful intentions. First, they occupied themselves with beaching the canoes and as they were very large and heavy, this was a work of 'some few minutes' employment for the whole of them.

William, who minutely examined them with the telescope said to Ready, "What a fierce, cruel set of wretches they appear to be! If they overpower us they will certainly kill us."

"Of that there is no doubt, Master William; but we must fight hard and not let them overpower us. Kill us they certainly will, and I am not sure that they may not eat us afterwards, but that is of little consequence."

William shuddered at the idea of the savages overpowering and killing them. He informed Ready that he saw another vessel under sail, just as they turned away from the sea-shore. Ready quieted him by saying that the ship he saw might be one of the canoes of the savages which had been separated from them. Another half-minute, and they arrived at the door of the stockade. They entered and shut the door and then barricaded it with the poles which they had fitted to the inner door-posts.

"That is secure enough," observed Ready, "and now we must trust to Heaven and our own exertions."

The loud yells of the savages struck terror into the heart of Mrs. Seagrave. Mr. Seagrave had been employed making the holes between the palisades large enough to admit the barrel of the muskets, so that they could fire at the savages without being exposed, while Ready and William, with their muskets loaded, were on the look out for their approach. After completely demolishing the old house, the savages came towards the stockade, being led by one of the women that had escaped from the island. They stopped all of a sudden, surprised by the fortification in front of them. Their progress being checked, they crowded together and talked as to how they should proceed. "Now Master William," said Ready, "although I intend to fight as hard as I can, yet I always feel a dislike to begin first. I shall therefore show myself over the palisades, and if they attack me, I shall then fire with a quiet conscience."

"But take care they don't hit you, Ready."

Ready now stood upon the plank within so as to show himself to the savages, who gave a tremendous yell on seeing him. And, as they advanced, a dozen spears were thrown at him with so true an aim, that, had he not instantly dodged behind the stockade, he must have been wounded or killed. Three or four spears remained quivering in the palisades just below the top. The others went over it and fell down

inside the stockade at the farther end. Mr. Seagrave at once fired and the tall chief of the cannibals fell down dead.

The fight between the two parties had now begun in all seriousness. Ready and William also fired, and two more of the assailants were seen to drop amidst the yells of their companions. Juno and Mrs. Seagrave handed up the other muskets, which were ready loaded, and took those discharged. The spears now flew through the air and it was well that they could fire from the stockade without exposing their persons, or they would have had but little chance. The yells increased and the savages began to attack on every quarter. The most active, who climbed like cats, actually succeeded in gaining the top of the palisades. But as soon as their heads appeared above, they were fired with so sure an aim that they dropped down dead outside. This combat lasted for more than an hour, when the savages, having lost a great many men, drew off from the assault. And the party within the stronghold had time to breathe freely.

"They have not gained much in this bout at all events," said Ready, "it was well fought on our side and, Master William, you behaved certainly very well, as if you had been brought up to it. I don't think you ever missed your man once."

"Do you think they will go away now?" said Mrs. Seagrave.

"Oh, no, Madam, not yet; they will try us every way before they leave us. You see they

are very brave men, and it is clear that they know what gun-powder is, or they would have been more astonished and frightened, even when they had heard the sound of our guns," said Ready.

The savages sat round in a circle, under a tree and made speeches among themselves. Evidently they were discussing the plan to be adopted.

"Well, I am very thirsty at all events," said William, "Juno, bring me a little water."

Juno went to the water-tub to comply with William's request, and in a few minutes came back in great consternation.

"Oh massa! Oh missy! no water; water all gone."

"Water all gone!" cried Ready, and all of them in a breath.

"Yes: not one little drop in the cask."

"I filled it up to the top!" exclaimed Ready very gravely; "the tub did not leak, that I am sure of, how can this have happened?" Everybody looked very grave. The fact was that all of them perceived the danger of their position. If the savages did not leave the island soon, they would either have to perish of thirst or to surrender. In the latter case, all their lives would most certainly be sacrificed.

