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The Cruise of the Snark

by Jack London

February, 2001 [Etext #2512]

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THE CRUISE OF THE "SNARK"

CHAPTER I--FOREWORD

It began in the swimming pool at Glen Ellen. Between swims it was

our wont to come out and lie in the sand and let our skins breathe

the warm air and soak in the sunshine. Roscoe was a yachtsman. I

had followed the sea a bit. It was inevitable that we should talk

about boats. We talked about small boats, and the seaworthiness of

small boats. We instanced Captain Slocum and his three years'

voyage around the world in the Spray.

We asserted that we were not afraid to go around the world in a

small boat, say forty feet long. We asserted furthermore that we

would like to do it. We asserted finally that there was nothing in

this world we'd like better than a chance to do it.

"Let us do it," we said . . . in fun.

Then I asked Charmian privily if she'd really care to do it, and she

said that it was too good to be true.

The next time we breathed our skins in the sand by the swimming pool

I said to Roscoe, "Let us do it."

I was in earnest, and so was he, for he said:

"When shall we start?"

I had a house to build on the ranch, also an orchard, a vineyard,

and several hedges to plant, and a number of other things to do. We

thought we would start in four or five years. Then the lure of the

adventure began to grip us. Why not start at once? We'd never be

younger, any of us. Let the orchard, vineyard, and hedges be

growing up while we were away. When we came back, they would be

ready for us, and we could live in the barn while we built the

house.

So the trip was decided upon, and the building of the Snark began.

We named her the Snark because we could not think of any other name-

-this information is given for the benefit of those who otherwise

might think there is something occult in the name.

Our friends cannot understand why we make this voyage. They

shudder, and moan, and raise their hands. No amount of explanation

can make them comprehend that we are moving along the line of least

resistance; that it is easier for us to go down to the sea in a

small ship than to remain on dry land, just as it is easier for them

to remain on dry land than to go down to the sea in the small ship.

This state of mind comes of an undue prominence of the ego. They

cannot get away from themselves. They cannot come out of themselves

long enough to see that their line of least resistance is not

necessarily everybody else's line of least resistance. They make of

their own bundle of desires, likes, and dislikes a yardstick

wherewith to measure the desires, likes, and dislikes of all

creatures. This is unfair. I tell them so. But they cannot get

away from their own miserable egos long enough to hear me. They

think I am crazy. In return, I am sympathetic. It is a state of

mind familiar to me. We are all prone to think there is something

wrong with the mental processes of the man who disagrees with us.

The ultimate word is I LIKE. It lies beneath philosophy, and is

twined about the heart of life. When philosophy has maundered

ponderously for a month, telling the individual what he must do, the

individual says, in an instant, "I LIKE," and does something else,

and philosophy goes glimmering. It is I LIKE that makes the

drunkard drink and the martyr wear a hair shirt; that makes one man

a reveller and another man an anchorite; that makes one man pursue

fame, another gold, another love, and another God. Philosophy is

very often a man's way of explaining his own I LIKE.

But to return to the Snark, and why I, for one, want to journey in

her around the world. The things I like constitute my set of

values. The thing I like most of all is personal achievement--not

achievement for the world's applause, but achievement for my own

delight. It is the old "I did it! I did it! With my own hands I

did it!" But personal achievement, with me, must be concrete. I'd

rather win a water-fight in the swimming pool, or remain astride a

horse that is trying to get out from under me, than write the great

American novel. Each man to his liking. Some other fellow would

prefer writing the great American novel to winning the water-fight

or mastering the horse.

Possibly the proudest achievement of my life, my moment of highest

living, occurred when I was seventeen. I was in a three-masted

schooner off the coast of Japan. We were in a typhoon. All hands

had been on deck most of the night. I was called from my bunk at

seven in the morning to take the wheel. Not a stitch of canvas was

set. We were running before it under bare poles, yet the schooner

fairly tore along. The seas were all of an eighth of a mile apart,

and the wind snatched the whitecaps from their summits, filling.

The air so thick with driving spray that it was impossible to see

more than two waves at a time. The schooner was almost

unmanageable, rolling her rail under to starboard and to port,

veering and yawing anywhere between south-east and south-west, and

threatening, when the huge seas lifted under her quarter, to broach

to. Had she broached to, she would ultimately have been reported

lost with all hands and no tidings.

I took the wheel. The sailing-master watched me for a space. He

was afraid of my youth, feared that I lacked the strength and the

nerve. But when he saw me successfully wrestle the schooner through

several bouts, he went below to breakfast. Fore and aft, all hands

were below at breakfast. Had she broached to, not one of them would

ever have reached the deck. For forty minutes I stood there alone

at the wheel, in my grasp the wildly careering schooner and the

lives of twenty-two men. Once we were pooped. I saw it coming,

and, half-drowned, with tons of water crushing me, I checked the

schooner's rush to broach to. At the end of the hour, sweating and

played out, I was relieved. But I had done it! With my own hands I

had done my trick at the wheel and guided a hundred tons of wood and

iron through a few million tons of wind and waves.

My delight was in that I had done it--not in the fact that twenty-

two men knew I had done it. Within the year over half of them were

dead and gone, yet my pride in the thing performed was not

diminished by half. I am willing to confess, however, that I do

like a small audience. But it must be a very small audience,

composed of those who love me and whom I love. When I then

accomplish personal achievement, I have a feeling that I am

justifying their love for me. But this is quite apart from the

delight of the achievement itself. This delight is peculiarly my

own and does not depend upon witnesses. When I have done some such

thing, I am exalted. I glow all over. I am aware of a pride in

myself that is mine, and mine alone. It is organic. Every fibre of

me is thrilling with it. It is very natural. It is a mere matter

of satisfaction at adjustment to environment. It is success.

Life that lives is life successful, and success is the breath of its

nostrils. The achievement of a difficult feat is successful

adjustment to a sternly exacting environment. The more difficult

the feat, the greater the satisfaction at its accomplishment. Thus

it is with the man who leaps forward from the springboard, out over

the swimming pool, and with a backward half-revolution of the body,

enters the water head first. Once he leaves the springboard his

environment becomes immediately savage, and savage the penalty it

will exact should he fail and strike the water flat. Of course, the

man does not have to run the risk of the penalty. He could remain

on the bank in a sweet and placid environment of summer air,

sunshine, and stability. Only he is not made that way. In that

swift mid-air moment he lives as he could never live on the bank.

As for myself, I'd rather be that man than the fellows who sit on

the bank and watch him. That is why I am building the Snark. I am

so made. I like, that is all. The trip around the world means big

moments of living. Bear with me a moment and look at it. Here am

I, a little animal called a man--a bit of vitalized matter, one

hundred and sixty-five pounds of meat and blood, nerve, sinew,

bones, and brain,--all of it soft and tender, susceptible to hurt,

fallible, and frail. I strike a light back-handed blow on the nose

of an obstreperous horse, and a bone in my hand is broken. I put my

head under the water for five minutes, and I am drowned. I fall

twenty feet through the air, and I am smashed. I am a creature of

temperature. A few degrees one way, and my fingers and ears and

toes blacken and drop off. A few degrees the other way, and my skin

blisters and shrivels away from the raw, quivering flesh. A few

additional degrees either way, and the life and the light in me go

out. A drop of poison injected into my body from a snake, and I

cease to move--for ever I cease to move. A splinter of lead from a

rifle enters my head, and I am wrapped around in the eternal

blackness.

Fallible and frail, a bit of pulsating, jelly-like life--it is all I

am. About me are the great natural forces--colossal menaces, Titans

of destruction, unsentimental monsters that have less concern for me

than I have for the grain of sand I crush under my foot. They have

no concern at all for me. They do not know me. They are

unconscious, unmerciful, and unmoral. They are the cyclones and

tornadoes, lightning flashes and cloud-bursts, tide-rips and tidal

waves, undertows and waterspouts, great whirls and sucks and eddies,

earthquakes and volcanoes, surfs that thunder on rock-ribbed coasts

and seas that leap aboard the largest crafts that float, crushing

humans to pulp or licking them off into the sea and to death--and

these insensate monsters do not know that tiny sensitive creature,

all nerves and weaknesses, whom men call Jack London, and who

himself thinks he is all right and quite a superior being.

In the maze and chaos of the conflict of these vast and draughty

Titans, it is for me to thread my precarious way. The bit of life

that is I will exult over them. The bit of life that is I, in so

far as it succeeds in baffling them or in bitting them to its

service, will imagine that it is godlike. It is good to ride the

tempest and feel godlike. I dare to assert that for a finite speck

of pulsating jelly to feel godlike is a far more glorious feeling

than for a god to feel godlike.

Here is the sea, the wind, and the wave. Here are the seas, the

winds, and the waves of all the world. Here is ferocious

environment. And here is difficult adjustment, the achievement of

which is delight to the small quivering vanity that is I. I like.

I am so made. It is my own particular form of vanity, that is all.

There is also another side to the voyage of the Snark. Being alive,

I want to see, and all the world is a bigger thing to see than one

small town or valley. We have done little outlining of the voyage.

Only one thing is definite, and that is that our first port of call

will be Honolulu. Beyond a few general ideas, we have no thought of

our next port after Hawaii. We shall make up our minds as we get

nearer, in a general way we know that we shall wander through the

South Seas, take in Samoa, New Zealand, Tasmania, Australia, New

Guinea, Borneo, and Sumatra, and go on up through the Philippines to

Japan. Then will come Korea, China, India, the Red Sea, and the

Mediterranean. After that the voyage becomes too vague to describe,

though we know a number of things we shall surely do, and we expect

to spend from one to several months in every country in Europe.

The Snark is to be sailed. There will be a gasolene engine on

board, but it will be used only in case of emergency, such as in bad

water among reefs and shoals, where a sudden calm in a swift current

leaves a sailing-boat helpless. The rig of the Snark is to be what

is called the "ketch." The ketch rig is a compromise between the

yawl and the schooner. Of late years the yawl rig has proved the

best for cruising. The ketch retains the cruising virtues of the

yawl, and in addition manages to embrace a few of the sailing

virtues of the schooner. The foregoing must be taken with a pinch

of salt. It is all theory in my head. I've never sailed a ketch,

nor even seen one. The theory commends itself to me. Wait till I

get out on the ocean, then I'll be able to tell more about the

cruising and sailing qualities of the ketch.

As originally planned, the Snark was to be forty feet long on the

water-line. But we discovered there was no space for a bath-room,

and for that reason we have increased her length to forty-five feet.

Her greatest beam is fifteen feet. She has no house and no hold.

There is six feet of headroom, and the deck is unbroken save for two

companionways and a hatch for'ard. The fact that there is no house

to break the strength of the deck will make us feel safer in case

great seas thunder their tons of water down on board. A large and

roomy cockpit, sunk beneath the deck, with high rail and self-

bailing, will make our rough-weather days and nights more

comfortable.

There will be no crew. Or, rather, Charmian, Roscoe, and I are the

crew. We are going to do the thing with our own hands. With our

own hands we're going to circumnavigate the globe. Sail her or sink

her, with our own hands we'll do it. Of course there will be a cook

and a cabin-boy. Why should we stew over a stove, wash dishes, and

set the table? We could stay on land if we wanted to do those

things. Besides, we've got to stand watch and work the ship. And

also, I've got to work at my trade of writing in order to feed us

and to get new sails and tackle and keep the Snark in efficient

working order. And then there's the ranch; I've got to keep the

vineyard, orchard, and hedges growing.

When we increased the length of the Snark in order to get space for

a bath-room, we found that all the space was not required by the

bath-room. Because of this, we increased the size of the engine.

Seventy horse-power our engine is, and since we expect it to drive

us along at a nine-knot clip, we do not know the name of a river

with a current swift enough to defy us.

We expect to do a lot of inland work. The smallness of the Snark

makes this possible. When we enter the land, out go the masts and

on goes the engine. There are the canals of China, and the Yang-tse

River. We shall spend months on them if we can get permission from

the government. That will be the one obstacle to our inland

voyaging--governmental permission. But if we can get that

permission, there is scarcely a limit to the inland voyaging we can

do.

When we come to the Nile, why we can go up the Nile. We can go up

the Danube to Vienna, up the Thames to London, and we can go up the

Seine to Paris and moor opposite the Latin Quarter with a bow-line

out to Notre Dame and a stern-line fast to the Morgue. We can leave

the Mediterranean and go up the Rhone to Lyons, there enter the

Saone, cross from the Saone to the Maine through the Canal de

Bourgogne, and from the Marne enter the Seine and go out the Seine

at Havre. When we cross the Atlantic to the United States, we can

go up the Hudson, pass through the Erie Canal, cross the Great

Lakes, leave Lake Michigan at Chicago, gain the Mississippi by way

of the Illinois River and the connecting canal, and go down the

Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico. And then there are the great

rivers of South America. We'll know something about geography when

we get back to California.

People that build houses are often sore perplexed; but if they enjoy

the strain of it, I'll advise them to build a boat like the Snark.

Just consider, for a moment, the strain of detail. Take the engine.

What is the best kind of engine--the two cycle? three cycle? four

cycle? My lips are mutilated with all kinds of strange jargon, my

mind is mutilated with still stranger ideas and is foot-sore and

weary from travelling in new and rocky realms of thought.--Ignition

methods; shall it be make-and-break or jump-spark? Shall dry cells

or storage batteries be used? A storage battery commends itself,

but it requires a dynamo. How powerful a dynamo? And when we have

installed a dynamo and a storage battery, it is simply ridiculous

not to light the boat with electricity. Then comes the discussion

of how many lights and how many candle-power. It is a splendid

idea. But electric lights will demand a more powerful storage

battery, which, in turn, demands a more powerful dynamo.

And now that we've gone in for it, why not have a searchlight? It

would be tremendously useful. But the searchlight needs so much

electricity that when it runs it will put all the other lights out

of commission. Again we travel the weary road in the quest after

more power for storage battery and dynamo. And then, when it is

finally solved, some one asks, "What if the engine breaks down?"

And we collapse. There are the sidelights, the binnacle light, and

the anchor light. Our very lives depend upon them. So we have to

fit the boat throughout with oil lamps as well.

But we are not done with that engine yet. The engine is powerful.

We are two small men and a small woman. It will break our hearts

and our backs to hoist anchor by hand. Let the engine do it. And

then comes the problem of how to convey power for'ard from the

engine to the winch. And by the time all this is settled, we

redistribute the allotments of space to the engine-room, galley,

bath-room, state-rooms, and cabin, and begin all over again. And

when we have shifted the engine, I send off a telegram of gibberish

to its makers at New York, something like this: Toggle-joint

abandoned change thrust-bearing accordingly distance from forward

side of flywheel to face of stern post sixteen feet six inches.

Just potter around in quest of the best steering gear, or try to

decide whether you will set up your rigging with old-fashioned

lanyards or with turnbuckles, if you want strain of detail. Shall

the binnacle be located in front of the wheel in the centre of the

beam, or shall it be located to one side in front of the wheel?--

there's room right there for a library of sea-dog controversy. Then

there's the problem of gasolene, fifteen hundred gallons of it--what

are the safest ways to tank it and pipe it? and which is the best

fire-extinguisher for a gasolene fire? Then there is the pretty

problem of the life-boat and the stowage of the same. And when that

is finished, come the cook and cabin-boy to confront one with

nightmare possibilities. It is a small boat, and we'll be packed

close together. The servant-girl problem of landsmen pales to

insignificance. We did select one cabin-boy, and by that much were

our troubles eased. And then the cabin-boy fell in love and

resigned.

And in the meanwhile how is a fellow to find time to study

navigation--when he is divided between these problems and the

earning of the money wherewith to settle the problems? Neither

Roscoe nor I know anything about navigation, and the summer is gone,

and we are about to start, and the problems are thicker than ever,

and the treasury is stuffed with emptiness. Well, anyway, it takes

years to learn seamanship, and both of us are seamen. If we don't

find the time, we'll lay in the books and instruments and teach

ourselves navigation on the ocean between San Francisco and Hawaii.

There is one unfortunate and perplexing phase of the voyage of the

Snark. Roscoe, who is to be my co-navigator, is a follower of one,

Cyrus R. Teed. Now Cyrus R. Teed has a different cosmology from the

one generally accepted, and Roscoe shares his views. Wherefore

Roscoe believes that the surface of the earth is concave and that we

live on the inside of a hollow sphere. Thus, though we shall sail

on the one boat, the Snark, Roscoe will journey around the world on

the inside, while I shall journey around on the outside. But of

this, more anon. We threaten to be of the one mind before the

voyage is completed. I am confident that I shall convert him into

making the journey on the outside, while he is equally confident

that before we arrive back in San Francisco I shall be on the inside

of the earth. How he is going to get me through the crust I don't

know, but Roscoe is ay a masterful man.

P.S.--That engine! While we've got it, and the dynamo, and the

storage battery, why not have an ice-machine? Ice in the tropics!

It is more necessary than bread. Here goes for the ice-machine!

Now I am plunged into chemistry, and my lips hurt, and my mind

hurts, and how am I ever to find the time to study navigation?

CHAPTER II--THE INCONCEIVABLE AND MONSTROUS

"Spare no money," I said to Roscoe. "Let everything on the Snark be

of the best. And never mind decoration. Plain pine boards is good

enough finishing for me. But put the money into the construction.

Let the Snark be as staunch and strong as any boat afloat. Never

mind what it costs to make her staunch and strong; you see that she

is made staunch and strong, and I'll go on writing and earning the

money to pay for it."

And I did . . . as well as I could; for the Snark ate up money

faster than I could earn it. In fact, every little while I had to

borrow money with which to supplement my earnings. Now I borrowed

one thousand dollars, now I borrowed two thousand dollars, and now I

borrowed five thousand dollars. And all the time I went on working

every day and sinking the earnings in the venture. I worked Sundays

as well, and I took no holidays. But it was worth it. Every time I

thought of the Snark I knew she was worth it.

For know, gentle reader, the staunchness of the Snark. She is

forty-five feet long on the waterline. Her garboard strake is three

inches thick; her planking two and one-half inches thick; her deck-

planking two inches thick and in all her planking there are no

butts. I know, for I ordered that planking especially from Puget

Sound. Then the Snark has four water-tight compartments, which is

to say that her length is broken by three water-tight bulkheads.

Thus, no matter how large a leak the Snark may spring, Only one

compartment can fill with water. The other three compartments will

keep her afloat, anyway, and, besides, will enable us to mend the

leak. There is another virtue in these bulkheads. The last

compartment of all, in the very stern, contains six tanks that carry

over one thousand gallons of gasolene. Now gasolene is a very

dangerous article to carry in bulk on a small craft far out on the

wide ocean. But when the six tanks that do not leak are themselves

contained in a compartment hermetically sealed off from the rest of

the boat, the danger will be seen to be very small indeed.

The Snark is a sail-boat. She was built primarily to sail. But

incidentally, as an auxiliary, a seventy-horse-power engine was

installed. This is a good, strong engine. I ought to know. I paid

for it to come out all the way from New York City. Then, on deck,

above the engine, is a windlass. It is a magnificent affair. It

weighs several hundred pounds and takes up no end of deck-room. You

see, it is ridiculous to hoist up anchor by hand-power when there is

a seventy-horse-power engine on board. So we installed the

windlass, transmitting power to it from the engine by means of a

gear and castings specially made in a San Francisco foundry.

