

explicit" suggested lady helena. "here it is, then," said lord glenarvan, "and that is in a language we all know."

"there are figures!" exclaimed lady helena. "look!" "let us go steadily to work," said lord glenarvan, "and begin at the beginning. i think we can make out from the incomplete words in the first line that a threemast vessel is in question, and there is little doubt about the name; we get that from the fragments of the other papers; it is the britannia. as to the next two words, gone and austral, it is only austral that has any meaning to us." "but that is a valuable scrap of information," said john mangles. "the shipwreck occurred in the southern hemisphere." "that's a wide world," said the major. "well, we'll go on," resumed glenarvan. "here is the word above; that is clearly the root of the verb aboard. the poor men have landed somewhere; but where? contindoes that mean continent? cruel?" "cruel!" interrupted john mangles. "i see now what graus is part of in the second document. it is grausam, the word in german for cruel!" "let's go on," said lord glenarvan, becoming quite excited over his task, as the incomplete words began to fill up and develop their meaning. "india is it india where they have been shipwrecked? and what can this word ongit be part of? ah! i see it is longitude; and here is the latitude 37 degrees 11'. that is the precise indication at last, then!" "but we haven't the longitude," objected mc nabbs. "but we can't get everything, my dear major; and it is something at all events, to have the exact latitude. the french document is decidedly the most complete of the three; but it is plain enough that each is the literal translation of the other, for they all contain exactly the same number of lines. what we have to do now is to put together all the words we have found, and translate them into one language, and try to ascertain their most probable and logical sense." "well, what language shall we choose?" asked the major. "i think we had better keep to the french, since that was the most complete document of the three." "your lordship is right," said john mangles, "and besides, we're all familiar with the language." "very well, then, i'll set to work." just at that moment one of the sailors came to inform the captain that they were about entering the firth of clyde, and to ask what were his orders. "what are your lordship's intentions?" said john mangles, addressing lord glenarvan. "to get to dunbarton as quickly as possible, john; and lady helena will return to malcolm castle, while i go on to london and lay this document before the admiralty." the sailor received orders accordingly, and went out to deliver them to the mate. "now, friends," said lord glenarvan, "let us go on with our investigations, for we are on the track of a great catastrophe, and the lives of several human beings depend on our sagacity. we must give our whole minds to the solution of this enigma." "first of all, there are three very distinct things to be considered in this document: the things we know, the things we may conjecture, the things we do not know." "what are those we know?" we know that on the 7th of june a threemast vessel, the britannia of glasgow, foundered; that two sailors and the captain threw this document into the sea in 37 degrees 11' latitude, and they entreat help.

"exactly so," said the major. "what are those now we may conjecture?" continued glenarvan. "that the shipwreck occurred in the southern seas; and here i would draw your attention at once to the incomplete word gone. doesn't the name of the country strike you even in the mere mention of it?" "patagonia!" exclaimed lady helena. "undoubtedly." "but is patagonia crossed by the 37th parallel?" asked the major. "that is easily ascertained," said the captain, opening a map of south america. "yes, it is; patagonia just touches the 37th parallel. it cuts through araucania, goes along over the pampas to the north, and loses itself in the atlantic." "well, let us proceed then with our conjectures. the two sailors and the captain landland where? continon a continent; on a continent, mark you, not an island. what becomes of them? there are two letters here providentially which give a clue to their fate; that must mean prisoners, and cruel indian is evidently the meaning of the next two words. these unfortunate men are captives in the hands of cruel indians. don't you see it? don't the words seem to come of themselves, and fill up the blanks? isn't the document quite clear now? isn't the sense self-evident?" glenarvan spoke in a tone of absolute conviction, and his enthusiastic confidence appeared contagious, for the others all exclaimed, too, "yes, it is evident, quite evident!" after an instant lord edward said again, "to my own mind the hypothesis is so plausible, that i have no doubt whatever the event occurred on the coast of patagonia, but still i will have inquiries made in glasgow as to the destination of the britannia, and we shall know if it is possible she could have been wrecked on those shores." "oh, there's no need to send so far to find out that," said john mangles. "i have the mercantile and shipping gazette here, and we'll see the name on the list, and all about it." "do look at once, then," said lord glenarvan. the file of papers for the year 1862 was soon brought, and john began to turn over the leaves rapidly, running down each page with his eye in search of the name required. but his quest was not long, for in a few minutes he called out: "i've got it! may 30, 1862, perucallao, with cargo for glasgow, the britannia, captain grant." "grant!" exclaimed lord glenarvan. "that is the adventurous scotchman that attempted to