X It was Tommy's doing again. Pleased with the praise of being so quick in bringing water when they used him while washing clothes, Tommy had taken out the spigot of the cask and drawn it all off. He was now crying and promising not to take the water again.

"His promises come too late," observed Mr. Seagrave. "Well, it is the will of Heaven that all our careful arrangements and preparations against this attack should be defeated by the idleness of a child and we must submit. —

Ready, fearing the night attack of the savages more than that by day, took the necessary precautions. By nailing planks from cocoanut tree to cocoanut tree above the present stockade, he wanted to make a great portion of it much higher and more difficult to climb over. A large fire was then made to burn, so that they might not fight in complete darkness. To make it bright, plenty of tar was poured over the fire.

The children were now crying aloud for water. It was really a sore spectacle to see. Ready remained on the look-out. Poor Mrs. Seagrave had a difficult and most painful task to keep the children quiet under such severe privation. The weather was still warm and sultry. Dinner or supper they had none, for there was nothing but salt pork and beef and live turtle, and by Ready's advice, they did not eat, as it would only increase their desire to drink.

The poor children suffered much; little Albert wailed and cried for "water, water." Caroline knew that there was none, and was quiet, poor little girl, although she suffered much; as for Tommy, the author of all this misery, he was the most impatient and roared for some time, till William, quite angry at his behaviour, gave him a smart box on the ear, and he reduced his roar to a whimper, from fear of receiving another.

CHAPTER XX

THE SCARCITY OF WATER AND RELIEF ARRIVES

THE moaning of the children for water was, very soon after dusk, drowned by the yells of the savages who, as Ready had foretold, now advanced to the night attack. Every part of the stockade was at once assailed and attempts were made to climb into it. Their object was to obtain an entrance by dint of numbers. It was well that Ready had taken the precaution of nailing the deal planks above the original stockade, or the savages would have gained their object. As it was, before the flames of the fire gave them sufficient light, three or four of them had climbed up and had been shot by William and Mr. Seagrave.

When the fire burnt more brightly, the men outside were more easily aimed at, and a great many fell in their attempts to get over. The attack continued for nearly an hour, when at last, satisfied that they could not succeed, the savages once more withdrew, carrying with them the dead and wounded.

Ready now wanted to ascertain thier movements by making a look-out, by ascending a tall tree, near them.

"You see, Sir, that cocoanut tree," continued Ready, pointing to one of those to which the palisades were fastened, "is much taller than any of the others. Now by driving spikenails into the trunk at about a foot apart, we might ascend it with ease and it would command the view of the whole bay; we then could know what the enemy are about."

Lest he should be attacked by some one still lurking underneath the stockade, the old man would not do it before daylight. Mr. Seagrave then went into the house. Sending William away to sleep, Ready kept watch, till Mr. Seagrave came and relieved him.

"I can't sleep, Ready. I am mad with thirst," replied William.

"Yes, Sir; it is very painful—I feel it myself very much, but what must those poor children feel! I pity them most."

"I pity my mother most, Ready," replied William; "it must be agony to her to witness their sufferings and not be able to relieve them."

"Yes, indeed, it must be terrible, Master William, to a mother's feelings; but perhaps the savages will be off to-morrow, and then we shall forget all our privations."

In the meantime, Mr. Seagrave found the children still crying for water, notwithstanding the coaxing and soothing of Mrs. Seagrave, who was shedding tears as she hung over little Albert.

Juno had gone out, and had dug with a spade as deep as she could, with a faint hope that some water might be found. Vain was her attempt, and she returned mournful and disconsolate. After helping his wife to soothe the children to the best of his power, Mr. Seagrave returned to old Ready to take up his duty.

"Ready, I had rather a hundred times be attacked by these savages and defend this place, than be in that house for even a few minutes and witness the sufferings of my children and wife."

"I do not doubt it, Sir," replied Ready "but cheer up, and let us hope for the best. I think it very probable that the savages will leave this island after this second defeat."

"I wish I could think so, Ready; it would make me very happy; but I have come out to take the watch, Ready. Will you not sleep for a while?"