The Snark was made for comfort, and no expense was spared in this

regard. There is the bath-room, for instance, small and compact, it

is true, but containing all the conveniences of any bath-room upon

land. The bath-room is a beautiful dream of schemes and devices,

pumps, and levers, and sea-valves. Why, in the course of its

building, I used to lie awake nights thinking about that bath-room.

And next to the bathroom come the life-boat and the launch. They

are carried on deck, and they take up what little space might have

been left us for exercise. But then, they beat life insurance; and

the prudent man, even if he has built as staunch and strong a craft

as the Snark, will see to it that he has a good life-boat as well.

And ours is a good one. It is a dandy. It was stipulated to cost

one hundred and fifty dollars, and when I came to pay the bill, it

turned out to be three hundred and ninety-five dollars. That shows

how good a life-boat it is.

I could go on at great length relating the various virtues and

excellences of the Snark, but I refrain. I have bragged enough as

it is, and I have bragged to a purpose, as will be seen before my

tale is ended. And please remember its title, "The Inconceivable

and Monstrous." It was planned that the Snark should sail on

October 1, 1906. That she did not so sail was inconceivable and

monstrous. There was no valid reason for not sailing except that

she was not ready to sail, and there was no conceivable reason why

she was not ready. She was promised on November first, on November

fifteenth, on December first; and yet she was never ready. On

December first Charmian and I left the sweet, clean Sonoma country

and came down to live in the stifling city--but not for long, oh,

no, only for two weeks, for we would sail on December fifteenth.

And I guess we ought to know, for Roscoe said so, and it was on his

advice that we came to the city to stay two weeks. Alas, the two

weeks went by, four weeks went by, six weeks went by, eight weeks

went by, and we were farther away from sailing than ever. Explain

it? Who?--me? I can't. It is the one thing in all my life that I

have backed down on. There is no explaining it; if there were, I'd

do it. I, who am an artisan of speech, confess my inability to

explain why the Snark was not ready. As I have said, and as I must

repeat, it was inconceivable and monstrous.

The eight weeks became sixteen weeks, and then, one day, Roscoe

cheered us up by saying: "If we don't sail before April first, you

can use my head for a football."

Two weeks later he said, "I'm getting my head in training for that

match."

"Never mind," Charmian and I said to each other; "think of the

wonderful boat it is going to be when it is completed."

Whereat we would rehearse for our mutual encouragement the manifold

virtues and excellences of the Snark. Also, I would borrow more

money, and I would get down closer to my desk and write harder, and

I refused heroically to take a Sunday off and go out into the hills

with my friends. I was building a boat, and by the eternal it was

going to be a boat, and a boat spelled out all in capitals--B--O--A-

-T; and no matter what it cost I didn't care. So long as it was a

BOAT.

And, oh, there is one other excellence of the Snark, upon which I

must brag, namely, her bow. No sea could ever come over it. It

laughs at the sea, that bow does; it challenges the sea; it snorts

defiance at the sea. And withal it is a beautiful bow; the lines of

it are dreamlike; I doubt if ever a boat was blessed with a more

beautiful and at the same time a more capable bow. It was made to

punch storms. To touch that bow is to rest one's hand on the cosmic

nose of things. To look at it is to realize that expense cut no

figure where it was concerned. And every time our sailing was

delayed, or a new expense was tacked on, we thought of that

wonderful bow and were content.

The Snark is a small boat. When I figured seven thousand dollars as

her generous cost, I was both generous and correct. I have built

barns and houses, and I know the peculiar trait such things have of

running past their estimated cost. This knowledge was mine, was

already mine, when I estimated the probable cost of the building of

the Snark at seven thousand dollars. Well, she cost thirty

thousand. Now don't ask me, please. It is the truth. I signed the

cheques and I raised the money. Of course there is no explaining

it, inconceivable and monstrous is what it is, as you will agree, I

know, ere my tale is done.

Then there was the matter of delay. I dealt with forty-seven

different kinds of union men and with one hundred and fifteen

different firms. And not one union man and not one firm of all the

union men and all the firms ever delivered anything at the time

agreed upon, nor ever was on time for anything except pay-day and

bill-collection. Men pledged me their immortal souls that they

would deliver a certain thing on a certain date; as a rule, after

such pledging, they rarely exceeded being three months late in

delivery. And so it went, and Charmian and I consoled each other by

saying what a splendid boat the Snark was, so staunch and strong;

also, we would get into the small boat and row around the Snark, and

gloat over her unbelievably wonderful bow.

"Think," I would say to Charmian, "of a gale off the China coast,

and of the Snark hove to, that splendid bow of hers driving into the

storm. Not a drop will come over that bow. She'll be as dry as a

feather, and we'll be all below playing whist while the gale howls."

And Charmian would press my hand enthusiastically and exclaim:

"It's worth every bit of it--the delay, and expense, and worry, and

all the rest. Oh, what a truly wonderful boat!"

Whenever I looked at the bow of the Snark or thought of her water-

tight compartments, I was encouraged. Nobody else, however, was

encouraged. My friends began to make bets against the various

sailing dates of the Snark. Mr. Wiget, who was left behind in

charge of our Sonoma ranch was the first to cash his bet. He

collected on New Year's Day, 1907. After that the bets came fast

and furious. My friends surrounded me like a gang of harpies,

making bets against every sailing date I set. I was rash, and I was

stubborn. I bet, and I bet, and I continued to bet; and I paid them

all. Why, the women-kind of my friends grew so brave that those

among them who never bet before began to bet with me. And I paid

them, too.

"Never mind," said Charmian to me; "just think of that bow and of

being hove to on the China Seas."

"You see," I said to my friends, when I paid the latest bunch of

wagers, "neither trouble nor cash is being spared in making the

Snark the most seaworthy craft that ever sailed out through the

Golden Gate--that is what causes all the delay."

In the meantime editors and publishers with whom I had contracts

pestered me with demands for explanations. But how could I explain

to them, when I was unable to explain to myself, or when there was

nobody, not even Roscoe, to explain to me? The newspapers began to

laugh at me, and to publish rhymes anent the Snark's departure with

refrains like, "Not yet, but soon." And Charmian cheered me up by

reminding me of the bow, and I went to a banker and borrowed five

thousand more. There was one recompense for the delay, however. A

friend of mine, who happens to be a critic, wrote a roast of me, of

all I had done, and of all I ever was going to do; and he planned to

have it published after I was out on the ocean. I was still on

shore when it came out, and he has been busy explaining ever since.

And the time continued to go by. One thing was becoming apparent,

namely, that it was impossible to finish the Snark in San Francisco.

She had been so long in the building that she was beginning to break

down and wear out. In fact, she had reached the stage where she was

breaking down faster than she could be repaired. She had become a

joke. Nobody took her seriously; least of all the men who worked on

her. I said we would sail just as she was and finish building her

in Honolulu. Promptly she sprang a leak that had to be attended to

before we could sail. I started her for the boat-ways. Before she

got to them she was caught between two huge barges and received a

vigorous crushing. We got her on the ways, and, part way along, the

ways spread and dropped her through, stern-first, into the mud.

It was a pretty tangle, a job for wreckers, not boat-builders.

There are two high tides every twenty-four hours, and at every high

tide, night and day, for a week, there were two steam tugs pulling

and hauling on the Snark. There she was, stuck, fallen between the

ways and standing on her stern. Next, and while still in that

predicament, we started to use the gears and castings made in the

local foundry whereby power was conveyed from the engine to the

windlass. It was the first time we ever tried to use that windlass.

The castings had flaws; they shattered asunder, the gears ground

together, and the windlass was out of commission. Following upon

that, the seventy-horse-power engine went out of commission. This

engine came from New York; so did its bed-plate; there was a flaw in

the bed-plate; there were a lot of flaws in the bed-plate; and the

seventy-horse-power engine broke away from its shattered

foundations, reared up in the air, smashed all connections and

fastenings, and fell over on its side. And the Snark continued to

stick between the spread ways, and the two tugs continued to haul

vainly upon her.

"Never mind," said Charmian, "think of what a staunch, strong boat

she is."

"Yes," said I, "and of that beautiful bow."

So we took heart and went at it again. The ruined engine was lashed

down on its rotten foundation; the smashed castings and cogs of the

power transmission were taken down and stored away--all for the

purpose of taking them to Honolulu where repairs and new castings

could be made. Somewhere in the dim past the Snark had received on

the outside one coat of white paint. The intention of the colour

was still evident, however, when one got it in the right light. The

Snark had never received any paint on the inside. On the contrary,

she was coated inches thick with the grease and tobacco-juice of the

multitudinous mechanics who had toiled upon her. Never mind, we

said; the grease and filth could be planed off, and later, when we

fetched Honolulu, the Snark could be painted at the same time as she

was being rebuilt.

By main strength and sweat we dragged the Snark off from the wrecked

ways and laid her alongside the Oakland City Wharf. The drays

brought all the outfit from home, the books and blankets and

personal luggage. Along with this, everything else came on board in

a torrent of confusion--wood and coal, water and water-tanks,

vegetables, provisions, oil, the life-boat and the launch, all our

friends, all the friends of our friends and those who claimed to be

their friends, to say nothing of some of the friends of the friends

of the friends of our crew. Also there were reporters, and

photographers, and strangers, and cranks, and finally, and over all,

clouds of coal-dust from the wharf.

We were to sail Sunday at eleven, and Saturday afternoon had

arrived. The crowd on the wharf and the coal-dust were thicker than

ever. In one pocket I carried a cheque-book, a fountain-pen, a

dater, and a blotter; in another pocket I carried between one and

two thousand dollars in paper money and gold. I was ready for the

creditors, cash for the small ones and cheques for the large ones,

and was waiting only for Roscoe to arrive with the balances of the

accounts of the hundred and fifteen firms who had delayed me so many

months. And then -

And then the inconceivable and monstrous happened once more. Before

Roscoe could arrive there arrived another man. He was a United

States marshal. He tacked a notice on the Snark's brave mast so

that all on the wharf could read that the Snark had been libelled

for debt. The marshal left a little old man in charge of the Snark,

and himself went away. I had no longer any control of the Snark,

nor of her wonderful bow. The little old man was now her lord and

master, and I learned that I was paying him three dollars a day for

being lord and master. Also, I learned the name of the man who had

libelled the Snark. It was Sellers; the debt was two hundred and

thirty-two dollars; and the deed was no more than was to be expected

from the possessor of such a name. Sellers! Ye gods! Sellers!

But who under the sun was Sellers? I looked in my cheque-book and

saw that two weeks before I had made him out a cheque for five

hundred dollars. Other cheque-books showed me that during the many

months of the building of the Snark I had paid him several thousand

dollars. Then why in the name of common decency hadn't he tried to

collect his miserable little balance instead of libelling the Snark?

I thrust my hands into my pockets, and in one pocket encountered the

cheque-hook and the dater and the pen, and in the other pocket the

gold money and the paper money. There was the wherewithal to settle

his pitiful account a few score of times and over--why hadn't he

given me a chance? There was no explanation; it was merely the

inconceivable and monstrous.

To make the matter worse, the Snark had been libelled late Saturday

afternoon; and though I sent lawyers and agents all over Oakland and

San Francisco, neither United States judge, nor United States

marshal, nor Mr. Sellers, nor Mr. Sellers' attorney, nor anybody

could be found. They were all out of town for the weekend. And so

the Snark did not sail Sunday morning at eleven. The little old man

was still in charge, and he said no. And Charmian and I walked out

on an opposite wharf and took consolation in the Snark's wonderful

bow and thought of all the gales and typhoons it would proudly

punch.

"A bourgeois trick," I said to Charmian, speaking of Mr. Sellers and

his libel; "a petty trader's panic. But never mind; our troubles

will cease when once we are away from this and out on the wide

ocean."

And in the end we sailed away, on Tuesday morning, April 23, 1907.

We started rather lame, I confess. We had to hoist anchor by hand,

because the power transmission was a wreck. Also, what remained of

our seventy-horse-power engine was lashed down for ballast on the

bottom of the Snark. But what of such things? They could be fixed

in Honolulu, and in the meantime think of the magnificent rest of

the boat! It is true, the engine in the launch wouldn't run, and

the life-boat leaked like a sieve; but then they weren't the Snark;

they were mere appurtenances. The things that counted were the

water-tight bulkheads, the solid planking without butts, the bath-

room devices--they were the Snark. And then there was, greatest of

all, that noble, wind-punching bow.

We sailed out through the Golden Gate and set our course south

toward that part of the Pacific where we could hope to pick up with

the north-east trades. And right away things began to happen. I

had calculated that youth was the stuff for a voyage like that of

the Snark, and I had taken three youths--the engineer, the cook, and

the cabin-boy. My calculation was only two-thirds OFF; I had

forgotten to calculate on seasick youth, and I had two of them, the

cook and the cabin boy. They immediately took to their bunks, and

that was the end of their usefulness for a week to come. It will be

understood, from the foregoing, that we did not have the hot meals

we might have had, nor were things kept clean and orderly down

below. But it did not matter very much anyway, for we quickly

discovered that our box of oranges had at some time been frozen;

that our box of apples was mushy and spoiling; that the crate of

cabbages, spoiled before it was ever delivered to us, had to go

overboard instanter; that kerosene had been spilled on the carrots,

and that the turnips were woody and the beets rotten, while the

kindling was dead wood that wouldn't burn, and the coal, delivered

in rotten potato-sacks, had spilled all over the deck and was

washing through the scuppers.

But what did it matter? Such things were mere accessories. There

was the boat--she was all right, wasn't she? I strolled along the

deck and in one minute counted fourteen butts in the beautiful

planking ordered specially from Puget Sound in order that there

should be no butts in it. Also, that deck leaked, and it leaked

badly. It drowned Roscoe out of his bunk and ruined the tools in

the engine-room, to say nothing of the provisions it ruined in the

galley. Also, the sides of the Snark leaked, and the bottom leaked,

and we had to pump her every day to keep her afloat. The floor of

the galley is a couple of feet above the inside bottom of the Snark;

and yet I have stood on the floor of the galley, trying to snatch a

cold bite, and been wet to the knees by the water churning around

inside four hours after the last pumping.

Then those magnificent water-tight compartments that cost so much

time and money--well, they weren't water-tight after all. The water

moved free as the air from one compartment to another; furthermore,

a strong smell of gasolene from the after compartment leads me to

suspect that some one or more of the half-dozen tanks there stored

have sprung a leak. The tanks leak, and they are not hermetically

sealed in their compartment. Then there was the bath-room with its

pumps and levers and sea-valves--it went out of commission inside

the first twenty hours. Powerful iron levers broke off short in

one's hand when one tried to pump with them. The bathroom was the

swiftest wreck of any portion of the Snark.

And the iron-work on the Snark, no matter what its source, proved to

be mush. For instance, the bed-plate of the engine came from New

York, and it was mush; so were the casting and gears for the

windlass that came from San Francisco. And finally, there was the

wrought iron used in the rigging, that carried away in all

directions when the first strains were put upon it. Wrought iron,

mind you, and it snapped like macaroni.

A gooseneck on the gaff of the mainsail broke short off. We

replaced it with the gooseneck from the gaff of the storm trysail,

and the second gooseneck broke short off inside fifteen minutes of

use, and, mind you, it had been taken from the gaff of the storm

trysail, upon which we would have depended in time of storm. At the

present moment the Snark trails her mainsail like a broken wing, the

gooseneck being replaced by a rough lashing. We'll see if we can

get honest iron in Honolulu.

Man had betrayed us and sent us to sea in a sieve, but the Lord must

have loved us, for we had calm weather in which to learn that we

must pump every day in order to keep afloat, and that more trust

could be placed in a wooden toothpick than in the most massive piece

of iron to be found aboard. As the staunchness and the strength of

the Snark went glimmering, Charmian and I pinned our faith more and

more to the Snark's wonderful bow. There was nothing else left to

pin to. It was all inconceivable and monstrous, we knew, but that

bow, at least, was rational. And then, one evening, we started to

heave to.

How shall I describe it? First of all, for the benefit of the tyro,

let me explain that heaving to is that sea manoeuvre which, by means

of short and balanced canvas, compels a vessel to ride bow-on to

wind and sea. When the wind is too strong, or the sea is too high,

a vessel of the size of the Snark can heave to with ease, whereupon

there is no more work to do on deck. Nobody needs to steer. The

lookout is superfluous. All hands can go below and sleep or play

whist.

Well, it was blowing half of a small summer gale, when I told Roscoe

we'd heave to. Night was coming on. I had been steering nearly all

day, and all hands on deck (Roscoe and Bert and Charmian) were

tired, while all hands below were seasick. It happened that we had

already put two reefs in the big mainsail. The flying-jib and the

jib were taken in, and a reef put in the fore-staysail. The mizzen

was also taken in. About this time the flying jib-boom buried

itself in a sea and broke short off. I started to put the wheel

down in order to heave to. The Snark at the moment was rolling in

the trough. She continued rolling in the trough. I put the spokes

down harder and harder. She never budged from the trough. (The

trough, gentle reader, is the most dangerous position all in which

to lay a vessel.) I put the wheel hard down, and still the Snark

rolled in the trough. Eight points was the nearest I could get her

to the wind. I had Roscoe and Bert come in on the main-sheet. The

Snark rolled on in the trough, now putting her rail under on one

side and now under on the other side.

Again the inconceivable and monstrous was showing its grizzly head.

It was grotesque, impossible. I refused to believe it. Under

double-reefed mainsail and single-reefed staysail the Snark refused

to heave to. We flattened the mainsail down. It did not alter the

Snark's course a tenth of a degree. We slacked the mainsail off

with no more result. We set a storm trysail on the mizzen, and took

in the mainsail. No change. The Snark roiled on in the trough.

That beautiful bow of hers refused to come up and face the wind.

Next we took in the reefed staysail. Thus, the only bit of canvas

left on her was the storm trysail on the mizzen. If anything would

bring her bow up to the wind, that would. Maybe you won't believe

me when I say it failed, but I do say it failed. And I say it

failed because I saw it fail, and not because I believe it failed.

I don't believe it did fail. It is unbelievable, and I am not

telling you what I believe; I am telling you what I saw.

Now, gentle reader, what would you do if you were on a small boat,

rolling in the trough of the sea, a trysail on that small boat's

stern that was unable to swing the bow up into the wind? Get out

the sea-anchor. It's just what we did. We had a patent one, made

to order and warranted not to dive. Imagine a hoop of steel that

serves to keep open the mouth of a large, conical, canvas bag, and

you have a sea-anchor. Well, we made a line fast to the sea-anchor

and to the bow of the Snark, and then dropped the sea-anchor

overboard. It promptly dived. We had a tripping line on it, so we

tripped the sea-anchor and hauled it in. We attached a big timber

as a float, and dropped the sea-anchor over again. This time it

floated. The line to the bow grew taut. The trysail on the mizzen

tended to swing the bow into the wind, but, in spite of this

tendency, the Snark calmly took that sea-anchor in her teeth, and

went on ahead, dragging it after her, still in the trough of the

sea. And there you are. We even took in the trysail, hoisted the

full mizzen in its place, and hauled the full mizzen down flat, and

the Snark wallowed in the trough and dragged the sea-anchor behind

her. Don't believe me. I don't believe it myself. I am merely

telling you what I saw.