"I wish, Sir, if you please, to take a little sleep. Call me in two hours; it will then be broad daylight, and I can go to work, and you can get some repose yourself."

"I am too anxious to sleep—I think so at least."

"Master William said he was too thirsty to sleep, Sir, but, poor fellow, he is now fast asleep."

"Good-night, Ready."

Mr. Seagrave took his station on the plank and was left to his own reflections, after sending away Ready. He had been however well schooled by adversity and had lately brought himself to bow in submission to the will of Heaven whatever it may be. He prayed earnestly and fervently that they might be delivered from the dangers and sufferings which threatened them.

At daybreak, William ascended to the top of a cocoanut tree and took a survey. He saw the old house pulled down, and many of the savages lying down, covered up with their cloaks. He remained there for some minutes, and then came down to Ready and said:

"They are all up now and swarming like bees. I counted two hundred and sixty of the men in their war-cloaks and feather head-dresses.

There are none at the canoes except eight or ten women, who are beating their heads or doing something of the kind."

Ready replied that they were lamenting over the dead.

The day after the fight was passed in keeping a look-out upon the savages, and awaiting a fresh attack from them. They could perceive from the top of the cocoanut tree that the savages held a council of war in the forenoon. In the afternoon, the assembly broke up, and the savages were busy cutting down the cocoanut trees in all directions, and collecting all the brushwood. Ready watched their movements for a long time, and at last came down a little before sunset. He told Mr. Seagrave that the savages were busy gathering all the brushwood and cutting down cocoanut trees and making large faggots. It was their idea to pile them up outside the palisades, so high as to enable them to walk upon them, or else to set fire to them and burn the inmates alive.

But Ready and his party did not lose courage. Mr. Seagrave asked Ready, how suffering as they did for want of water, they could possibly keep up their strength to meet them in suffocating smoke and flame. They must drop with sheer exhaustion.

"We must always hope for the best, and do our best, Mr. Seagrave," said Ready; "and recollect that should anything happen to me during the conflict and if there is any chance of your being overpowered, you must take advantage of the smoke to escape into the woods, and find

your way to the tents. The savages, if they get possession of our stockade, may not think of looking for you."

Ready then told Mr. Seagrave that he would keep watch and call him at twelve o'clock. During these two days they had eaten very little. A turtle had been killed and peases fried. But eating only added to their thirst, and even the children refused the meat. Their sufferings were now really dreadful, and poor Mrs. Seagrave was almost frantic.

As soon as Mr. Seagrave had gone into the house, Ready called William and informed him of his intention to bring water in a seven-gallon cask. He determined to attempt it even at the risk of meeting with danger outside. He could not bear to see the children thirsting for water. It was the time best suited to the attempt, as the savages were then eating. If at all he should meet with anybody outside, it would be a woman.

Ready took the cask and put on the head-dress and war-clock of a savage who had fallen dead inside the stockade. Taking the spear in his hand, the poles which barred the door were softly removed by William, and after ascertaining that no one was concealed beneath the palisades, Ready pressed William's hand and setting off across the clear space outside the stockade gained the cocoanut tree. William, as directed, closed the door, passed one pole through the inner door-posts for security, and remained on the watch. He was in an awful state of suspense, listening

to the slightest noise. Even the slight rustling by the wind of the cocoanut boughs above him made him start. There he continued for some minutes, his gun ready cocked by his side.

At last he thought he heard footsteps coming very softly. William had his hand upon the pole, to slip it on one side and open the door, when he heard a scuffle and a fall close to the door, and soon after Ready called him by name. William sprang out with his musket. He found Ready struggling with a savage, whose spear was at Ready's breast. In a second William shot the savage down.

"Take the water in quick, William," said Ready, in a faint voice. "I will contrive to crawl in if I can."

William caught up the barrel of water, and took it in. He then hastened to Ready, who was on his knees. Mr. Seagrave, hearing the musket fired, had run out and, finding his son supporting Ready, caught hold of his other arm, and both led him tottering into the stockade. The door was then secured.

"Are you hurt, Ready?" said William.

"Yes, dear boy, yes; hurt to death, I fear. His spear went through my breast. Water quick, water!"

"Alas that we had some!" said Mr. Seagrave.

"We have, papa," replied William, "but it has cost us dearly."

William at once brought a little water to Ready, who drank it with eagerness.

"Now, Master William, lay me down on those cocoanut boughs; go and give some water to others. When you all have drunk, then come to me again.. Don't tell Mrs. Seagrave that I am hurt. Do as I beg of you."

William asked his father to take the water in, after quenching his own thirst. He did not wish to leave Ready to himself in his present condition.

After satisfying those in the house with water, Mr. Seagrave returned to Ready and ascertained the nature of the wound. When Ready drank a little more water, he turned on his side and threw up a quantity of blood. He was now a little better, and his wound was at once bound up. The spear had gone deep into the lungs and it appeared that it was fatal. The stricken man, who at first appeared much exhausted with being moved about, gradually recovered so far as to be able to speak in a low voice, when Mrs. Seagrave came to him.

"Where is that brave, kind man?" cried she, "that I may bless him and thank him."

Mr. Seagrave briefly related what had occurred. Mrs. Seagrave knelt by his side, took his hand, burst into tears, and said that she would never forget his services to her and hers.

"Don't weep for me, dear madam," said Ready: "my days are numbered. I am only sorry that I cannot be any more useful to you."

Mrs. Seagrave then bent over Ready, and kissing his forehead, rose from her knees, and retired weeping into the house.

Mr. Seagrave and William raised Ready's head a little, and left him in quiet, thinking that it would do him good. And now, father and son talked about their position and how they must rise to the occasion and fight the savages next day to save their lives and the lives of those most dear to them. William, finding Ready dozing, went in and arranged for a meal. They ate it with so much relish that they thought they had not taken one such in their lives. But they were not happy, as Ready, their friend and protector was not there to keep them company.

It was nearly daylight, when William, who had several times been softly up to Ready to ascertain whether he slept or not, found him with his eyes open.

"How do you find yourself, Ready?" said William.

"I am quiet and easy, Master William, and without much pain. But I think I am sinking and shall not last long. Recollect that, if you are obliged to escape from the stockade, William, you take no heed of me, but leave me where I am. I cannot live, and were you to move me, I should only die the sooner."

"I had rather die with you than leave you, Ready."

"No Sir, that it is wrong and foolish: you must save your parents, brothers and sisters. Promise me that you will do as I wish, or you will make me miserable."

William squeezed Ready's hand. His heart was too full for utterance. Ready advised him to be on the look out.

At dawn of day William perceived that every savage shouldered a faggot and commenced to advance towards the stockade.—The muskets were all loaded, and Mrs. Seagrave and Juno took their posts below the planking to reload them as fast as they were fired.

“We must fire upon them as soon as we are sure of not missing them, William,” said Mr. Seagrave, “for the more we check their advance, the better.”

When the first savages were within fifty yards they both fired and two of the men dropped. They continued to fire as their assailants came up, with great success for the first ten minutes. After that the savages advanced in a large body, and took the precaution to hold the faggots in front of them, as a sort of protection. By these means, they gained the stockade in safety, and commenced laying their faggots. Mr. Seagrave and William still kept up an incessant fire on them, but not with so much effect as before.

Although many fell, the faggots were gradually heaped up, till they almost reached to the holes between the palisades through which they pointed their muskets. As the savages contrived to slope them down from the stockade to the ground, it was evident that they meant to mount up and take them by escalade. After laying the faggots, the savages retired for a while. Before making the final charge, they discussed among themselves as to the procedure to be adopted. Soon they advanced from the

cocoanut grove in a solid mass. They raised a yell, which struck terror into Mrs. Seagrave and Juno; yet they flinched not. The fire of the guns was answered by loud yells and the savages had already reached the bottom of the sloping pile of faggots.