Now I leave it to you. Who ever heard of a sailing-boat that

wouldn't heave to?--that wouldn't heave to with a sea-anchor to help

it? Out of my brief experience with boats I know I never did. And

I stood on deck and looked on the naked face of the inconceivable

and monstrous--the Snark that wouldn't heave to. A stormy night

with broken moonlight had come on. There was a splash of wet in the

air, and up to windward there was a promise of rain-squalls; and

then there was the trough of the sea, cold and cruel in the

moonlight, in which the Snark complacently rolled. And then we took

in the sea-anchor and the mizzen, hoisted the reefed staysail, ran

the Snark off before it, and went below--not to the hot meal that

should have awaited us, but to skate across the slush and slime on

the cabin floor, where cook and cabin-boy lay like dead men in their

bunks, and to lie down in our own bunks, with our clothes on ready

for a call, and to listen to the bilge-water spouting knee-high on

the galley floor.

In the Bohemian Club of San Francisco there are some crack sailors.

I know, because I heard them pass judgment on the Snark during the

process of her building. They found only one vital thing the matter

with her, and on this they were all agreed, namely, that she could

not run. She was all right in every particular, they said, except

that I'd never be able to run her before it in a stiff wind and sea.

"Her lines," they explained enigmatically, "it is the fault of her

lines. She simply cannot be made to run, that is all." Well, I

wish I'd only had those crack sailors of the Bohemian Club on board

the Snark the other night for them to see for themselves their one,

vital, unanimous judgment absolutely reversed. Run? It is the one

thing the Snark does to perfection. Run? She ran with a sea-anchor

fast for'ard and a full mizzen flattened down aft. Run? At the

present moment, as I write this, we are bowling along before it, at

a six-knot clip, in the north-east trades. Quite a tidy bit of sea

is running. There is nobody at the wheel, the wheel is not even

lashed and is set over a half-spoke weather helm. To be precise,

the wind is north-east; the Snark's mizzen is furled, her mainsail

is over to starboard, her head-sheets are hauled flat: and the

Snark's course is south-south-west. And yet there are men who have

sailed the seas for forty years and who hold that no boat can run

before it without being steered. They'll call me a liar when they

read this; it's what they called Captain Slocum when he said the

same of his Spray.

As regards the future of the Snark I'm all at sea. I don't know.

If I had the money or the credit, I'd build another Snark that WOULD

heave to. But I am at the end of my resources. I've got to put up

with the present Snark or quit--and I can't quit. So I guess I'll

have to try to get along with heaving the Snark to stern first. I

am waiting for the next gale to see how it will work. I think it

can be done. It all depends on how her stern takes the seas. And

who knows but that some wild morning on the China Sea, some gray-

beard skipper will stare, rub his incredulous eyes and stare again,

at the spectacle of a weird, small craft very much like the Snark,

hove to stern-first and riding out the gale?

P.S. On my return to California after the voyage, I learned that

the Snark was forty-three feet on the water-line instead of forty-

five. This was due to the fact that the builder was not on speaking

terms with the tape-line or two-foot rule.

CHAPTER III--ADVENTURE

No, adventure is not dead, and in spite of the steam engine and of

Thomas Cook & Son. When the announcement of the contemplated voyage

of the Snark was made, young men of "roving disposition" proved to

be legion, and young women as well--to say nothing of the elderly

men and women who volunteered for the voyage. Why, among my

personal friends there were at least half a dozen who regretted

their recent or imminent marriages; and there was one marriage I

know of that almost failed to come off because of the Snark.

Every mail to me was burdened with the letters of applicants who

were suffocating in the "man-stifled towns," and it soon dawned upon

me that a twentieth century Ulysses required a corps of

stenographers to clear his correspondence before setting sail. No,

adventure is certainly not dead--not while one receives letters that

begin:

"There is no doubt that when you read this soul-plea from a female

stranger in New York City," etc.; and wherein one learns, a little

farther on, that this female stranger weighs only ninety pounds,

wants to be cabin-boy, and "yearns to see the countries of the

world."

The possession of a "passionate fondness for geography," was the way

one applicant expressed the wander-lust that was in him; while

another wrote, "I am cursed with an eternal yearning to be always on

the move, consequently this letter to you." But best of all was the

fellow who said he wanted to come because his feet itched.

There were a few who wrote anonymously, suggesting names of friends

and giving said friends' qualifications; but to me there was a hint

of something sinister in such proceedings, and I went no further in

the matter.

With two or three exceptions, all the hundreds that volunteered for

my crew were very much in earnest. Many of them sent their

photographs. Ninety per cent. offered to work in any capacity, and

ninety-nine per cent. offered to work without salary.

"Contemplating your voyage on the Snark," said one, "and

notwithstanding its attendant dangers, to accompany you (in any

capacity whatever) would be the climax of my ambitions." Which

reminds me of the young fellow who was "seventeen years old and

ambicious," and who, at the end of his letter, earnestly requested

"but please do not let this git into the papers or magazines."

Quite different was the one who said, "I would be willing to work

like hell and not demand pay." Almost all of them wanted me to

telegraph, at their expense, my acceptance of their services; and

quite a number offered to put up a bond to guarantee their

appearance on sailing date.

Some were rather vague in their own minds concerning the work to be

done on the Snark; as, for instance, the one who wrote: "I am

taking the liberty of writing you this note to find out if there

would be any possibility of my going with you as one of the crew of

your boat to make sketches and illustrations." Several, unaware of

the needful work on a small craft like the Snark, offered to serve,

as one of them phrased it, "as assistant in filing materials

collected for books and novels." That's what one gets for being

prolific.

"Let me give my qualifications for the job," wrote one. "I am an

orphan living with my uncle, who is a hot revolutionary socialist

and who says a man without the red blood of adventure is an animated

dish-rag." Said another: "I can swim some, though I don't know any

of the new strokes. But what is more important than strokes, the

water is a friend of mine." "If I was put alone in a sail-boat, I

could get her anywhere I wanted to go," was the qualification of a

third--and a better qualification than the one that follows, "I have

also watched the fish-boats unload." But possibly the prize should

go to this one, who very subtly conveys his deep knowledge of the

world and life by saying: "My age, in years, is twenty-two."

Then there were the simple straight-out, homely, and unadorned

letters of young boys, lacking in the felicities of expression, it

is true, but desiring greatly to make the voyage. These were the

hardest of all to decline, and each time I declined one it seemed as

if I had struck Youth a slap in the face. They were so earnest,

these boys, they wanted so much to go. "I am sixteen but large for

my age," said one; and another, "Seventeen but large and healthy."

"I am as strong at least as the average boy of my size," said an

evident weakling. "Not afraid of any kind of work," was what many

said, while one in particular, to lure me no doubt by

inexpensiveness, wrote: "I can pay my way to the Pacific coast, so

that part would probably be acceptable to you." "Going around the

world is THE ONE THING I want to do," said one, and it seemed to be

the one thing that a few hundred wanted to do. "I have no one who

cares whether I go or not," was the pathetic note sounded by

another. One had sent his photograph, and speaking of it, said,

"I'm a homely-looking sort of a chap, but looks don't always count."

And I am confident that the lad who wrote the following would have

turned out all right: "My age is 19 years, but I am rather small

and consequently won't take up much room, but I'm tough as the

devil." And there was one thirteen-year-old applicant that Charmian

and I fell in love with, and it nearly broke our hearts to refuse

him.

But it must not be imagined that most of my volunteers were boys; on

the contrary, boys constituted a very small proportion. There were

men and women from every walk in life. Physicians, surgeons, and

dentists offered in large numbers to come along, and, like all the

professional men, offered to come without pay, to serve in any

capacity, and to pay, even, for the privilege of so serving.

There was no end of compositors and reporters who wanted to come, to

say nothing of experienced valets, chefs, and stewards. Civil

engineers were keen on the voyage; "lady" companions galore cropped

up for Charmian; while I was deluged with the applications of would-

be private secretaries. Many high school and university students

yearned for the voyage, and every trade in the working class

developed a few applicants, the machinists, electricians, and

engineers being especially strong on the trip. I was surprised at

the number, who, in musty law offices, heard the call of adventure;

and I was more than surprised by the number of elderly and retired

sea captains who were still thralls to the sea. Several young

fellows, with millions coming to them later on, were wild for the

adventure, as were also several county superintendents of schools.

Fathers and sons wanted to come, and many men with their wives, to

say nothing of the young woman stenographer who wrote: "Write

immediately if you need me. I shall bring my typewriter on the

first train." But the best of all is the following--observe the

delicate way in which he worked in his wife: "I thought I would

drop you a line of inquiry as to the possibility of making the trip

with you, am 24 years of age, married and broke, and a trip of that

kind would be just what we are looking for."

Come to think of it, for the average man it must be fairly difficult

to write an honest letter of self-recommendation. One of my

correspondents was so stumped that he began his letter with the

words, "This is a hard task"; and, after vainly trying to describe

his good points, he wound up with, "It is a hard job writing about

one's self." Nevertheless, there was one who gave himself a most

glowing and lengthy character, and in conclusion stated that he had

greatly enjoyed writing it.

"But suppose this: your cabin-boy could run your engine, could

repair it when out of order. Suppose he could take his turn at the

wheel, could do any carpenter or machinist work. Suppose he is

strong, healthy, and willing to work. Would you not rather have him

than a kid that gets seasick and can't do anything but wash dishes?"

It was letters of this sort that I hated to decline. The writer of

it, self-taught in English, had been only two years in the United

States, and, as he said, "I am not wishing to go with you to earn my

living, but I wish to learn and see." At the time of writing to me

he was a designer for one of the big motor manufacturing companies;

he had been to sea quite a bit, and had been used all his life to

the handling of small boats.

"I have a good position, but it matters not so with me as I prefer

travelling," wrote another. "As to salary, look at me, and if I am

worth a dollar or two, all right, and if I am not, nothing said. As

to my honesty and character, I shall be pleased to show you my

employers. Never drink, no tobacco, but to be honest, I myself,

after a little more experience, want to do a little writing."

"I can assure you that I am eminently respectable, but find other

respectable people tiresome." The man who wrote the foregoing

certainly had me guessing, and I am still wondering whether or not

he'd have found me tiresome, or what the deuce he did mean.

"I have seen better days than what I am passing through to-day,"

wrote an old salt, "but I have seen them a great deal worse also."

But the willingness to sacrifice on the part of the man who wrote

the following was so touching that I could not accept: "I have a

father, a mother, brothers and sisters, dear friends and a lucrative

position, and yet I will sacrifice all to become one of your crew."

Another volunteer I could never have accepted was the finicky young

fellow who, to show me how necessary it was that I should give him a

chance, pointed out that "to go in the ordinary boat, be it schooner

or steamer, would be impracticable, for I would have to mix among

and live with the ordinary type of seamen, which as a rule is not a

clean sort of life."

Then there was the young fellow of twenty-six, who had "run through

the gamut of human emotions," and had "done everything from cooking

to attending Stanford University," and who, at the present writing,

was "A vaquero on a fifty-five-thousand-acre range." Quite in

contrast was the modesty of the one who said, "I am not aware of

possessing any particular qualities that would be likely to

recommend me to your consideration. But should you be impressed,

you might consider it worth a few minutes' time to answer.

Otherwise, there's always work at the trade. Not expecting, but

hoping, I remain, etc."

But I have held my head in both my hands ever since, trying to

figure out the intellectual kinship between myself and the one who

wrote: "Long before I knew of you, I had mixed political economy

and history and deducted therefrom many of your conclusions in

concrete."

Here, in its way, is one of the best, as it is the briefest, that I

received: "If any of the present company signed on for cruise

happens to get cold feet and you need one more who understands

boating, engines, etc., would like to hear from you, etc." Here is

another brief one: "Point blank, would like to have the job of

cabin-boy on your trip around the world, or any other job on board.

Am nineteen years old, weigh one hundred and forty pounds, and am an

American."

And here is a good one from a man a "little over five feet long":

"When I read about your manly plan of sailing around the world in a

small boat with Mrs. London, I was so much rejoiced that I felt I

was planning it myself, and I thought to write you about filling

either position of cook or cabin-boy myself, but for some reason I

did not do it, and I came to Denver from Oakland to join my friend's

business last month, but everything is worse and unfavourable. But

fortunately you have postponed your departure on account of the

great earthquake, so I finally decided to propose you to let me fill

either of the positions. I am not very strong, being a man of a

little over five feet long, although I am of sound health and

capability."

"I think I can add to your outfit an additional method of utilizing

the power of the wind," wrote a well-wisher, "which, while not

interfering with ordinary sails in light breezes, will enable you to

use the whole force of the wind in its mightiest blows, so that even

when its force is so great that you may have to take in every inch

of canvas used in the ordinary way, you may carry the fullest spread

with my method. With my attachment your craft could not be UPSET."

The foregoing letter was written in San Francisco under the date of

April 16, 1906. And two days later, on April 18, came the Great

Earthquake. And that's why I've got it in for that earthquake, for

it made a refugee out of the man who wrote the letter, and prevented

us from ever getting together.

Many of my brother socialists objected to my making the cruise, of

which the following is typical: "The Socialist Cause and the

millions of oppressed victims of Capitalism has a right and claim

upon your life and services. If, however, you persist, then, when

you swallow the last mouthful of salt chuck you can hold before

sinking, remember that we at least protested."

One wanderer over the world who "could, if opportunity afforded,

recount many unusual scenes and events," spent several pages

ardently trying to get to the point of his letter, and at last

achieved the following: "Still I am neglecting the point I set out

to write you about. So will say at once that it has been stated in

print that you and one or two others are going to take a cruize

around the world a little fifty- or sixty-foot boat. I therefore

cannot get myself to think that a man of your attainments and

experience would attempt such a proceeding, which is nothing less

than courting death in that way. And even if you were to escape for

some time, your whole Person, and those with you would be bruised

from the ceaseless motion of a craft of the above size, even if she

were padded, a thing not usual at sea." Thank you, kind friend,

thank you for that qualification, "a thing not usual at sea." Nor

is this friend ignorant of the sea. As he says of himself, "I am

not a land-lubber, and I have sailed every sea and ocean." And he

winds up his letter with: "Although not wishing to offend, it would

be madness to take any woman outside the bay even, in such a craft."

And yet, at the moment of writing this, Charmian is in her state-

room at the typewriter, Martin is cooking dinner, Tochigi is setting

the table, Roscoe and Bert are caulking the deck, and the Snark is

steering herself some five knots an hour in a rattling good sea--and

the Snark is not padded, either.

"Seeing a piece in the paper about your intended trip, would like to

know if you would like a good crew, as there is six of us boys all

good sailor men, with good discharges from the Navy and Merchant

Service, all true Americans, all between the ages of 20 and 22, and

at present are employed as riggers at the Union Iron Works, and

would like very much to sail with you."--It was letters like this

that made me regret the boat was not larger.

And here writes the one woman in all the world--outside of Charmian-

-for the cruise: "If you have not succeeded in getting a cook I

would like very much to take the trip in that capacity. I am a

woman of fifty, healthy and capable, and can do the work for the

small company that compose the crew of the Snark. I am a very good

cook and a very good sailor and something of a traveller, and the

length of the voyage, if of ten years' duration, would suit me

better than one. References, etc."

Some day, when I have made a lot of money, I'm going to build a big

ship, with room in it for a thousand volunteers. They will have to

do all the work of navigating that boat around the world, or they'll

stay at home. I believe that they'll work the boat around the

world, for I know that Adventure is not dead. I know Adventure is

not dead because I have had a long and intimate correspondence with

Adventure.

CHAPTER IV--FINDING ONE'S WAY ABOUT

"But," our friends objected, "how dare you go to sea without a

navigator on board? You're not a navigator, are you?"

I had to confess that I was not a navigator, that I had never looked

through a sextant in my life, and that I doubted if I could tell a

sextant from a nautical almanac. And when they asked if Roscoe was

a navigator, I shook my head. Roscoe resented this. He had glanced

at the "Epitome," bought for our voyage, knew how to use logarithm

tables, had seen a sextant at some time, and, what of this and of

his seafaring ancestry, he concluded that he did know navigation.

But Roscoe was wrong, I still insist. When a young boy he came from

Maine to California by way of the Isthmus of Panama, and that was

the only time in his life that he was out of sight of land. He had

never gone to a school of navigation, nor passed an examination in

the same; nor had he sailed the deep sea and learned the art from

some other navigator. He was a San Francisco Bay yachtsman, where

land is always only several miles away and the art of navigation is

never employed.

So the Snark started on her long voyage without a navigator. We

beat through the Golden Gate on April 23, and headed for the

Hawaiian Islands, twenty-one hundred sea-miles away as the gull

flies. And the outcome was our justification. We arrived. And we

arrived, furthermore, without any trouble, as you shall see; that

is, without any trouble to amount to anything. To begin with,

Roscoe tackled the navigating. He had the theory all right, but it

was the first time he had ever applied it, as was evidenced by the

erratic behaviour of the Snark. Not but what the Snark was

perfectly steady on the sea; the pranks she cut were on the chart.

On a day with a light breeze she would make a jump on the chart that

advertised "a wet sail and a flowing sheet," and on a day when she

just raced over the ocean, she scarcely changed her position on the

chart. Now when one's boat has logged six knots for twenty-four

consecutive hours, it is incontestable that she has covered one

hundred and forty-four miles of ocean. The ocean was all right, and

so was the patent log; as for speed, one saw it with his own eyes.

Therefore the thing that was not all right was the figuring that

refused to boost the Snark along over the chart. Not that this

happened every day, but that it did happen. And it was perfectly

proper and no more than was to be expected from a first attempt at

applying a theory.

The acquisition of the knowledge of navigation has a strange effect

on the minds of men. The average navigator speaks of navigation

with deep respect. To the layman navigation is a deed and awful

mystery, which feeling has been generated in him by the deep and

awful respect for navigation that the layman has seen displayed by

navigators. I have known frank, ingenuous, and modest young men,

open as the day, to learn navigation and at once betray

secretiveness, reserve, and self-importance as if they had achieved

some tremendous intellectual attainment. The average navigator

impresses the layman as a priest of some holy rite. With bated

breath, the amateur yachtsman navigator invites one in to look at

his chronometer. And so it was that our friends suffered such

apprehension at our sailing without a navigator.

During the building of the Snark, Roscoe and I had an agreement,

something like this: "I'll furnish the books and instruments," I

said, "and do you study up navigation now. I'll be too busy to do

any studying. Then, when we get to sea, you can teach me what you

have learned." Roscoe was delighted. Furthermore, Roscoe was as

frank and ingenuous and modest as the young men I have described.