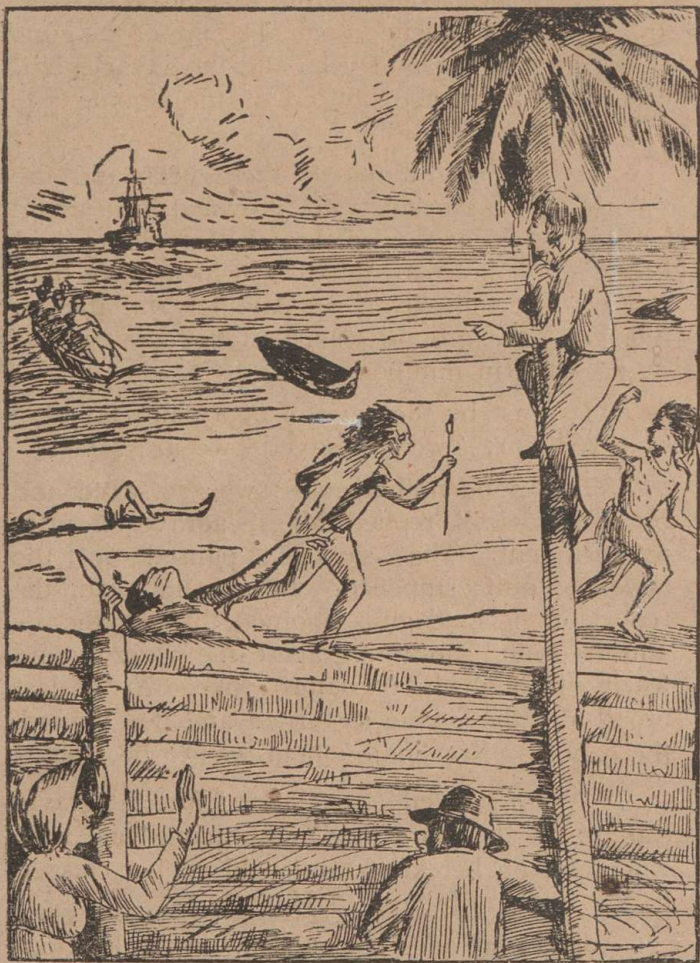
Just at that moment, their yells and the reports of the muskets were drowned by a much louder report, followed by the crackling and breaking of the cocoanut trees, which made both parties start with surprise. Another and another followed; the ground was ploughed up and the savages fell in numbers.

"It must be the cannon of a ship, father," said William; "we are saved—we are saved!"

"It can be nothing else; we are saved and by a miracle," replied Mr. Seagrave in utter astonishment. The savages paused in the advance, quite stupefied. Again and again the report of the loud guns boomed through the air and the round shot and grape came whizzing and tearing through the cocoanut grove. At the last broadside the savages turned and fled towards the canoes. Not one of them was to be seen.

"We are saved!" exclaimed Mr. Seagrave, leaping off the plank and embracing his wife, who sank on her knees and held up her clasped hands in thankfulness to Heaven.

William at once hastened up to the look-out on the cocoanut tree, and cried, "A large schooner, father! She is firing at the savages, who are in the canoes. They are falling off in



“A LARGE SCHOONER FATHER ! SHE IS FIRING AT
THE SAVAGES, WHO ARE IN THE CANOES.”

every direction and some have plunged into the water. There is a boat full of armed men coming on shore. Three canoes of the savages have escaped full of men. Two of the canoes have sunk."

Finding the people of the ship coming towards the island, he quickly descended from the tree and unbarred the door of the stockade. He threw open the door, and a second after he found himself in the arms of Captain Osborn.

CHAPTER XXII

CAPTAIN OSBORN

How it was that Captain Osborn made his appearance at so fortunate a moment can be stated briefly. It will be recollected how a brig was seen making for the island some months before. We know also the great disappointment that the party on the island experienced in her not making her appearance again, especially as those on board had seen the flags which they had hoisted.

The fact was that those on board the brig had not only seen their signals, but also had read the name of the *Pacific* upon the flag hoisted. But the heavy gale which came on, drove them away. Besides, the Captain did not consider that he should do his duty to his owners if he lost so much time in beating up for the island again; the cargo which he had on board was one which would lose in value if it were not one of the first in the market. He therefore decided upon making all sail for Sydney, to which port he was bound.

When Captain Osborn was laid into the boat by Mackintosh and the seamen of the *Pacific*, he was still insensible. But he gradually recovered, though the men faced a stormy night and had great difficulty in keeping the boat afloat. When he came to his senses, he was acquainted with everything that had happened. The next morning the wind abated and they were fortunate enough to fall in with a vessel bound for Tasmania, which took them all safely on board.

From the account given by Mackintosh, Captain Osborn believed that the Seagrave family had perished. As the ship reached Tasmania, the Captain was so much struck with the beauty and fertility of the country, that he resolved to settle there and was not inclined to go to sea again after such danger as he had experienced. He did accordingly and had stocked his farm with cattle, and had gone to Sydney in a schooner, to await the arrival of a large order from England which he had sent for. When the brig arrived at Sydney, the Captain of the ship reported to Captain Osborn the existence of some white people on a small island and said that they had seen a flag hoisted with the name *Pacific* on it. Captain Osborn at once learnt the latitude and longitude of the island, so that he might know the exact position of the place. He was now convinced that by some miracle, the Seagrave family had been preserved. He resolved to save the wrecked people at any cost. He therefore went to the Governor of New South

Wales and made him acquainted with the facts which he had learnt, and the Governor instantly replied that the government's armed schooner was at his service, if he himself would go in quest of his former shipmates. Captain Osborn at once acquiesced; and in a few days the schooner sailed for her destination. She arrived off the island on the same morning that the fleet of canoes with the savages effected their landing. And we know also that William had seen this vessel off the garden-point. Had Ready had time, he would have discovered that it was the schooner and not, as he supposed, a canoe, which had separated from the other canoes of the savages during the night.

Captain Osborn was slowly driving the schooner towards the island. On hearing the firing of the muskets, he became most anxious to land as early as possible. But the commander of the ship considered that it would be rash to make an attempt, as they were only twenty-five against a good number of savages. So he resolved to bring the schooner to an anchor to protect his men; but it fell calm that day and only the following morning, just as the savages were making their last attempt upon the stockade, the schooner managed to get in. As soon as she did so, she opened fire and the result was the flight of the savages in different directions. A boat was then manned, and Captain Osborn led the party to the island and came so opportunely to the relief of the besieged.

CHAPTER XXIII

PREPARATIONS FOR LEAVING THE ISLAND

THE joy of Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave, when they beheld their old friend, Captain Osborn, knew no bounds. All danger was now over. The party who had landed with him went round under the command of the mate, to ascertain if there were any more of the savages to be found. But except the dead and dying, all had escaped in some of the smaller canoes. Captain Osborn remained with the Seagraves, and in a few words told them his own story. Mr. Seagrave then informed him of the state of poor old Ready, whom William had gone to attend, leaving Captain Osborn with his parents.

Captain Osborn received the news with a mournful countenance and hurried to see his friend. Ready recognised him immediately by his voice, as his eyes were getting dim and his heart failing.

"That is Captain Osborn, I know," said Ready in a faint and failing voice. "You have come in good time, Sir, you have the thanks of a dying man."

But the captain, hoping to cure Ready, sent for the surgeon on board the ship. Ready intervened and said, "No surgeon can help me, Sir. In a few minutes I shall be in Eternity. I thank God for the preservation of the family, but Captain Osborn, my time is come."

The old man then joined his hands across his breast and remained for some time in prayer.

Much affected by the scene all of them left Ready.

A few minutes afterwards, Ready opened his eyes and called William to his side. The last request to him was to be buried under the trees on the mound above the well. He wished that poor Tommy should not know that he had been the cause of his death. He summoned all to his side to take a last farewell of them.

All stood round Ready in unspeakable sorrow. Ready called them all by name one after another. They knelt down as he called them, and kissed him. He bade them farewell in a faint voice which at last was changed to a mere whisper. They still remained in silence and in tears standing round him. William alone was kneeling and holding his hand, when the old man's head fell back, and he was no more!