But when we got out to sea and he began to practise the holy rite,

while I looked on admiringly, a change, subtle and distinctive,

marked his bearing. When he shot the sun at noon, the glow of

achievement wrapped him in lambent flame. When he went below,

figured out his observation, and then returned on deck and announced

our latitude and longitude, there was an authoritative ring in his

voice that was new to all of us. But that was not the worst of it.

He became filled with incommunicable information. And the more he

discovered the reasons for the erratic jumps of the Snark over the

chart, and the less the Snark jumped, the more incommunicable and

holy and awful became his information. My mild suggestions that it

was about time that I began to learn, met with no hearty response,

with no offers on his part to help me. He displayed not the

slightest intention of living up to our agreement.

Now this was not Roscoe's fault; he could not help it. He had

merely gone the way of all the men who learned navigation before

him. By an understandable and forgivable confusion of values, plus

a loss of orientation, he felt weighted by responsibility, and

experienced the possession of power that was like unto that of a

god. All his life Roscoe had lived on land, and therefore in sight

of land. Being constantly in sight of land, with landmarks to guide

him, he had managed, with occasional difficulties, to steer his body

around and about the earth. Now he found himself on the sea, wide-

stretching, bounded only by the eternal circle of the sky. This

circle looked always the same. There were no landmarks. The sun

rose to the east and set to the west and the stars wheeled through

the night. But who may look at the sun or the stars and say, "My

place on the face of the earth at the present moment is four and

three-quarter miles to the west of Jones's Cash Store of

Smithersville"? or "I know where I am now, for the Little Dipper

informs me that Boston is three miles away on the second turning to

the right"? And yet that was precisely what Roscoe did. That he

was astounded by the achievement, is putting it mildly. He stood in

reverential awe of himself; he had performed a miraculous feat. The

act of finding himself on the face of the waters became a rite, and

he felt himself a superior being to the rest of us who knew not this

rite and were dependent on him for being shepherded across the

heaving and limitless waste, the briny highroad that connects the

continents and whereon there are no mile-stones. So, with the

sextant he made obeisance to the sun-god, he consulted ancient tomes

and tables of magic characters, muttered prayers in a strange tongue

that sounded like INDEXERRORPARALLAXREFRACTION, made cabalistic

signs on paper, added and carried one, and then, on a piece of holy

script called the Grail--I mean the Chart--he placed his finger on a

certain space conspicuous for its blankness and said, "Here we are."

When we looked at the blank space and asked, "And where is that?" he

answered in the cipher-code of the higher priesthood, "31-15-47

north, 133-5-30 west." And we said "Oh," and felt mighty small.

So I aver, it was not Roscoe's fault. He was like unto a god, and

he carried us in the hollow of his hand across the blank spaces on

the chart. I experienced a great respect for Roscoe; this respect

grew so profound that had he commanded, "Kneel down and worship me,"

I know that I should have flopped down on the deck and yammered.

But, one day, there came a still small thought to me that said:

"This is not a god; this is Roscoe, a mere man like myself. What he

has done, I can do. Who taught him? Himself. Go you and do

likewise--be your own teacher." And right there Roscoe crashed, and

he was high priest of the Snark no longer. I invaded the sanctuary

and demanded the ancient tomes and magic tables, also the prayer-

wheel--the sextant, I mean.

And now, in simple language. I shall describe how I taught myself

navigation. One whole afternoon I sat in the cockpit, steering with

one hand and studying logarithms with the other. Two afternoons,

two hours each, I studied the general theory of navigation and the

particular process of taking a meridian altitude. Then I took the

sextant, worked out the index error, and shot the sun. The figuring

from the data of this observation was child's play. In the

"Epitome" and the "Nautical Almanac" were scores of cunning tables,

all worked out by mathematicians and astronomers. It was like using

interest tables and lightning-calculator tables such as you all

know. The mystery was mystery no longer. I put my finger on the

chart and announced that that was where we were. I was right too,

or at least I was as right as Roscoe, who selected a spot a quarter

of a mile away from mine. Even he was willing to split the distance

with me. I had exploded the mystery, and yet, such was the miracle

of it, I was conscious of new power in me, and I felt the thrill and

tickle of pride. And when Martin asked me, in the same humble and

respectful way I had previously asked Roscoe, as to where we were,

it was with exaltation and spiritual chest-throwing that I answered

in the cipher-code of the higher priesthood and heard Martin's self-

abasing and worshipful "Oh." As for Charmian, I felt that in a new

way I had proved my right to her; and I was aware of another

feeling, namely, that she was a most fortunate woman to have a man

like me.

I couldn't help it. I tell it as a vindication of Roscoe and all

the other navigators. The poison of power was working in me. I was

not as other men--most other men; I knew what they did not know,--

the mystery of the heavens, that pointed out the way across the

deep. And the taste of power I had received drove me on. I steered

at the wheel long hours with one hand, and studied mystery with the

other. By the end of the week, teaching myself, I was able to do

divers things. For instance, I shot the North Star, at night, of

course; got its altitude, corrected for index error, dip, etc., and

found our latitude. And this latitude agreed with the latitude of

the previous noon corrected by dead reckoning up to that moment.

Proud? Well, I was even prouder with my next miracle. I was going

to turn in at nine o'clock. I worked out the problem, self-

instructed, and learned what star of the first magnitude would be

passing the meridian around half-past eight. This star proved to be

Alpha Crucis. I had never heard of the star before. I looked it up

on the star map. It was one of the stars of the Southern Cross.

What! thought I; have we been sailing with the Southern Cross in the

sky of nights and never known it? Dolts that we are! Gudgeons and

moles! I couldn't believe it. I went over the problem again, and

verified it. Charmian had the wheel from eight till ten that

evening. I told her to keep her eyes open and look due south for

the Southern Cross. And when the stars came out, there shone the

Southern Cross low on the horizon. Proud? No medicine man nor high

priest was ever prouder. Furthermore, with the prayer-wheel I shot

Alpha Crucis and from its altitude worked out our latitude. And

still furthermore, I shot the North Star, too, and it agreed with

what had been told me by the Southern Cross. Proud? Why, the

language of the stars was mine, and I listened and heard them

telling me my way over the deep.

Proud? I was a worker of miracles. I forgot how easily I had

taught myself from the printed page. I forgot that all the work

(and a tremendous work, too) had been done by the masterminds before

me, the astronomers and mathematicians, who had discovered and

elaborated the whole science of navigation and made the tables in

the "Epitome." I remembered only the everlasting miracle of it--

that I had listened to the voices of the stars and been told my

place upon the highway of the sea. Charmian did not know, Martin

did not know, Tochigi, the cabin-boy, did not know. But I told

them. I was God's messenger. I stood between them and infinity. I

translated the high celestial speech into terms of their ordinary

understanding. We were heaven-directed, and it was I who could read

the sign-post of the sky!--I! I!

And now, in a cooler moment, I hasten to blab the whole simplicity

of it, to blab on Roscoe and the other navigators and the rest of

the priesthood, all for fear that I may become even as they,

secretive, immodest, and inflated with self-esteem. And I want to

say this now: any young fellow with ordinary gray matter, ordinary

education, and with the slightest trace of the student-mind, can get

the books, and charts, and instruments and teach himself navigation.

Now I must not be misunderstood. Seamanship is an entirely

different matter. It is not learned in a day, nor in many days; it

requires years. Also, navigating by dead reckoning requires long

study and practice. But navigating by observations of the sun,

moon, and stars, thanks to the astronomers and mathematicians, is

child's play. Any average young fellow can teach himself in a week.

And yet again I must not be misunderstood. I do not mean to say

that at the end of a week a young fellow could take charge of a

fifteen-thousand-ton steamer, driving twenty knots an hour through

the brine, racing from land to land, fair weather and foul, clear

sky or cloudy, steering by degrees on the compass card and making

landfalls with most amazing precision. But what I do mean is just

this: the average young fellow I have described can get into a

staunch sail-boat and put out across the ocean, without knowing

anything about navigation, and at the end of the week he will know

enough to know where he is on the chart. He will be able to take a

meridian observation with fair accuracy, and from that observation,

with ten minutes of figuring, work out his latitude and longitude.

And, carrying neither freight nor passengers, being under no press

to reach his destination, he can jog comfortably along, and if at

any time he doubts his own navigation and fears an imminent

landfall, he can heave to all night and proceed in the morning.

Joshua Slocum sailed around the world a few years ago in a thirty-

seven-foot boat all by himself. I shall never forget, in his

narrative of the voyage, where he heartily indorsed the idea of

young men, in similar small boats, making similar voyage. I

promptly indorsed his idea, and so heartily that I took my wife

along. While it certainly makes a Cook's tour look like thirty

cents, on top of that, amid on top of the fun and pleasure, it is a

splendid education for a young man--oh, not a mere education in the

things of the world outside, of lands, and peoples, and climates,

but an education in the world inside, an education in one's self, a

chance to learn one's own self, to get on speaking terms with one's

soul. Then there is the training and the disciplining of it.

First, naturally, the young fellow will learn his limitations; and

next, inevitably, he will proceed to press back those limitations.

And he cannot escape returning from such a voyage a bigger and

better man. And as for sport, it is a king's sport, taking one's

self around the world, doing it with one's own hands, depending on

no one but one's self, and at the end, back at the starting-point,

contemplating with inner vision the planet rushing through space,

and saying, "I did it; with my own hands I did it. I went clear

around that whirling sphere, and I can travel alone, without any

nurse of a sea-captain to guide my steps across the seas. I may not

fly to other stars, but of this star I myself am master."

As I write these lines I lift my eyes and look seaward. I am on the

beach of Waikiki on the island of Oahu. Far, in the azure sky, the

trade-wind clouds drift low over the blue-green turquoise of the

deep sea. Nearer, the sea is emerald and light olive-green. Then

comes the reef, where the water is all slaty purple flecked with

red. Still nearer are brighter greens and tans, lying in alternate

stripes and showing where sandbeds lie between the living coral

banks. Through and over and out of these wonderful colours tumbles

and thunders a magnificent surf. As I say, I lift my eyes to all

this, and through the white crest of a breaker suddenly appears a

dark figure, erect, a man-fish or a sea-god, on the very forward

face of the crest where the top falls over and down, driving in

toward shore, buried to his loins in smoking spray, caught up by the

sea and flung landward, bodily, a quarter of a mile. It is a Kanaka

on a surf-board. And I know that when I have finished these lines I

shall be out in that riot of colour and pounding surf, trying to bit

those breakers even as he, and failing as he never failed, but

living life as the best of us may live it. And the picture of that

coloured sea and that flying sea-god Kanaka becomes another reason

for the young man to go west, and farther west, beyond the Baths of

Sunset, and still west till he arrives home again.

But to return. Please do not think that I already know it all. I

know only the rudiments of navigation. There is a vast deal yet for

me to learn. On the Snark there is a score of fascinating books on

navigation waiting for me. There is the danger-angle of Lecky,

there is the line of Sumner, which, when you know least of all where

you are, shows most conclusively where you are, and where you are

not. There are dozens and dozens of methods of finding one's

location on the deep, and one can work years before he masters it

all in all its fineness.

Even in the little we did learn there were slips that accounted for

the apparently antic behaviour of the Snark. On Thursday, May 16,

for instance, the trade wind failed us. During the twenty-four

hours that ended Friday at noon, by dead reckoning we had not sailed

twenty miles. Yet here are our positions, at noon, for the two

days, worked out from our observations:

Thursday 20 degrees 57 minutes 9 seconds N

152 degrees 40 minutes 30 seconds W

Friday 21 degrees 15 minutes 33 seconds N

154 degrees 12 minutes W

The difference between the two positions was something like eighty

miles. Yet we knew we had not travelled twenty miles. Now our

figuring was all right. We went over it several times. What was

wrong was the observations we had taken. To take a correct

observation requires practice and skill, and especially so on a

small craft like the Snark. The violently moving boat and the

closeness of the observer's eye to the surface of the water are to

blame. A big wave that lifts up a mile off is liable to steal the

horizon away.

But in our particular case there was another perturbing factor. The

sun, in its annual march north through the heavens, was increasing

its declination. On the 19th parallel of north latitude in the

middle of May the sun is nearly overhead. The angle of arc was

between eighty-eight and eighty-nine degrees. Had it been ninety

degrees it would have been straight overhead. It was on another day

that we learned a few things about taking the altitude of the almost

perpendicular sun. Roscoe started in drawing the sun down to the

eastern horizon, and he stayed by that point of the compass despite

the fact that the sun would pass the meridian to the south. I, on

the other hand, started in to draw the sun down to south-east and

strayed away to the south-west. You see, we were teaching

ourselves. As a result, at twenty-five minutes past twelve by the

ship's time, I called twelve o'clock by the sun. Now this signified

that we had changed our location on the face of the world by twenty-

five minutes, which was equal to something like six degrees of

longitude, or three hundred and fifty miles. This showed the Snark

had travelled fifteen knots per hour for twenty-four consecutive

hours--and we had never noticed it! It was absurd and grotesque.

But Roscoe, still looking east, averred that it was not yet twelve

o'clock. He was bent on giving us a twenty-knot clip. Then we

began to train our sextants rather wildly all around the horizon,

and wherever we looked, there was the sun, puzzlingly close to the

sky-line, sometimes above it and sometimes below it. In one

direction the sun was proclaiming morning, in another direction it

was proclaiming afternoon. The sun was all right--we knew that;

therefore we were all wrong. And the rest of the afternoon we spent

in the cockpit reading up the matter in the books and finding out

what was wrong. We missed the observation that day, but we didn't

the next. We had learned.

And we learned well, better than for a while we thought we had. At

the beginning of the second dog-watch one evening, Charmian and I

sat down on the forecastle-head for a rubber of cribbage. Chancing

to glance ahead, I saw cloud-capped mountains rising from the sea.

We were rejoiced at the sight of land, but I was in despair over our

navigation. I thought we had learned something, yet our position at

noon, plus what we had run since, did not put us within a hundred

miles of land. But there was the land, fading away before our eyes

in the fires of sunset. The land was all right. There was no

disputing it. Therefore our navigation was all wrong. But it

wasn't. That land we saw was the summit of Haleakala, the House of

the Sun, the greatest extinct volcano in the world. It towered ten

thousand feet above the sea, and it was all of a hundred miles away.

We sailed all night at a seven-knot clip, and in the morning the

House of the Sun was still before us, and it took a few more hours

of sailing to bring it abreast of us. "That island is Maui," we

said, verifying by the chart. "That next island sticking out is

Molokai, where the lepers are. And the island next to that is Oahu.

There is Makapuu Head now. We'll be in Honolulu to-morrow. Our

navigation is all right."

CHAPTER V--THE FIRST LANDFALL

"It will not be so monotonous at sea," I promised my fellow-voyagers

on the Snark. "The sea is filled with life. It is so populous that

every day something new is happening. Almost as soon as we pass

through the Golden Gate and head south we'll pick up with the flying

fish. We'll be having them fried for breakfast. We'll be catching

bonita and dolphin, and spearing porpoises from the bowsprit. And

then there are the sharks--sharks without end."

We passed through the Golden Gate and headed south. We dropped the

mountains of California beneath the horizon, and daily the surf grew

warmer. But there were no flying fish, no bonita and dolphin. The

ocean was bereft of life. Never had I sailed on so forsaken a sea.

Always, before, in the same latitudes, had I encountered flying

fish.

"Never mind," I said. "Wait till we get off the coast of Southern

California. Then we'll pick up the flying fish."

We came abreast of Southern California, abreast of the Peninsula of

Lower California, abreast of the coast of Mexico; and there were no

flying fish. Nor was there anything else. No life moved. As the

days went by the absence of life became almost uncanny.

"Never mind," I said. "When we do pick up with the flying fish

we'll pick up with everything else. The flying fish is the staff of

life for all the other breeds. Everything will come in a bunch when

we find the flying fish."

When I should have headed the Snark south-west for Hawaii, I still

held her south. I was going to find those flying fish. Finally the

time came when, if I wanted to go to Honolulu, I should have headed

the Snark due west, instead of which I kept her south. Not until

latitude 19 degrees did we encounter the first flying fish. He was

very much alone. I saw him. Five other pairs of eager eyes scanned

the sea all day, but never saw another. So sparse were the flying

fish that nearly a week more elapsed before the last one on board

saw his first flying fish. As for the dolphin, bonita, porpoise,

and all the other hordes of life--there weren't any.

Not even a shark broke surface with his ominous dorsal fin. Bert

took a dip daily under the bowsprit, hanging on to the stays and

dragging his body through the water. And daily he canvassed the

project of letting go and having a decent swim. I did my best to

dissuade him. But with him I had lost all standing as an authority

on sea life.

"If there are sharks," he demanded, "why don't they show up?"

I assured him that if he really did let go and have a swim the

sharks would promptly appear. This was a bluff on my part. I

didn't believe it. It lasted as a deterrent for two days. The

third day the wind fell calm, and it was pretty hot. The Snark was

moving a knot an hour. Bert dropped down under the bowsprit and let

go. And now behold the perversity of things. We had sailed across

two thousand miles and more of ocean and had met with no sharks.

Within five minutes after Bert finished his swim, the fin of a shark

was cutting the surface in circles around the Snark.

There was something wrong about that shark. It bothered me. It had

no right to be there in that deserted ocean. The more I thought

about it, the more incomprehensible it became. But two hours later

we sighted land and the mystery was cleared up. He had come to us

from the land, and not from the uninhabited deep. He had presaged

the landfall. He was the messenger of the land.

Twenty-seven days out from San Francisco we arrived at the island of

Oahu, Territory of Hawaii. In the early morning we drifted around

Diamond Head into full view of Honolulu; and then the ocean burst

suddenly into life. Flying fish cleaved the air in glittering

squadrons. In five minutes we saw more of them than during the

whole voyage. Other fish, large ones, of various sorts, leaped into

the air. There was life everywhere, on sea and shore. We could see

the masts and funnels of the shipping in the harbour, the hotels and

bathers along the beach at Waikiki, the smoke rising from the

dwelling-houses high up on the volcanic slopes of the Punch Bowl and

Tantalus. The custom-house tug was racing toward us and a big

school of porpoises got under our bow and began cutting the most

ridiculous capers. The port doctor's launch came charging out at

us, and a big sea turtle broke the surface with his back and took a

look at us. Never was there such a burgeoning of life. Strange

faces were on our decks, strange voices were speaking, and copies of

that very morning's newspaper, with cable reports from all the

world, were thrust before our eyes. Incidentally, we read that the

Snark and all hands had been lost at sea, and that she had been a

very unseaworthy craft anyway. And while we read this information a

wireless message was being received by the congressional party on

the summit of Haleakala announcing the safe arrival of the Snark.

It was the Snark's first landfall--and such a landfall! For twenty-

seven days we had been on the deserted deep, and it was pretty hard

to realize that there was so much life in the world. We were made

dizzy by it. We could not take it all in at once. We were like

awakened Rip Van Winkles, and it seemed to us that we were dreaming.

On one side the azure sea lapped across the horizon into the azure

sky; on the other side the sea lifted itself into great breakers of

emerald that fell in a snowy smother upon a white coral beach.

Beyond the beach, green plantations of sugar-cane undulated gently

upward to steeper slopes, which, in turn, became jagged volcanic

crests, drenched with tropic showers and capped by stupendous masses

of trade-wind clouds. At any rate, it was a most beautiful dream.

The Snark turned and headed directly in toward the emerald surf,

till it lifted and thundered on either hand; and on either hand,

scarce a biscuit-toss away, the reef showed its long teeth, pale

green and menacing.

Abruptly the land itself, in a riot of olive-greens of a thousand

hues, reached out its arms and folded the Snark in. There was no

perilous passage through the reef, no emerald surf and azure sea--

nothing but a warm soft land, a motionless lagoon, and tiny beaches

on which swam dark-skinned tropic children. The sea had

disappeared. The Snark's anchor rumbled the chain through the

hawse-pipe, and we lay without movement on a "lineless, level

floor." It was all so beautiful and strange that we could not

accept it as real. On the chart this place was called Pearl

Harbour, but we called it Dream Harbour.

A launch came off to us; in it were members of the Hawaiian Yacht

Club, come to greet us and make us welcome, with true Hawaiian

hospitality, to all they had. They were ordinary men, flesh and

blood and all the rest; but they did not tend to break our dreaming.

Our last memories of men were of United States marshals and of

panicky little merchants with rusty dollars for souls, who, in a

reeking atmosphere of soot and coal-dust, laid grimy hands upon the

Snark and held her back from her world adventure. But these men who

came to meet us were clean men. A healthy tan was on their cheeks,

and their eyes were not dazzled and bespectacled from gazing

overmuch at glittering dollar-heaps. No, they merely verified the

dream. They clinched it with their unsmirched souls.

So we went ashore with them across a level flashing sea to the

wonderful green land. We landed on a tiny wharf, and the dream

became more insistent; for know that for twenty-seven days we had

been rocking across the ocean on the tiny Snark. Not once in all

those twenty-seven days had we known a moment's rest, a moment's

cessation from movement. This ceaseless movement had become

ingrained. Body and brain we had rocked and rolled so long that

when we climbed out on the tiny wharf kept on rocking and rolling.

This, naturally, we attributed to the wharf. It was projected

psychology. I spraddled along the wharf and nearly fell into the

water. I glanced at Charmian, and the way she walked made me sad.

The wharf had all the seeming of a ship's deck. It lifted, tilted,

heaved and sank; and since there were no handrails on it, it kept

Charmian and me busy avoiding falling in. I never saw such a

preposterous little wharf. Whenever I watched it closely, it

refused to roll; but as soon as I took my attention off from it,

away it went, just like the Snark. Once, I caught it in the act,

just as it upended, and I looked down the length of it for two

hundred feet, and for all the world it was like the deck of a ship

ducking into a huge head-sea.

At last, however, supported by our hosts, we negotiated the wharf

and gained the land. But the land was no better. The very first

thing it did was to tilt up on one side, and far as the eye could

see I watched it tilt, clear to its jagged, volcanic backbone, and I

saw the clouds above tilt, too. This was no stable, firm-founded

land, else it would not cut such capers. It was like all the rest

of our landfall, unreal. It was a dream. At any moment, like

shifting vapour, it might dissolve away. The thought entered my

head that perhaps it was my fault, that my head was swimming or that

something I had eaten had disagreed with me. But I glanced at

Charmian and her sad walk, and even as I glanced I saw her stagger

and bump into the yachtsman by whose side she walked. I spoke to

her, and she complained about the antic behaviour of the land.

We walked across a spacious, wonderful lawn and down an avenue of

royal palms, and across more wonderful lawn in the gracious shade of

stately trees. The air was filled with the songs of birds and was

heavy with rich warm fragrances--wafture from great lilies, and

blazing blossoms of hibiscus, and other strange gorgeous tropic

flowers. The dream was becoming almost impossibly beautiful to us

who for so long had seen naught but the restless, salty sea.

Charmian reached out her hand and clung to me--for support against

the ineffable beauty of it, thought I. But no. As I supported her

I braced my legs, while the flowers and lawns reeled and swung

around me. It was like an earthquake, only it quickly passed

without doing any harm. It was fairly difficult to catch the land

playing these tricks. As long as I kept my mind on it, nothing

happened. But as soon as my attention was distracted, away it went,

the whole panorama, swinging and heaving and tilting at all sorts of

angles. Once, however, I turned my head suddenly and caught that

stately line of royal palms swinging in a great arc across the sky.

But it stopped, just as soon as I caught it, and became a placid

dream again.

Next we came to a house of coolness, with great sweeping veranda,

where lotus-eaters might dwell. Windows and doors were wide open to

the breeze, and the songs and fragrances blew lazily in and out.

The walls were hung with tapa-cloths. Couches with grass-woven

covers invited everywhere, and there was a grand piano, that played,

I was sure, nothing more exciting than lullabies. Servants--

Japanese maids in native costume--drifted around and about,

noiselessly, like butterflies. Everything was preternaturally cool.

Here was no blazing down of a tropic sun upon an unshrinking sea.

It was too good to be true. But it was not real. It was a dream-

dwelling. I knew, for I turned suddenly and caught the grand piano

cavorting in a spacious corner of the room. I did not say anything,

for just then we were being received by a gracious woman, a

beautiful Madonna, clad in flowing white and shod with sandals, who

greeted us as though she had known us always.

We sat at table on the lotus-eating veranda, served by the butterfly

maids, and ate strange foods and partook of a nectar called poi.

But the dream threatened to dissolve. It shimmered and trembled

like an iridescent bubble about to break. I was just glancing out

at the green grass and stately trees and blossoms of hibiscus, when

suddenly I felt the table move. The table, and the Madonna across

from me, and the veranda of the lotus-eaters, the scarlet hibiscus,

the greensward and the trees--all lifted and tilted before my eyes,

and heaved and sank down into the trough of a monstrous sea. I

gripped my chair convulsively and held on. I had a feeling that I

was holding on to the dream as well as the chair. I should not have

been surprised had the sea rushed in and drowned all that fairyland

and had I found myself at the wheel of the Snark just looking up

casually from the study of logarithms. But the dream persisted. I

looked covertly at the Madonna and her husband. They evidenced no

perturbation. The dishes had not moved upon the table. The

hibiscus and trees and grass were still there. Nothing had changed.

I partook of more nectar, and the dream was more real than ever.

"Will you have some iced tea?" asked the Madonna; and then her side

of the table sank down gently and I said yes to her at an angle of

forty-five degrees.

"Speaking of sharks," said her husband, "up at Niihau there was a

man--" And at that moment the table lifted and heaved, and I gazed

upward at him at an angle of forty-five degrees.

So the luncheon went on, and I was glad that I did not have to bear

the affliction of watching Charmian walk. Suddenly, however, a

mysterious word of fear broke from the lips of the lotus-eaters.

"Ah, ah," thought I, "now the dream goes glimmering." I clutched

the chair desperately, resolved to drag back to the reality of the

Snark some tangible vestige of this lotus land. I felt the whole

dream lurching and pulling to be gone. Just then the mysterious

word of fear was repeated. It sounded like REPORTERS. I looked and

saw three of them coming across the lawn. Oh, blessed reporters!

Then the dream was indisputably real after all. I glanced out

across the shining water and saw the Snark at anchor, and I

remembered that I had sailed in her from San Francisco to Hawaii,

and that this was Pearl Harbour, and that even then I was

acknowledging introductions and saying, in reply to the first

question, "Yes, we had delightful weather all the way down."

CHAPTER VI--A ROYAL SPORT

That is what it is, a royal sport for the natural kings of earth.

The grass grows right down to the water at Waikiki Beach, and within

fifty feet of the everlasting sea. The trees also grow down to the

salty edge of things, and one sits in their shade and looks seaward

at a majestic surf thundering in on the beach to one's very feet.

Half a mile out, where is the reef, the white-headed combers thrust

suddenly skyward out of the placid turquoise-blue and come rolling

in to shore. One after another they come, a mile long, with smoking

crests, the white battalions of the infinite army of the sea. And

one sits and listens to the perpetual roar, and watches the unending

procession, and feels tiny and fragile before this tremendous force

expressing itself in fury and foam and sound. Indeed, one feels

microscopically small, and the thought that one may wrestle with

this sea raises in one's imagination a thrill of apprehension,

almost of fear. Why, they are a mile long, these bull-mouthed

monsters, and they weigh a thousand tons, and they charge in to

shore faster than a man can run. What chance? No chance at all, is

the verdict of the shrinking ego; and one sits, and looks, and

listens, and thinks the grass and the shade are a pretty good place

in which to be.

And suddenly, out there where a big smoker lifts skyward, rising

like a sea-god from out of the welter of spume and churning white,

on the giddy, toppling, overhanging and downfalling, precarious

crest appears the dark head of a man. Swiftly he rises through the

rushing white. His black shoulders, his chest, his loins, his

limbs--all is abruptly projected on one's vision. Where but the

moment before was only the wide desolation and invincible roar, is

now a man, erect, full-statured, not struggling frantically in that

wild movement, not buried and crushed and buffeted by those mighty

monsters, but standing above them all, calm and superb, poised on

the giddy summit, his feet buried in the churning foam, the salt

smoke rising to his knees, and all the rest of him in the free air

and flashing sunlight, and he is flying through the air, flying

forward, flying fast as the surge on which he stands. He is a

Mercury--a brown Mercury. His heels are winged, and in them is the

swiftness of the sea. In truth, from out of the sea he has leaped

upon the back of the sea, and he is riding the sea that roars and

bellows and cannot shake him from its back. But no frantic

outreaching and balancing is his. He is impassive, motionless as a

statue carved suddenly by some miracle out of the sea's depth from

which he rose. And straight on toward shore he flies on his winged

heels and the white crest of the breaker. There is a wild burst of

foam, a long tumultuous rushing sound as the breaker falls futile

and spent on the beach at your feet; and there, at your feet steps

calmly ashore a Kanaka, burnt, golden and brown by the tropic sun.

Several minutes ago he was a speck a quarter of a mile away. He has

"bitted the bull-mouthed breaker" and ridden it in, and the pride in

the feat shows in the carriage of his magnificent body as he glances

for a moment carelessly at you who sit in the shade of the shore.

He is a Kanaka--and more, he is a man, a member of the kingly

species that has mastered matter and the brutes and lorded it over

creation.

And one sits and thinks of Tristram's last wrestle with the sea on

that fatal morning; and one thinks further, to the fact that that

Kanaka has done what Tristram never did, and that he knows a joy of

the sea that Tristram never knew. And still further one thinks. It

is all very well, sitting here in cool shade of the beach, but you

are a man, one of the kingly species, and what that Kanaka can do,

you can do yourself. Go to. Strip off your clothes that are a

nuisance in this mellow clime. Get in and wrestle with the sea;

wing your heels with the skill and power that reside in you; bit the

sea's breakers, master them, and ride upon their backs as a king

should.

And that is how it came about that I tackled surf-riding. And now

that I have tackled it, more than ever do I hold it to be a royal

sport. But first let me explain the physics of it. A wave is a

communicated agitation. The water that composes the body of a wave

does not move. If it did, when a stone is thrown into a pond and

the ripples spread away in an ever widening circle, there would

appear at the centre an ever increasing hole. No, the water that

composes the body of a wave is stationary. Thus, you may watch a

particular portion of the ocean's surface and you will see the sane

water rise and fall a thousand times to the agitation communicated

by a thousand successive waves. Now imagine this communicated

agitation moving shoreward. As the bottom shoals, the lower portion

of the wave strikes land first and is stopped. But water is fluid,

and the upper portion has not struck anything, wherefore it keeps on

communicating its agitation, keeps on going. And when the top of

the wave keeps on going, while the bottom of it lags behind,

something is bound to happen. The bottom of the wave drops out from

under and the top of the wave falls over, forward, and down, curling

and cresting and roaring as it does so. It is the bottom of a wave

striking against the top of the land that is the cause of all surfs.

But the transformation from a smooth undulation to a breaker is not

abrupt except where the bottom shoals abruptly. Say the bottom

shoals gradually for from quarter of a mile to a mile, then an equal

distance will be occupied by the transformation. Such a bottom is

that off the beach of Waikiki, and it produces a splendid surf-

riding surf. One leaps upon the back of a breaker just as it begins

to break, and stays on it as it continues to break all the way in to

shore.

And now to the particular physics of surf-riding. Get out on a flat

board, six feet long, two feet wide, and roughly oval in shape. Lie

down upon it like a small boy on a coaster and paddle with your

hands out to deep water, where the waves begin to crest. Lie out

there quietly on the board. Sea after sea breaks before, behind,

and under and over you, and rushes in to shore, leaving you behind.

When a wave crests, it gets steeper. Imagine yourself, on your

hoard, on the face of that steep slope. If it stood still, you

would slide down just as a boy slides down a hill on his coaster.

"But," you object, "the wave doesn't stand still." Very true, but

the water composing the wave stands still, and there you have the

secret. If ever you start sliding down the face of that wave,

you'll keep on sliding and you'll never reach the bottom. Please

don't laugh. The face of that wave may be only six feet, yet you

can slide down it a quarter of a mile, or half a mile, and not reach

the bottom. For, see, since a wave is only a communicated agitation

or impetus, and since the water that composes a wave is changing

every instant, new water is rising into the wave as fast as the wave

travels. You slide down this new water, and yet remain in your old

position on the wave, sliding down the still newer water that is

rising and forming the wave. You slide precisely as fast as the

wave travels. If it travels fifteen miles an hour, you slide

fifteen miles an hour. Between you and shore stretches a quarter of

mile of water. As the wave travels, this water obligingly heaps

itself into the wave, gravity does the rest, and down you go,

sliding the whole length of it. If you still cherish the notion,

while sliding, that the water is moving with you, thrust your arms

into it and attempt to paddle; you will find that you have to be

remarkably quick to get a stroke, for that water is dropping astern

just as fast as you are rushing ahead.

And now for another phase of the physics of surf-riding. All rules

have their exceptions. It is true that the water in a wave does not

travel forward. But there is what may be called the send of the

sea. The water in the overtoppling crest does move forward, as you

will speedily realize if you are slapped in the face by it, or if

you are caught under it and are pounded by one mighty blow down

under the surface panting and gasping for half a minute. The water

in the top of a wave rests upon the water in the bottom of the wave.

But when the bottom of the wave strikes the land, it stops, while

the top goes on. It no longer has the bottom of the wave to hold it

up. Where was solid water beneath it, is now air, and for the first

time it feels the grip of gravity, and down it falls, at the same

time being torn asunder from the lagging bottom of the wave and

flung forward. And it is because of this that riding a surf-board

is something more than a mere placid sliding down a hill. In truth,

one is caught up and hurled shoreward as by some Titan's hand.

I deserted the cool shade, put on a swimming suit, and got hold of a

surf-board. It was too small a board. But I didn't know, and

nobody told me. I joined some little Kanaka boys in shallow water,

where the breakers were well spent and small--a regular kindergarten

school. I watched the little Kanaka boys. When a likely-looking

breaker came along, they flopped upon their stomachs on their

boards, kicked like mad with their feet, and rode the breaker in to

the beach. I tried to emulate them. I watched them, tried to do

everything that they did, and failed utterly. The breaker swept

past, and I was not on it. I tried again and again. I kicked twice

as madly as they did, and failed. Half a dozen would be around. We

would all leap on our boards in front of a good breaker. Away our

feet would churn like the stern-wheels of river steamboats, and away

the little rascals would scoot while I remained in disgrace behind.

I tried for a solid hour, and not one wave could I persuade to boost

me shoreward. And then arrived a friend, Alexander Hume Ford, a

globe trotter by profession, bent ever on the pursuit of sensation.

And he had found it at Waikiki. Heading for Australia, he had

stopped off for a week to find out if there were any thrills in

surf-riding, and he had become wedded to it. He had been at it

every day for a month and could not yet see any symptoms of the

fascination lessening on him. He spoke with authority.

"Get off that board," he said. "Chuck it away at once. Look at the

way you're trying to ride it. If ever the nose of that board hits

bottom, you'll be disembowelled. Here, take my board. It's a man's

size."

I am always humble when confronted by knowledge. Ford knew. He

showed me how properly to mount his board. Then he waited for a

good breaker, gave me a shove at the right moment, and started me

in. Ah, delicious moment when I felt that breaker grip and fling

me.

On I dashed, a hundred and fifty feet, and subsided with the breaker

on the sand. From that moment I was lost. I waded back to Ford

with his board. It was a large one, several inches thick, and

weighed all of seventy-five pounds. He gave me advice, much of it.

He had had no one to teach him, and all that he had laboriously

learned in several weeks he communicated to me in half an hour. I

really learned by proxy. And inside of half an hour I was able to

start myself and ride in. I did it time after time, and Ford

applauded and advised. For instance, he told me to get just so far

forward on the board and no farther. But I must have got some

farther, for as I came charging in to land, that miserable board

poked its nose down to bottom, stopped abruptly, and turned a

somersault, at the same time violently severing our relations. I

was tossed through the air like a chip and buried ignominiously

under the downfalling breaker. And I realized that if it hadn't

been for Ford, I'd have been disembowelled. That particular risk is

part of the sport, Ford says. Maybe he'll have it happen to him

before he leaves Waikiki, and then, I feel confident, his yearning

for sensation will be satisfied for a time.

When all is said and done, it is my steadfast belief that homicide

is worse than suicide, especially if, in the former case, it is a

woman. Ford saved me from being a homicide. "Imagine your legs are

a rudder," he said. "Hold them close together, and steer with

them." A few minutes later I came charging in on a comber. As I

neared the beach, there, in the water, up to her waist, dead in

front of me, appeared a woman. How was I to stop that comber on

whose back I was? It looked like a dead woman. The board weighed

seventy-five pounds, I weighed a hundred and sixty-five. The added

weight had a velocity of fifteen miles per hour. The board and I

constituted a projectile. I leave it to the physicists to figure

out the force of the impact upon that poor, tender woman. And then

I remembered my guardian angel, Ford. "Steer with your legs!" rang

through my brain. I steered with my legs, I steered sharply,

abruptly, with all my legs and with all my might. The board sheered

around broadside on the crest. Many things happened simultaneously.

The wave gave me a passing buffet, a light tap as the taps of waves

go, but a tap sufficient to knock me off the board and smash me down

through the rushing water to bottom, with which I came in violent

collision and upon which I was rolled over and over. I got my head

out for a breath of air and then gained my feet. There stood the

woman before me. I felt like a hero. I had saved her life. And

she laughed at me. It was not hysteria. She had never dreamed of

her danger. Anyway, I solaced myself, it was not I but Ford that

saved her, and I didn't have to feel like a hero. And besides, that

leg-steering was great. In a few minutes more of practice I was

able to thread my way in and out past several bathers and to remain

on top my breaker instead of going under it.

"To-morrow," Ford said, "I am going to take you out into the blue

water."

I looked seaward where he pointed, and saw the great smoking combers

that made the breakers I had been riding look like ripples. I don't

know what I might have said had I not recollected just then that I

was one of a kingly species. So all that I did say was, "All right,

I'll tackle them to-morrow."