"It is all over", said Mr. Seagrave, "and he has I have no doubt gone to receive the reward of a good and just man. Happy are those who die in the Lord!"

Poor Juno cried as if her heart would break and gave vent to her feelings.

Meanwhile the commander of the schooner landed with another party of men, whom he despatched to scour the island in pursuit of any savages who might remain concealed in the woods, but they could find none. Captain Osborn introduced him to Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave, and arrangements were commenced for embarkation. It was decided that the following day should be passed in packing up and getting on

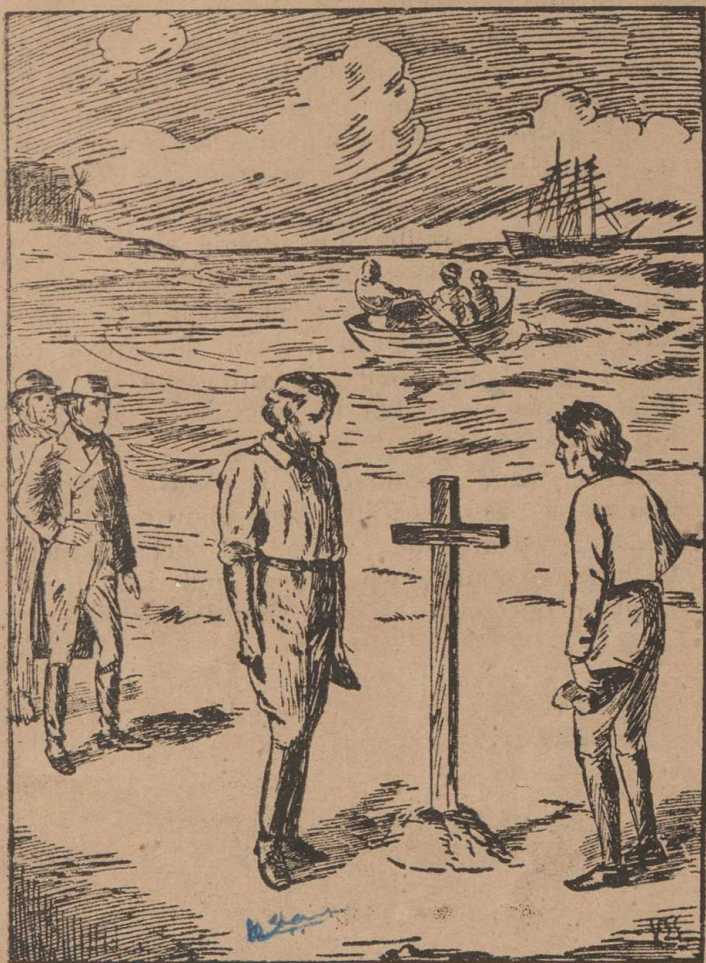
board their luggage, and that the day after the family should embark. Mr. Seagrave refused to take anything with him which might prove useful to those who, like them, might be wrecked on the island at any future time.

Now that they had a little time, bitterly did they lament the loss of their old friend and deplore that he had not survived to sail with them to Sydney. They had always indulged the hope that old Ready would become part of their future household. They decided to attend to his last wishes religiously.

The next morning they were up early, and packed up the articles, which still remained to be carried on board. Mr. Seagrave read the prayers, and sat for the last breakfast on the island. Few words were exchanged, for there was a solemn grief upon all of them. A few minutes afterwards, Captain Osborn and the commander of the schooner made their appearance. The body of Ready was put into the coffin which was brought on shore and screwed down. William attended the process, and tears trickled fast down his cheeks as the lid was put over and as he saw the last remains of his old friend.

In half-an-hour all was prepared and the family were summoned from the house. It was arranged that William, Mr. Seagrave, Captain Osborn and Juno should be the pall-bearers.