The water that rolls in on Waikiki Beach is just the same as the

water that laves the shores of all the Hawaiian Islands; and in

ways, especially from the swimmer's standpoint, it is wonderful

water. It is cool enough to be comfortable, while it is warm enough

to permit a swimmer to stay in all day without experiencing a chill.

Under the sun or the stars, at high noon or at midnight, in

midwinter or in midsummer, it does not matter when, it is always the

same temperature--not too warm, not too cold, just right. It is

wonderful water, salt as old ocean itself, pure and crystal-clear.

When the nature of the water is considered, it is not so remarkable

after all that the Kanakas are one of the most expert of swimming

races.

So it was, next morning, when Ford came along, that I plunged into

the wonderful water for a swim of indeterminate length. Astride of

our surf-boards, or, rather, flat down upon them on our stomachs, we

paddled out through the kindergarten where the little Kanaka boys

were at play. Soon we were out in deep water where the big smokers

came roaring in. The mere struggle with them, facing them and

paddling seaward over them and through them, was sport enough in

itself. One had to have his wits about him, for it was a battle in

which mighty blows were struck, on one side, and in which cunning

was used on the other side--a struggle between insensate force and

intelligence. I soon learned a bit. When a breaker curled over my

head, for a swift instant I could see the light of day through its

emerald body; then down would go my head, and I would clutch the

board with all my strength. Then would come the blow, and to the

onlooker on shore I would be blotted out. In reality the board and

I have passed through the crest and emerged in the respite of the

other side. I should not recommend those smashing blows to an

invalid or delicate person. There is weight behind them, and the

impact of the driven water is like a sandblast. Sometimes one

passes through half a dozen combers in quick succession, and it is

just about that time that he is liable to discover new merits in the

stable land and new reasons for being on shore.

Out there in the midst of such a succession of big smoky ones, a

third man was added to our party, one Freeth. Shaking the water

from my eyes as I emerged from one wave and peered ahead to see what

the next one looked like, I saw him tearing in on the back of it,

standing upright on his board, carelessly poised, a young god

bronzed with sunburn. We went through the wave on the back of which

he rode. Ford called to him. He turned an airspring from his wave,

rescued his board from its maw, paddled over to us and joined Ford

in showing me things. One thing in particular I learned from

Freeth, namely, how to encounter the occasional breaker of

exceptional size that rolled in. Such breakers were really

ferocious, and it was unsafe to meet them on top of the board. But

Freeth showed me, so that whenever I saw one of that calibre rolling

down on me, I slid off the rear end of the board and dropped down

beneath the surface, my arms over my head and holding the board.

Thus, if the wave ripped the board out of my hands and tried to

strike me with it (a common trick of such waves), there would be a

cushion of water a foot or more in depth, between my head and the

blow. When the wave passed, I climbed upon the board and paddled

on. Many men have been terribly injured, I learn, by being struck

by their boards.

The whole method of surf-riding and surf-fighting, learned, is one

of non-resistance. Dodge the blow that is struck at you. Dive

through the wave that is trying to slap you in the face. Sink down,

feet first, deep under the surface, and let the big smoker that is

trying to smash you go by far overhead. Never be rigid. Relax.

Yield yourself to the waters that are ripping and tearing at you.

When the undertow catches you and drags you seaward along the

bottom, don't struggle against it. If you do, you are liable to be

drowned, for it is stronger than you. Yield yourself to that

undertow. Swim with it, not against it, and you will find the

pressure removed. And, swimming with it, fooling it so that it does

not hold you, swim upward at the same time. It will be no trouble

at all to reach the surface.

The man who wants to learn surf-riding must be a strong swimmer, and

he must be used to going under the water. After that, fair strength

and common-sense are all that is required. The force of the big

comber is rather unexpected. There are mix-ups in which board and

rider are torn apart and separated by several hundred feet. The

surf-rider must take care of himself. No matter how many riders

swim out with him, he cannot depend upon any of them for aid. The

fancied security I had in the presence of Ford and Freeth made me

forget that it was my first swim out in deep water among the big

ones. I recollected, however, and rather suddenly, for a big wave

came in, and away went the two men on its back all the way to shore.

I could have been drowned a dozen different ways before they got

back to me.

One slides down the face of a breaker on his surf-board, but he has

to get started to sliding. Board and rider must be moving shoreward

at a good rate before the wave overtakes them. When you see the

wave coming that you want to ride in, you turn tail to it and paddle

shoreward with all your strength, using what is called the windmill

stroke. This is a sort of spurt performed immediately in front of

the wave. If the board is going fast enough, the wave accelerates

it, and the board begins its quarter-of-a-mile slide.

I shall never forget the first big wave I caught out there in the

deep water. I saw it coming, turned my back on it and paddled for

dear life. Faster and faster my board went, till it seemed my arms

would drop off. What was happening behind me I could not tell. One

cannot look behind and paddle the windmill stroke. I heard the

crest of the wave hissing and churning, and then my board was lifted

and flung forward. I scarcely knew what happened the first half-

minute. Though I kept my eyes open, I could not see anything, for I

was buried in the rushing white of the crest. But I did not mind.

I was chiefly conscious of ecstatic bliss at having caught the wave.

At the end, of the half-minute, however, I began to see things, and

to breathe. I saw that three feet of the nose of my board was clear

out of water and riding on the air. I shifted my weight forward,

and made the nose come down. Then I lay, quite at rest in the midst

of the wild movement, and watched the shore and the bathers on the

beach grow distinct. I didn't cover quite a quarter of a mile on

that wave, because, to prevent the board from diving, I shifted my

weight back, but shifted it too far and fell down the rear slope of

the wave.

It was my second day at surf-riding, and I was quite proud of

myself. I stayed out there four hours, and when it was over, I was

resolved that on the morrow I'd come in standing up. But that

resolution paved a distant place. On the morrow I was in bed. I

was not sick, but I was very unhappy, and I was in bed. When

describing the wonderful water of Hawaii I forgot to describe the

wonderful sun of Hawaii. It is a tropic sun, and, furthermore, in

the first part of June, it is an overhead sun. It is also an

insidious, deceitful sun. For the first time in my life I was

sunburned unawares. My arms, shoulders, and back had been burned

many times in the past and were tough; but not so my legs. And for

four hours I had exposed the tender backs of my legs, at right-

angles, to that perpendicular Hawaiian sun. It was not until after

I got ashore that I discovered the sun had touched me. Sunburn at

first is merely warm; after that it grows intense and the blisters

come out. Also, the joints, where the skin wrinkles, refuse to

bend. That is why I spent the next day in bed. I couldn't walk.

And that is why, to-day, I am writing this in bed. It is easier to

than not to. But to-morrow, ah, to-morrow, I shall be out in that

wonderful water, and I shall come in standing up, even as Ford and

Freeth. And if I fail to-morrow, I shall do it the next day, or the

next. Upon one thing I am resolved: the Snark shall not sail from

Honolulu until I, too, wing my heels with the swiftness of the sea,

and become a sun-burned, skin-peeling Mercury.

CHAPTER VII--THE LEPERS OF MOLOKAI

When the Snark sailed along the windward coast of Molokai, on her

way to Honolulu, I looked at the chart, then pointed to a low-lying

peninsula backed by a tremendous cliff varying from two to four

thousand feet in height, and said: "The pit of hell, the most

cursed place on earth." I should have been shocked, if, at that

moment, I could have caught a vision of myself a month later, ashore

in the most cursed place on earth and having a disgracefully good

time along with eight hundred of the lepers who were likewise having

a good time. Their good time was not disgraceful; but mine was, for

in the midst of so much misery it was not meet for me to have a good

time. That is the way I felt about it, and my only excuse is that I

couldn't help having a good time.

For instance, in the afternoon of the Fourth of July all the lepers

gathered at the race-track for the sports. I had wandered away from

the Superintendent and the physicians in order to get a snapshot of

the finish of one of the races. It was an interesting race, and

partisanship ran high. Three horses were entered, one ridden by a

Chinese, one by an Hawaiian, and one by a Portuguese boy. All three

riders were lepers; so were the judges and the crowd. The race was

twice around the track. The Chinese and the Hawaiian got away

together and rode neck and neck, the Portuguese boy toiling along

two hundred feet behind. Around they went in the same positions.

Halfway around on the second and final lap the Chinese pulled away

and got one length ahead of the Hawaiian. At the same time the

Portuguese boy was beginning to crawl up. But it looked hopeless.

The crowd went wild. All the lepers were passionate lovers of

horseflesh. The Portuguese boy crawled nearer and nearer. I went

wild, too. They were on the home stretch. The Portuguese boy

passed the Hawaiian. There was a thunder of hoofs, a rush of the

three horses bunched together, the jockeys plying their whips, and

every last onlooker bursting his throat, or hers, with shouts and

yells. Nearer, nearer, inch by inch, the Portuguese boy crept up,

and passed, yes, passed, winning by a head from the Chinese. I came

to myself in a group of lepers. They were yelling, tossing their

hats, and dancing around like fiends. So was I. When I came to I

was waving my hat and murmuring ecstatically: "By golly, the boy

wins! The boy wins!"

I tried to check myself. I assured myself that I was witnessing one

of the horrors of Molokai, and that it was shameful for me, under

such circumstances, to be so light-hearted and light-headed. But it

was no use. The next event was a donkey-race, and it was just

starting; so was the fun. The last donkey in was to win the race,

and what complicated the affair was that no rider rode his own

donkey. They rode one another's donkeys, the result of which was

that each man strove to make the donkey he rode beat his own donkey

ridden by some one else, Naturally, only men possessing very slow or

extremely obstreperous donkeys had entered them for the race. One

donkey had been trained to tuck in its legs and lie down whenever

its rider touched its sides with his heels. Some donkeys strove to

turn around and come back; others developed a penchant for the side

of the track, where they stuck their heads over the railing and

stopped; while all of them dawdled. Halfway around the track one

donkey got into an argument with its rider. When all the rest of

the donkeys had crossed the wire, that particular donkey was still

arguing. He won the race, though his rider lost it and came in on

foot. And all the while nearly a thousand lepers were laughing

uproariously at the fun. Anybody in my place would have joined with

them in having a good time.

All the foregoing is by way of preamble to the statement that the

horrors of Molokai, as they have been painted in the past, do not

exist. The Settlement has been written up repeatedly by

sensationalists, and usually by sensationalists who have never laid

eyes on it. Of course, leprosy is leprosy, and it is a terrible

thing; but so much that is lurid has been written about Molokai that

neither the lepers, nor those who devote their lives to them, have

received a fair deal. Here is a case in point. A newspaper writer,

who, of course, had never been near the Settlement, vividly

described Superintendent McVeigh, crouching in a grass hut and being

besieged nightly by starving lepers on their knees, wailing for

food. This hair-raising account was copied by the press all over

the United States and was the cause of many indignant and protesting

editorials. Well, I lived and slept for five days in Mr. McVeigh's

"grass hut" (which was a comfortable wooden cottage, by the way; and

there isn't a grass house in the whole Settlement), and I heard the

lepers wailing for food--only the wailing was peculiarly harmonious

and rhythmic, and it was accompanied by the music of stringed

instruments, violins, guitars, ukuleles, and banjos. Also, the

wailing was of various sorts. The leper brass band wailed, and two

singing societies wailed, and lastly a quintet of excellent voices

wailed. So much for a lie that should never have been printed. The

wailing was the serenade which the glee clubs always give Mr.

McVeigh when he returns from a trip to Honolulu.

Leprosy is not so contagious as is imagined. I went for a week's

visit to the Settlement, and I took my wife along--all of which

would not have happened had we had any apprehension of contracting

the disease. Nor did we wear long, gauntleted gloves and keep apart

from the lepers. On the contrary, we mingled freely with them, and

before we left, knew scores of them by sight and name. The

precautions of simple cleanliness seem to be all that is necessary.

On returning to their own houses, after having been among and

handling lepers, the non-lepers, such as the physicians and the

superintendent, merely wash their faces and hands with mildly

antiseptic soap and change their coats.

That a leper is unclean, however, should be insisted upon; and the

segregation of lepers, from what little is known of the disease,

should be rigidly maintained. On the other hand, the awful horror

with which the leper has been regarded in the past, and the

frightful treatment he has received, have been unnecessary and

cruel. In order to dispel some of the popular misapprehensions of

leprosy, I want to tell something of the relations between the

lepers and non-lepers as I observed them at Molokai. On the morning

after our arrival Charmian and I attended a shoot of the Kalaupapa

Rifle Club, and caught our first glimpse of the democracy of

affliction and alleviation that obtains. The club was just

beginning a prize shoot for a cup put up by Mr. McVeigh, who is also

a member of the club, as also are Dr. Goodhue and Dr. Hollmann, the

resident physicians (who, by the way, live in the Settlement with

their wives). All about us, in the shooting booth, were the lepers.

Lepers and non-lepers were using the same guns, and all were rubbing

shoulders in the confined space. The majority of the lepers were

Hawaiians. Sitting beside me on a bench was a Norwegian. Directly

in front of me, in the stand, was an American, a veteran of the

Civil War, who had fought on the Confederate side. He was sixty-

five years of age, but that did not prevent him from running up a

good score. Strapping Hawaiian policemen, lepers, khaki-clad, were

also shooting, as were Portuguese, Chinese, and kokuas--the latter

are native helpers in the Settlement who are non-lepers. And on the

afternoon that Charmian and I climbed the two-thousand-foot pali and

looked our last upon the Settlement, the superintendent, the

doctors, and the mixture of nationalities and of diseased and non-

diseased were all engaged in an exciting baseball game.

Not so was the leper and his greatly misunderstood and feared

disease treated during the middle ages in Europe. At that time the

leper was considered legally and politically dead. He was placed in

a funeral procession and led to the church, where the burial service

was read over him by the officiating clergyman. Then a spadeful of

earth was dropped upon his chest and he was dead-living dead. While

this rigorous treatment was largely unnecessary, nevertheless, one

thing was learned by it. Leprosy was unknown in Europe until it was

introduced by the returning Crusaders, whereupon it spread slowly

until it had seized upon large numbers of the people. Obviously, it

was a disease that could be contracted by contact. It was a

contagion, and it was equally obvious that it could be eradicated by

segregation. Terrible and monstrous as was the treatment of the

leper in those days, the great lesson of segregation was learned.

By its means leprosy was stamped out.

And by the same means leprosy is even now decreasing in the Hawaiian

Islands. But the segregation of the lepers on Molokai is not the

horrible nightmare that has been so often exploited by YELLOW

writers. In the first place, the leper is not torn ruthlessly from

his family. When a suspect is discovered, he is invited by the

Board of Health to come to the Kalihi receiving station at Honolulu.

His fare and all expenses are paid for him. He is first passed upon

by microscopical examination by the bacteriologist of the Board of

Health. If the bacillus leprae is found, the patient is examined by

the Board of Examining Physicians, five in number. If found by them

to be a leper, he is so declared, which finding is later officially

confirmed by the Board of Health, and the leper is ordered straight

to Molokai. Furthermore, during the thorough trial that is given

his case, the patient has the right to be represented by a physician

whom he can select and employ for himself. Nor, after having been

declared a leper, is the patient immediately rushed off to Molokai.

He is given ample time, weeks, and even months, sometimes, during

which he stays at Kalihi and winds up or arranges all his business

affairs. At Molokai, in turn, he may be visited by his relatives,

business agents, etc., though they are not permitted to eat and

sleep in his house. Visitors' houses, kept "clean," are maintained

for this purpose.

I saw an illustration of the thorough trial given the suspect, when

I visited Kalihi with Mr. Pinkham, president of the Board of Health.

The suspect was an Hawaiian, seventy years of age, who for thirty-

four years had worked in Honolulu as a pressman in a printing

office. The bacteriologist had decided that he was a leper, the

Examining Board had been unable to make up its mind, and that day

all had come out to Kalihi to make another examination.

When at Molokai, the declared leper has the privilege of re-

examination, and patients are continually coming back to Honolulu

for that purpose. The steamer that took me to Molokai had on board

two returning lepers, both young women, one of whom had come to

Honolulu to settle up some property she owned, and the other had

come to Honolulu to see her sick mother. Both had remained at

Kalihi for a month.

The Settlement of Molokai enjoys a far more delightful climate than

even Honolulu, being situated on the windward side of the island in

the path of the fresh north-east trades. The scenery is

magnificent; on one side is the blue sea, on the other the wonderful

wall of the pali, receding here and there into beautiful mountain

valleys. Everywhere are grassy pastures over which roam the

hundreds of horses which are owned by the lepers. Some of them have

their own carts, rigs, and traps. In the little harbour of

Kalaupapa lie fishing boats and a steam launch, all of which are

privately owned and operated by lepers. Their bounds upon the sea

are, of course, determined: otherwise no restriction is put upon

their sea-faring. Their fish they sell to the Board of Health, and

the money they receive is their own. While I was there, one night's

catch was four thousand pounds.

And as these men fish, others farm. All trades are followed. One

leper, a pure Hawaiian, is the boss painter. He employs eight men,

and takes contracts for painting buildings from the Board of Health.

He is a member of the Kalaupapa Rifle Club, where I met him, and I

must confess that he was far better dressed than I. Another man,

similarly situated, is the boss carpenter. Then, in addition to the

Board of Health store, there are little privately owned stores,

where those with shopkeeper's souls may exercise their peculiar

instincts. The Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Waiamau, a finely

educated and able man, is a pure Hawaiian and a leper. Mr.

Bartlett, who is the present storekeeper, is an American who was in

business in Honolulu before he was struck down by the disease. All

that these men earn is that much in their own pockets. If they do

not work, they are taken care of anyway by the territory, given

food, shelter, clothes, and medical attendance. The Board of Health

carries on agriculture, stock-raising, and dairying, for local use,

and employment at fair wages is furnished to all that wish to work.

They are not compelled to work, however, for they are the wards of

the territory. For the young, and the very old, and the helpless

there are homes and hospitals.

Major Lee, an American and long a marine engineer for the Inter

Island Steamship Company, I met actively at work in the new steam

laundry, where he was busy installing the machinery. I met him

often, afterwards, and one day he said to me:

"Give us a good breeze about how we live here. For heaven's sake

write us up straight. Put your foot down on this chamber-of-horrors

rot and all the rest of it. We don't like being misrepresented.

We've got some feelings. Just tell the world how we really are in

here."

Man after man that I met in the Settlement, and woman after woman,

in one way or another expressed the same sentiment. It was patent

that they resented bitterly the sensational and untruthful way in

which they have been exploited in the past.

In spite of the fact that they are afflicted by disease, the lepers

form a happy colony, divided into two villages and numerous country

and seaside homes, of nearly a thousand souls. They have six

churches, a Young Men's Christian Association building, several

assembly halls, a band stand, a race-track, baseball grounds,

shooting ranges, an athletic club, numerous glee clubs, and two

brass bands.

"They are so contented down there," Mr. Pinkham told me, "that you

can't drive them away with a shot-gun."

This I later verified for myself. In January of this year, eleven

of the lepers, on whom the disease, after having committed certain

ravages, showed no further signs of activity, were brought back to

Honolulu for re-examination. They were loath to come; and, on being

asked whether or not they wanted to go free if found clean of

leprosy, one and all answered, "Back to Molokai."

In the old days, before the discovery of the leprosy bacillus, a

small number of men and women, suffering from various and wholly

different diseases, were adjudged lepers and sent to Molokai. Years

afterward they suffered great consternation when the bacteriologists

declared that they were not afflicted with leprosy and never had

been. They fought against being sent away from Molokai, and in one

way or another, as helpers and nurses, they got jobs from the Board

of Health and remained. The present jailer is one of these men.

Declared to be a non-leper, he accepted, on salary, the charge of

the jail, in order to escape being sent away.

At the present moment, in Honolulu, there is a bootblack. He is an

American negro. Mr. McVeigh told me about him. Long ago, before

the bacteriological tests, he was sent to Molokai as a leper. As a

ward of the state he developed a superlative degree of independence

and fomented much petty mischief. And then, one day, after having

been for years a perennial source of minor annoyances, the

bacteriological test was applied, and he was declared a non-leper.

"Ah, ha!" chortled Mr. McVeigh. "Now I've got you! Out you go on

the next steamer and good riddance!"

But the negro didn't want to go. Immediately he married an old

woman, in the last stages of leprosy, and began petitioning the

Board of Health for permission to remain and nurse his sick wife.

There was no one, he said pathetically, who could take care of his

poor wife as well as he could. But they saw through his game, and

he was deported on the steamer and given the freedom of the world.

But he preferred Molokai. Landing on the leeward side of Molokai,

he sneaked down the pali one night and took up his abode in the

Settlement. He was apprehended, tried and convicted of trespass,

sentenced to pay a small fine, and again deported on the steamer

with the warning that if he trespassed again, he would be fined one

hundred dollars and be sent to prison in Honolulu. And now, when

Mr. McVeigh comes up to Honolulu, the bootblack shines his shoes for

him and says:

"Say, Boss, I lost a good home down there. Yes, sir, I lost a good

home." Then his voice sinks to a confidential whisper as he says,

"Say, Boss, can't I go back? Can't you fix it for me so as I can go

back?"

He had lived nine years on Molokai, and he had had a better time

there than he has ever had, before and after, on the outside.

As regards the fear of leprosy itself, nowhere in the Settlement

among lepers, or non-lepers, did I see any sign of it. The chief

horror of leprosy obtains in the minds of those who have never seen

a leper and who do not know anything about the disease. At the

hotel at Waikiki a lady expressed shuddering amazement at my having

the hardihood to pay a visit to the Settlement. On talking with her

I learned that she had been born in Honolulu, had lived there all

her life, and had never laid eyes on a leper. That was more than I

could say of myself in the United States, where the segregation of

lepers is loosely enforced and where I have repeatedly seen lepers

on the streets of large cities.

Leprosy is terrible, there is no getting away from that; but from

what little I know of the disease and its degree of contagiousness,

I would by far prefer to spend the rest of my days in Molokai than

in any tuberculosis sanatorium. In every city and county hospital

for poor people in the United States, or in similar institutions in

other countries, sights as terrible as those in Molokai can be

witnessed, and the sum total of these sights is vastly more

terrible. For that matter, if it were given me to choose between

being compelled to live in Molokai for the rest of my life, or in

the East End of London, the East Side of New York, or the Stockyards

of Chicago, I would select Molokai without debate. I would prefer

one year of life in Molokai to five years of life in the above-

mentioned cesspools of human degradation and misery.

In Molokai the people are happy. I shall never forget the

celebration of the Fourth of July I witnessed there. At six o'clock

in the morning the "horribles" were out, dressed fantastically,

astride horses, mules, and donkeys (their own property), and cutting

capers all over the Settlement. Two brass bands were out as well.

Then there were the pa-u riders, thirty or forty of them, Hawaiian

women all, superb horsewomen dressed gorgeously in the old, native

riding costume, and dashing about in twos and threes and groups. In

the afternoon Charmian and I stood in the judge's stand and awarded

the prizes for horsemanship and costume to the pa-u riders. All

about were the hundreds of lepers, with wreaths of flowers on heads

and necks and shoulders, looking on and making merry. And always,

over the brows of hills and across the grassy level stretches,

appearing and disappearing, were the groups of men and women, gaily

dressed, on galloping horses, horses and riders flower-bedecked and

flower-garlanded, singing, and laughing, and riding like the wind.

And as I stood in the judge's stand and looked at all this, there

came to my recollection the lazar house of Havana, where I had once

beheld some two hundred lepers, prisoners inside four restricted

walls until they died. No, there are a few thousand places I wot of

in this world over which I would select Molokai as a place of

permanent residence. In the evening we went to one of the leper

assembly halls, where, before a crowded audience, the singing

societies contested for prizes, and where the night wound up with a

dance. I have seen the Hawaiians living in the slums of Honolulu,

and, having seen them, I can readily understand why the lepers,

brought up from the Settlement for re-examination, shouted one and

all, "Back to Molokai!"

One thing is certain. The leper in the Settlement is far better off

than the leper who lies in hiding outside. Such a leper is a lonely

outcast, living in constant fear of discovery and slowly and surely

rotting away. The action of leprosy is not steady. It lays hold of

its victim, commits a ravage, and then lies dormant for an

indeterminate period. It may not commit another ravage for five

years, or ten years, or forty years, and the patient may enjoy

uninterrupted good health. Rarely, however, do these first ravages

cease of themselves. The skilled surgeon is required, and the

skilled surgeon cannot be called in for the leper who is in hiding.

For instance, the first ravage may take the form of a perforating

ulcer in the sole of the foot. When the bone is reached, necrosis

sets in. If the leper is in hiding, he cannot be operated upon, the

necrosis will continue to eat its way up the bone of the leg, and in

a brief and horrible time that leper will die of gangrene or some

other terrible complication. On the other hand, if that same leper

is in Molokai, the surgeon will operate upon the foot, remove the

ulcer, cleanse the bone, and put a complete stop to that particular

ravage of the disease. A month after the operation the leper will

be out riding horseback, running foot races, swimming in the

breakers, or climbing the giddy sides of the valleys for mountain

apples. And as has been stated before, the disease, lying dormant,

may not again attack him for five, ten, or forty years.

The old horrors of leprosy go back to the conditions that obtained

before the days of antiseptic surgery, and before the time when

physicians like Dr. Goodhue and Dr. Hollmann went to live at the

Settlement. Dr. Goodhue is the pioneer surgeon there, and too much

praise cannot be given him for the noble work he has done. I spent

one morning in the operating room with him and of the three

operations he performed, two were on men, newcomers, who had arrived

on the same steamer with me. In each case, the disease had attacked

in one spot only. One had a perforating ulcer in the ankle, well

advanced, and the other man was suffering from a similar affliction,

well advanced, under his arm. Both cases were well advanced because

the man had been on the outside and had not been treated. In each

case. Dr. Goodhue put an immediate and complete stop to the ravage,

and in four weeks those two men will be as well and able-bodied as

they ever were in their lives. The only difference between them and

you or me is that the disease is lying dormant in their bodies and

may at any future time commit another ravage.

Leprosy is as old as history. References to it are found in the

earliest written records. And yet to-day practically nothing more

is known about it than was known then. This much was known then,

namely, that it was contagious and that those afflicted by it should

be segregated. The difference between then and now is that to-day

the leper is more rigidly segregated and more humanely treated. But

leprosy itself still remains the same awful and profound mystery. A

reading of the reports of the physicians and specialists of all

countries reveals the baffling nature of the disease. These leprosy

specialists are unanimous on no one phase of the disease. They do

not know. In the past they rashly and dogmatically generalized.

They generalize no longer. The one possible generalization that can

be drawn from all the investigation that has been made is that

leprosy is FEEBLY CONTAGIOUS. But in what manner it is feebly

contagious is not known. They have isolated the bacillus of

leprosy. They can determine by bacteriological examination whether

or not a person is a leper; but they are as far away as ever from

knowing how that bacillus finds its entrance into the body of a non-

leper. They do not know the length of time of incubation. They

have tried to inoculate all sorts of animals with leprosy, and have

failed.

They are baffled in the discovery of a serum wherewith to fight the

disease. And in all their work, as yet, they have found no clue, no

cure. Sometimes there have been blazes of hope, theories of

causation and much heralded cures, but every time the darkness of

failure quenched the flame. A doctor insists that the cause of

leprosy is a long-continued fish diet, and he proves his theory

voluminously till a physician from the highlands of India demands

why the natives of that district should therefore be afflicted by

leprosy when they have never eaten fish, nor all the generations of

their fathers before them. A man treats a leper with a certain kind

of oil or drug, announces a cure, and five, ten, or forty years

afterwards the disease breaks out again. It is this trick of

leprosy lying dormant in the body for indeterminate periods that is

responsible for many alleged cures. But this much is certain: AS

YET THERE HAS BEEN NO AUTHENTIC CASE OF A CURE.

Leprosy is FEEBLY CONTAGIOUS, but how is it contagious? An Austrian

physician has inoculated himself and his assistants with leprosy and

failed to catch it. But this is not conclusive, for there is the

famous case of the Hawaiian murderer who had his sentence of death

commuted to life imprisonment on his agreeing to be inoculated with

the bacillus leprae. Some time after inoculation, leprosy made its

appearance, and the man died a leper on Molokai. Nor was this

conclusive, for it was discovered that at the time he was inoculated

several members of his family were already suffering from the

disease on Molokai. He may have contracted the disease from them,

and it may have been well along in its mysterious period of

incubation at the time he was officially inoculated. Then there is

the case of that hero of the Church, Father Damien, who went to

Molokai a clean man and died a leper. There have been many theories

as to how he contracted leprosy, but nobody knows. He never knew

himself. But every chance that he ran has certainly been run by a

woman at present living in the Settlement; who has lived there many

years; who has had five leper husbands, and had children by them;

and who is to-day, as she always has been, free of the disease.

As yet no light has been shed upon the mystery of leprosy. When

more is learned about the disease, a cure for it may be expected.

Once an efficacious serum is discovered, and leprosy, because it is

so feebly contagious, will pass away swiftly from the earth. The

battle waged with it will be short and sharp. In the meantime, how

to discover that serum, or some other unguessed weapon? In the

present it is a serious matter. It is estimated that there are half

a million lepers, not segregated, in India alone. Carnegie

libraries, Rockefeller universities, and many similar benefactions

are all very well; but one cannot help thinking how far a few

thousands of dollars would go, say in the leper Settlement of

Molokai. The residents there are accidents of fate, scapegoats to

some mysterious natural law of which man knows nothing, isolated for

the welfare of their fellows who else might catch the dread disease,

even as they have caught it, nobody knows how. Not for their sakes

merely, but for the sake of future generations, a few thousands of

dollars would go far in a legitimate and scientific search after a

cure for leprosy, for a serum, or for some undreamed discovery that

will enable the medical world to exterminate the bacillus leprae.

There's the place for your money, you philanthropists.

CHAPTER VIII--THE HOUSE OF THE SUN

There are hosts of people who journey like restless spirits round

and about this earth in search of seascapes and landscapes and the

wonders and beauties of nature. They overrun Europe in armies; they

can be met in droves and herds in Florida and the West Indies, at

the Pyramids, and on the slopes and summits of the Canadian and

American Rockies; but in the House of the Sun they are as rare as

live and wriggling dinosaurs. Haleakala is the Hawaiian name for

"the House of the Sun." It is a noble dwelling, situated on the

Island of Maui; but so few tourists have ever peeped into it, much

less entered it, that their number may be practically reckoned as

zero. Yet I venture to state that for natural beauty and wonder the

nature-lover may see dissimilar things as great as Haleakala, but no

greater, while he will never see elsewhere anything more beautiful

or wonderful. Honolulu is six days' steaming from San Francisco;

Maui is a night's run on the steamer from Honolulu; and six hours

more if he is in a hurry, can bring the traveller to Kolikoli, which

is ten thousand and thirty-two feet above the sea and which stands

hard by the entrance portal to the House of the Sun. Yet the

tourist comes not, and Haleakala sleeps on in lonely and unseen

grandeur.

Not being tourists, we of the Snark went to Haleakala. On the

slopes of that monster mountain there is a cattle ranch of some

fifty thousand acres, where we spent the night at an altitude of two

thousand feet. The next morning it was boots and saddles, and with

cow-boys and pack-horses we climbed to Ukulele, a mountain ranch-

house, the altitude of which, fifty-five hundred feet, gives a

severely temperate climate, compelling blankets at night and a

roaring fireplace in the living-room. Ukulele, by the way, is the

Hawaiian for "jumping flea" as it is also the Hawaiian for a certain

musical instrument that may be likened to a young guitar. It is my

opinion that the mountain ranch-house was named after the young

guitar. We were not in a hurry, and we spent the day at Ukulele,

learnedly discussing altitudes and barometers and shaking our

particular barometer whenever any one's argument stood in need of

demonstration. Our barometer was the most graciously acquiescent

instrument I have ever seen. Also, we gathered mountain

raspberries, large as hen's eggs and larger, gazed up the pasture-

covered lava slopes to the summit of Haleakala, forty-five hundred

feet above us, and looked down upon a mighty battle of the clouds

that was being fought beneath us, ourselves in the bright sunshine.

Every day and every day this unending battle goes on. Ukiukiu is

the name of the trade-wind that comes raging down out of the north-

east and hurls itself upon Haleakala. Now Haleakala is so bulky and

tall that it turns the north-east trade-wind aside on either hand,

so that in the lee of Haleakala no trade-wind blows at all. On the

contrary, the wind blows in the counter direction, in the teeth of

the north-east trade. This wind is called Naulu. And day and night

and always Ukiukiu and Naulu strive with each other, advancing,

retreating, flanking, curving, curling, and turning and twisting,

the conflict made visible by the cloud-masses plucked from the

heavens and hurled back and forth in squadrons, battalions, armies,

and great mountain ranges. Once in a while, Ukiukiu, in mighty

gusts, flings immense cloud-masses clear over the summit of

Haleakala; whereupon Naulu craftily captures them, lines them up in

new battle-formation, and with them smites back at his ancient and

eternal antagonist. Then Ukiukiu sends a great cloud-army around

the eastern-side of the mountain. It is a flanking movement, well

executed. But Naulu, from his lair on the leeward side, gathers the

flanking army in, pulling and twisting and dragging it, hammering it

into shape, and sends it charging back against Ukiukiu around the

western side of the mountain. And all the while, above and below

the main battle-field, high up the slopes toward the sea, Ukiukiu

and Naulu are continually sending out little wisps of cloud, in

ragged skirmish line, that creep and crawl over the ground, among

the trees and through the canyons, and that spring upon and capture

one another in sudden ambuscades and sorties. And sometimes Ukiukiu

or Naulu, abruptly sending out a heavy charging column, captures the

ragged little skirmishers or drives them skyward, turning over and

over, in vertical whirls, thousands of feet in the air.

But it is on the western slopes of Haleakala that the main battle

goes on. Here Naulu masses his heaviest formations and wins his

greatest victories. Ukiukiu grows weak toward late afternoon, which

is the way of all trade-winds, and is driven backward by Naulu.

Naulu's generalship is excellent. All day he has been gathering and

packing away immense reserves. As the afternoon draws on, he welds

them into a solid column, sharp-pointed, miles in length, a mile in

width, and hundreds of feet thick. This column he slowly thrusts

forward into the broad battle-front of Ukiukiu, and slowly and

surely Ukiukiu, weakening fast, is split asunder. But it is not all

bloodless. At times Ukiukiu struggles wildly, and with fresh

accessions of strength from the limitless north-east, smashes away

half a mile at a time of Naulu's column and sweeps it off and away

toward West Maui. Sometimes, when the two charging armies meet end-

on, a tremendous perpendicular whirl results, the cloud-masses,

locked together, mounting thousands of feet into the air and turning

over and over. A favourite device of Ukiukiu is to send a low,

squat formation, densely packed, forward along the ground and under

Naulu. When Ukiukiu is under, he proceeds to buck. Naulu's mighty

middle gives to the blow and bends upward, but usually he turns the

attacking column back upon itself and sets it milling. And all the

while the ragged little skirmishers, stray and detached, sneak

through the trees and canyons, crawl along and through the grass,

and surprise one another with unexpected leaps and rushes; while

above, far above, serene and lonely in the rays of the setting sun,

Haleakala looks down upon the conflict. And so, the night. But in

the morning, after the fashion of trade-winds, Ukiukiu gathers

strength and sends the hosts of Naulu rolling back in confusion and

rout. And one day is like another day in the battle of the clouds,

where Ukiukiu and Naulu strive eternally on the slopes of Haleakala.

Again in the morning, it was boots and saddles, cow-boys, and

packhorses, and the climb to the top began. One packhorse carried

twenty gallons of water, slung in five-gallon bags on either side;

for water is precious and rare in the crater itself, in spite of the

fact that several miles to the north and east of the crater-rim more

rain comes down than in any other place in the world. The way led

upward across countless lava flows, without regard for trails, and

never have I seen horses with such perfect footing as that of the

thirteen that composed our outfit. They climbed or dropped down

perpendicular places with the sureness and coolness of mountain

goats, and never a horse fell or baulked.

There is a familiar and strange illusion experienced by all who

climb isolated mountains. The higher one climbs, the more of the

earth's surface becomes visible, and the effect of this is that the

horizon seems up-hill from the observer. This illusion is

especially notable on Haleakala, for the old volcano rises directly

from the sea without buttresses or connecting ranges. In

consequence, as fast as we climbed up the grim slope of Haleakala,

still faster did Haleakala, ourselves, and all about us, sink down

into the centre of what appeared a profound abyss. Everywhere, far

above us, towered the horizon. The ocean sloped down from the

horizon to us. The higher we climbed, the deeper did we seem to

sink down, the farther above us shone the horizon, and the steeper

pitched the grade up to that horizontal line where sky and ocean

met. It was weird and unreal, and vagrant thoughts of Simm's Hole

and of the volcano through which Jules Verne journeyed to the centre

of the earth flitted through one's mind.

And then, when at last we reached the summit of that monster

mountain, which summit was like the bottom of an inverted cone

situated in the centre of an awful cosmic pit, we found that we were

at neither top nor bottom. Far above us was the heaven-towering

horizon, and far beneath us, where the top of the mountain should

have been, was a deeper deep, the great crater, the House of the

Sun. Twenty-three miles around stretched the dizzy wells of the

crater. We stood on the edge of the nearly vertical western wall,

and the floor of the crater lay nearly half a mile beneath. This

floor, broken by lava-flows and cinder-cones, was as red and fresh

and uneroded as if it were but yesterday that the fires went out.

The cinder-cones, the smallest over four hundred feet in height and

the largest over nine hundred, seemed no more than puny little sand-

hills, so mighty was the magnitude of the setting. Two gaps,

thousands of feet deep, broke the rim of the crater, and through

these Ukiukiu vainly strove to drive his fleecy herds of trade-wind

clouds. As fast as they advanced through the gaps, the heat of the

crater dissipated them into thin air, and though they advanced

always, they got nowhere.