The coffin, covered with the Union Jack, was raised on the shoulders of six of the seamen, who bore it to the grave followed by all. Mr. Seagrave read the funeral service and the grave

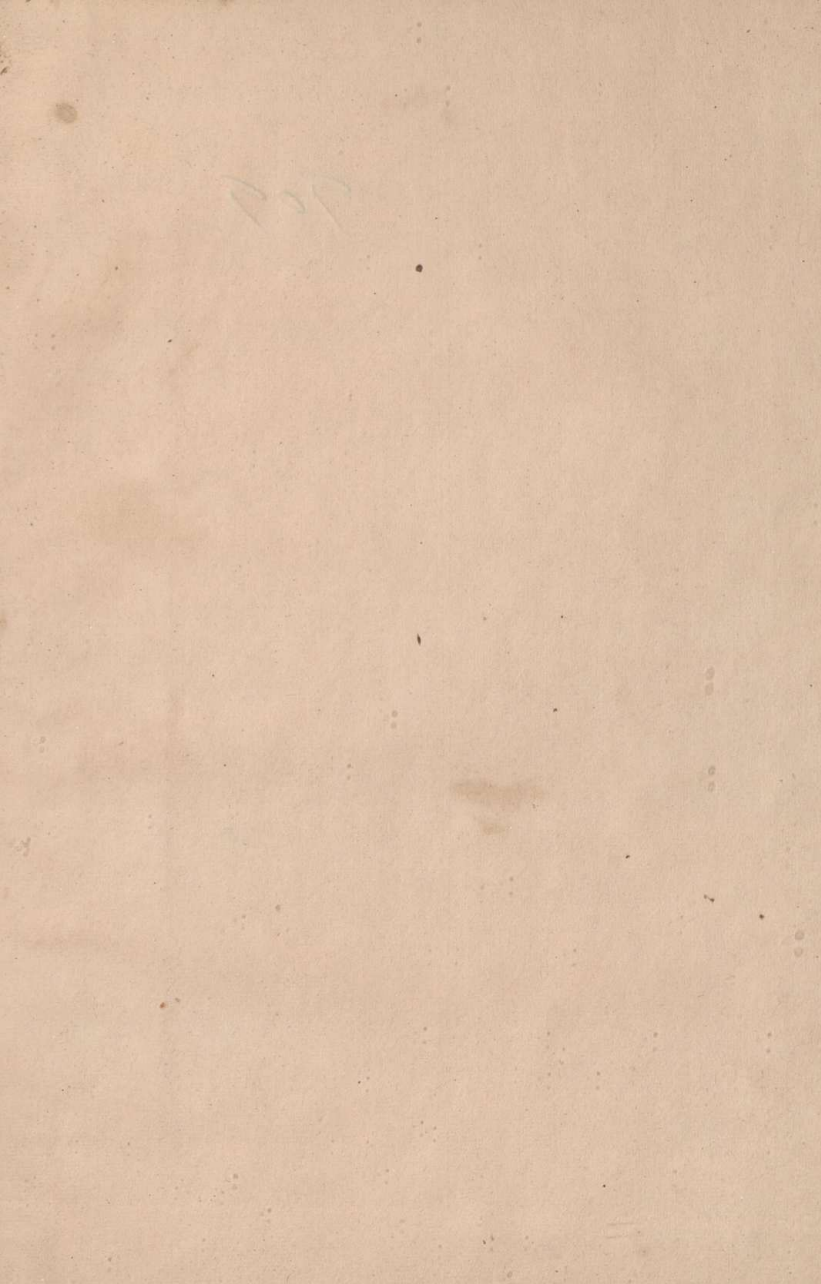


MR. SEAGRAVE ATTENDED THE FUNERAL SERVICE

was then filled up, and they all walked back in silence. At the request of William, the commander of the schooner ordered an oak paling to be put round the grave and a board on which was written the name of the deceased and the day of his death. As soon as this last service was done, they all embarked and were soon on the deck of the schooner.

At last the ship set sail in fair weather and every object on the island gradually became less distinct in the distance. Still their eyes were turned in that direction, where the grave of Ready was lying. William said, with the spy glass to his eyes, that he was taking his last farewell of Ready's grave.

The wind continued fair, and, after a favourable passage of little more than four weeks they arrived at Sydney cove, the port to which they were bound, when they embarked from England on board the good ship *Pacific*.



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