It was a scene of vast bleakness and desolation, stern, forbidding,

fascinating. We gazed down upon a place of fire and earthquake.

The tie-ribs of earth lay bare before us. It was a workshop of

nature still cluttered with the raw beginnings of world-making.

Here and there great dikes of primordial rock had thrust themselves

up from the bowels of earth, straight through the molten surface-

ferment that had evidently cooled only the other day. It was all

unreal and unbelievable. Looking upward, far above us (in reality

beneath us) floated the cloud-battle of Ukiukiu and Naulu. And

higher up the slope of the seeming abyss, above the cloud-battle, in

the air and sky, hung the islands of Lanai and Molokai. Across the

crater, to the south-east, still apparently looking upward, we saw

ascending, first, the turquoise sea, then the white surf-line of the

shore of Hawaii; above that the belt of trade-clouds, and next,

eighty miles away, rearing their stupendous hulks out of the azure

sky, tipped with snow, wreathed with cloud, trembling like a mirage,

the peaks of Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa hung poised on the wall of

heaven.

It is told that long ago, one Maui, the son of Hina, lived on what

is now known as West Maui. His mother, Hina, employed her time in

the making of kapas. She must have made them at night, for her days

were occupied in trying to dry the kapas. Each morning, and all

morning, she toiled at spreading them out in the sun. But no sooner

were they out, than she began taking them in, in order to have them

all under shelter for the night. For know that the days were

shorter then than now. Maui watched his mother's futile toil and

felt sorry for her. He decided to do something--oh, no, not to help

her hang out and take in the kapas. He was too clever for that.

His idea was to make the sun go slower. Perhaps he was the first

Hawaiian astronomer. At any rate, he took a series of observations

of the sun from various parts of the island. His conclusion was

that the sun's path was directly across Haleakala. Unlike Joshua,

he stood in no need of divine assistance. He gathered a huge

quantity of coconuts, from the fibre of which he braided a stout

cord, and in one end of which he made a noose, even as the cow-boys

of Haleakala do to this day. Next he climbed into the House of the

Sun and laid in wait. When the sun came tearing along the path,

bent on completing its journey in the shortest time possible, the

valiant youth threw his lariat around one of the sun's largest and

strongest beams. He made the sun slow down some; also, he broke the

beam short off. And he kept on roping and breaking off beams till

the sun said it was willing to listen to reason. Maui set forth his

terms of peace, which the sun accepted, agreeing to go more slowly

thereafter. Wherefore Hina had ample time in which to dry her

kapas, and the days are longer than they used to be, which last is

quite in accord with the teachings of modern astronomy.

We had a lunch of jerked beef and hard poi in a stone corral, used

of old time for the night-impounding of cattle being driven across

the island. Then we skirted the rim for half a mile and began the

descent into the crater. Twenty-five hundred feet beneath lay the

floor, and down a steep slope of loose volcanic cinders we dropped,

the sure-footed horses slipping and sliding, but always keeping

their feet. The black surface of the cinders, when broken by the

horses' hoofs, turned to a yellow ochre dust, virulent in appearance

and acid of taste, that arose in clouds. There was a gallop across

a level stretch to the mouth of a convenient blow-hole, and then the

descent continued in clouds of volcanic dust, winding in and out

among cinder-cones, brick-red, old rose, and purplish black of

colour. Above us, higher and higher, towered the crater-walls,

while we journeyed on across innumerable lava-flows, turning and

twisting a devious way among the adamantine billows of a petrified

sea. Saw-toothed waves of lava vexed the surface of this weird

ocean, while on either hand arose jagged crests and spiracles of

fantastic shape. Our way led on past a bottomless pit and along and

over the main stream of the latest lava-flow for seven miles.

At the lower end of the crater was our camping spot, in a small

grove of olapa and kolea trees, tucked away in a corner of the

crater at the base of walls that rose perpendicularly fifteen

hundred feet. Here was pasturage for the horses, but no water, and

first we turned aside and picked our way across a mile of lava to a

known water-hole in a crevice in the crater-wall. The water-hole

was empty. But on climbing fifty feet up the crevice, a pool was

found containing half a dozen barrels of water. A pail was carried

up, and soon a steady stream of the precious liquid was running down

the rock and filling the lower pool, while the cow-boys below were

busy fighting the horses back, for there was room for one only to

drink at a time. Then it was on to camp at the foot of the wall, up

which herds of wild goats scrambled and blatted, while the tent

arose to the sound of rifle-firing. Jerked beef, hard poi, and

broiled kid were the menu. Over the crest of the crater, just above

our heads, rolled a sea of clouds, driven on by Ukiukiu. Though

this sea rolled over the crest unceasingly, it never blotted out nor

dimmed the moon, for the heat of the crater dissolved the clouds as

fast as they rolled in. Through the moonlight, attracted by the

camp-fire, came the crater cattle to peer and challenge. They were

rolling fat, though they rarely drank water, the morning dew on the

grass taking its place. It was because of this dew that the tent

made a welcome bedchamber, and we fell asleep to the chanting of

hulas by the unwearied Hawaiian cowboys, in whose veins, no doubt,

ran the blood of Maui, their valiant forebear.

The camera cannot do justice to the House of the Sun. The

sublimated chemistry of photography may not lie, but it certainly

does not tell all the truth. The Koolau Gap may be faithfully

reproduced, just as it impinged on the retina of the camera, yet in

the resulting picture the gigantic scale of things would be missing.

Those walls that seem several hundred feet in height are almost as

many thousand; that entering wedge of cloud is a mile and a half

wide in the gap itself, while beyond the gap it is a veritable

ocean; and that foreground of cinder-cone and volcanic ash, mushy

and colourless in appearance, is in truth gorgeous-hued in brick-

red, terra-cotta rose, yellow ochre, and purplish black. Also,

words are a vain thing and drive to despair. To say that a crater-

wall is two thousand feet high is to say just precisely that it is

two thousand feet high; but there is a vast deal more to that

crater-wall than a mere statistic. The sun is ninety-three millions

of miles distant, but to mortal conception the adjoining county is

farther away. This frailty of the human brain is hard on the sun.

It is likewise hard on the House of the Sun. Haleakala has a

message of beauty and wonder for the human soul that cannot be

delivered by proxy. Kolikoli is six hours from Kahului; Kahului is

a night's run from Honolulu; Honolulu is six days from San

Francisco; and there you are.

We climbed the crater-walls, put the horses over impossible places,

rolled stones, and shot wild goats. I did not get any goats. I was

too busy rolling stones. One spot in particular I remember, where

we started a stone the size of a horse. It began the descent easy

enough, rolling over, wobbling, and threatening to stop; but in a

few minutes it was soaring through the air two hundred feet at a

jump. It grew rapidly smaller until it struck a slight slope of

volcanic sand, over which it darted like a startled jackrabbit,

kicking up behind it a tiny trail of yellow dust. Stone and dust

diminished in size, until some of the party said the stone had

stopped. That was because they could not see it any longer. It had

vanished into the distance beyond their ken. Others saw it rolling

farther on--I know I did; and it is my firm conviction that that

stone is still rolling.

Our last day in the crater, Ukiukiu gave us a taste of his strength.

He smashed Naulu back all along the line, filled the House of the

Sun to overflowing with clouds, and drowned us out. Our rain-gauge

was a pint cup under a tiny hole in the tent. That last night of

storm and rain filled the cup, and there was no way of measuring the

water that spilled over into the blankets. With the rain-gauge out

of business there was no longer any reason for remaining; so we

broke camp in the wet-gray of dawn, and plunged eastward across the

lava to the Kaupo Gap. East Maui is nothing more or less than the

vast lava stream that flowed long ago through the Kaupo Gap; and

down this stream we picked our way from an altitude of six thousand

five hundred feet to the sea. This was a day's work in itself for

the horses; but never were there such horses. Safe in the bad

places, never rushing, never losing their heads, as soon as they

found a trail wide and smooth enough to run on, they ran. There was

no stopping them until the trail became bad again, and then they

stopped of themselves. Continuously, for days, they had performed

the hardest kind of work, and fed most of the time on grass foraged

by themselves at night while we slept, and yet that day they covered

twenty-eight leg-breaking miles and galloped into Hana like a bunch

of colts. Also, there were several of them, reared in the dry

region on the leeward side of Haleakala, that had never worn shoes

in all their lives. Day after day, and all day long, unshod, they

had travelled over the sharp lava, with the extra weight of a man on

their backs, and their hoofs were in better condition than those of

the shod horses.

The scenery between Vieiras's (where the Kaupo Gap empties into the

sea) and Lana, which we covered in half a day, is well worth a week

or month; but, wildly beautiful as it is, it becomes pale and small

in comparison with the wonderland that lies beyond the rubber

plantations between Hana and the Honomanu Gulch. Two days were

required to cover this marvellous stretch, which lies on the

windward side of Haleakala. The people who dwell there call it the

"ditch country," an unprepossessing name, but it has no other.

Nobody else ever comes there. Nobody else knows anything about it.

With the exception of a handful of men, whom business has brought

there, nobody has heard of the ditch country of Maui. Now a ditch

is a ditch, assumably muddy, and usually traversing uninteresting

and monotonous landscapes. But the Nahiku Ditch is not an ordinary

ditch. The windward side of Haleakala is serried by a thousand

precipitous gorges, down which rush as many torrents, each torrent

of which achieves a score of cascades and waterfalls before it

reaches the sea. More rain comes down here than in any other region

in the world. In 1904 the year's downpour was four hundred and

twenty inches. Water means sugar, and sugar is the backbone of the

territory of Hawaii, wherefore the Nahiku Ditch, which is not a

ditch, but a chain of tunnels. The water travels underground,

appearing only at intervals to leap a gorge, travelling high in the

air on a giddy flume and plunging into and through the opposing

mountain. This magnificent waterway is called a "ditch," and with

equal appropriateness can Cleopatra's barge be called a box-car.

There are no carriage roads through the ditch country, and before

the ditch was built, or bored, rather, there was no horse-trail.

Hundreds of inches of rain annually, on fertile soil, under a tropic

sun, means a steaming jungle of vegetation. A man, on foot, cutting

his way through, might advance a mile a day, but at the end of a

week he would be a wreck, and he would have to crawl hastily back if

he wanted to get out before the vegetation overran the passage way

he had cut. O'Shaughnessy was the daring engineer who conquered the

jungle and the gorges, ran the ditch and made the horse-trail. He

built enduringly, in concrete and masonry, and made one of the most

remarkable water-farms in the world. Every little runlet and

dribble is harvested and conveyed by subterranean channels to the

main ditch. But so heavily does it rain at times that countless

spillways let the surplus escape to the sea.

The horse-trail is not very wide. Like the engineer who built it,

it dares anything. Where the ditch plunges through the mountain, it

climbs over; and where the ditch leaps a gorge on a flume, the

horse-trail takes advantage of the ditch and crosses on top of the

flume. That careless trail thinks nothing of travelling up or down

the faces of precipices. It gouges its narrow way out of the wall,

dodging around waterfalls or passing under them where they thunder

down in white fury; while straight overhead the wall rises hundreds

of feet, and straight beneath it sinks a thousand. And those

marvellous mountain horses are as unconcerned as the trail. They

fox-trot along it as a matter of course, though the footing is

slippery with rain, and they will gallop with their hind feet

slipping over the edge if you let them. I advise only those with

steady nerves and cool heads to tackle the Nahiku Ditch trail. One

of our cow-boys was noted as the strongest and bravest on the big

ranch. He had ridden mountain horses all his life on the rugged

western slopes of Haleakala. He was first in the horse-breaking;

and when the others hung back, as a matter of course, he would go in

to meet a wild bull in the cattle-pen. He had a reputation. But he

had never ridden over the Nahiku Ditch. It was there he lost his

reputation. When he faced the first flume, spanning a hair-raising

gorge, narrow, without railings, with a bellowing waterfall above,

another below, and directly beneath a wild cascade, the air filled

with driving spray and rocking to the clamour and rush of sound and

motion--well, that cow-boy dismounted from his horse, explained

briefly that he had a wife and two children, and crossed over on

foot, leading the horse behind him.

The only relief from the flumes was the precipices; and the only

relief from the precipices was the flumes, except where the ditch

was far under ground, in which case we crossed one horse and rider

at a time, on primitive log-bridges that swayed and teetered and

threatened to carry away. I confess that at first I rode such

places with my feet loose in the stirrups, and that on the sheer

walls I saw to it, by a definite, conscious act of will, that the

foot in the outside stirrup, overhanging the thousand feet of fall,

was exceedingly loose. I say "at first"; for, as in the crater

itself we quickly lost our conception of magnitude, so, on the

Nahiku Ditch, we quickly lost our apprehension of depth. The

ceaseless iteration of height and depth produced a state of

consciousness in which height and depth were accepted as the

ordinary conditions of existence; and from the horse's back to look

sheer down four hundred or five hundred feet became quite

commonplace and non-productive of thrills. And as carelessly as the

trail and the horses, we swung along the dizzy heights and ducked

around or through the waterfalls.

And such a ride! Falling water was everywhere. We rode above the

clouds, under the clouds, and through the clouds! and every now and

then a shaft of sunshine penetrated like a search-light to the

depths yawning beneath us, or flashed upon some pinnacle of the

crater-rim thousands of feet above. At every turn of the trail a

waterfall or a dozen waterfalls, leaping hundreds of feet through

the air, burst upon our vision. At our first night's camp, in the

Keanae Gulch, we counted thirty-two waterfalls from a single

viewpoint. The vegetation ran riot over that wild land. There were

forests of koa and kolea trees, and candlenut trees; and then there

were the trees called ohia-ai, which bore red mountain apples,

mellow and juicy and most excellent to eat. Wild bananas grew

everywhere, clinging to the sides of the gorges, and, overborne by

their great bunches of ripe fruit, falling across the trail and

blocking the way. And over the forest surged a sea of green life,

the climbers of a thousand varieties, some that floated airily, in

lacelike filaments, from the tallest branches others that coiled and

wound about the trees like huge serpents; and one, the ei-ei, that

was for all the world like a climbing palm, swinging on a thick stem

from branch to branch and tree to tree and throttling the supports

whereby it climbed. Through the sea of green, lofty tree-ferns

thrust their great delicate fronds, and the lehua flaunted its

scarlet blossoms. Underneath the climbers, in no less profusion,

grew the warm-coloured, strangely-marked plants that in the United

States one is accustomed to seeing preciously conserved in hot-

houses. In fact, the ditch country of Maui is nothing more nor less

than a huge conservatory. Every familiar variety of fern

flourishes, and more varieties that are unfamiliar, from the tiniest

maidenhair to the gross and voracious staghorn, the latter the

terror of the woodsmen, interlacing with itself in tangled masses

five or six feet deep and covering acres.

Never was there such a ride. For two days it lasted, when we

emerged into rolling country, and, along an actual wagon-road, came

home to the ranch at a gallop. I know it was cruel to gallop the

horses after such a long, hard journey; but we blistered our hands

in vain effort to hold them in. That's the sort of horses they grow

on Haleakala. At the ranch there was great festival of cattle-

driving, branding, and horse-breaking. Overhead Ukiukiu and Naulu

battled valiantly, and far above, in the sunshine, towered the

mighty summit of Haleakala.

CHAPTER IX--A PACIFIC TRAVERSE

Sandwich Islands to Tahiti.--There is great difficulty in making

this passage across the trades. The whalers and all others speak

with great doubt of fetching Tahiti from the Sandwich islands.

Capt. Bruce says that a vessel should keep to the northward until

she gets a start of wind before bearing for her destination. In his

passage between them in November, 1837, he had no variables near the

line in coming south, and never could make easting on either tack,

though he endeavoured by every means to do so.

So say the sailing directions for the South Pacific Ocean; and that

is all they say. There is not a word more to help the weary voyager

in making this long traverse--nor is there any word at all

concerning the passage from Hawaii to the Marquesas, which lie some

eight hundred miles to the northeast of Tahiti and which are the

more difficult to reach by just that much. The reason for the lack

of directions is, I imagine, that no voyager is supposed to make

himself weary by attempting so impossible a traverse. But the

impossible did not deter the Snark,--principally because of the fact

that we did not read that particular little paragraph in the sailing

directions until after we had started. We sailed from Hilo, Hawaii,

on October 7, and arrived at Nuka-hiva, in the Marquesas, on

December 6. The distance was two thousand miles as the crow flies,

while we actually travelled at least four thousand miles to

accomplish it, thus proving for once and for ever that the shortest

distance between two points is not always a straight line. Had we

headed directly for the Marquesas, we might have travelled five or

six thousand miles.

Upon one thing we were resolved: we would not cross the Line west

of 130 degrees west longitude. For here was the problem. To cross

the Line to the west of that point, if the southeast trades were

well around to the southeast, would throw us so far to leeward of

the Marquesas that a head-beat would be maddeningly impossible.

Also, we had to remember the equatorial current, which moves west at

a rate of anywhere from twelve to seventy-five miles a day. A

pretty pickle, indeed, to be to leeward of our destination with such

a current in our teeth. No; not a minute, nor a second, west of 130

degrees west longitude would we cross the Line. But since the

southeast trades were to be expected five or six degrees north of

the Line (which, if they were well around to the southeast or south-

southeast, would necessitate our sliding off toward south-

southwest), we should have to hold to the eastward, north of the

Line, and north of the southeast trades, until we gained at least

128 degrees west longitude.

I have forgotten to mention that the seventy-horse-power gasolene

engine, as usual, was not working, and that we could depend upon

wind alone. Neither was the launch engine working. And while I am

about it, I may as well confess that the five-horse-power, which ran

the lights, fans, and pumps, was also on the sick-list. A striking

title for a book haunts me, waking and sleeping. I should like to

write that book some day and to call it "Around the World with Three

Gasolene Engines and a Wife." But I am afraid I shall not write it,

for fear of hurting the feelings of some of the young gentlemen of

San Francisco, Honolulu, and Hilo, who learned their trades at the

expense of the Snark's engines.

It looked easy on paper. Here was Hilo and there was our objective,

128 degrees west longitude. With the northeast trade blowing we

could travel a straight line between the two points, and even slack

our sheets off a goodly bit. But one of the chief troubles with the

trades is that one never knows just where he will pick them up and

just in what direction they will be blowing. We picked up the

northeast trade right outside of Hilo harbour, but the miserable

breeze was away around into the east. Then there was the north

equatorial current setting westward like a mighty river.

Furthermore, a small boat, by the wind and bucking into a big

headsea, does not work to advantage. She jogs up and down and gets

nowhere. Her sails are full and straining, every little while she

presses her lee-rail under, she flounders, and bumps, and splashes,

and that is all. Whenever she begins to gather way, she runs ker-

chug into a big mountain of water and is brought to a standstill.

So, with the Snark, the resultant of her smallness, of the trade

around into the east, and of the strong equatorial current, was a

long sag south. Oh, she did not go quite south. But the easting

she made was distressing. On October 11, she made forty miles

easting; October 12, fifteen miles; October 13, no easting; October

14, thirty miles; October 15, twenty-three miles; October 16, eleven

miles; and on October 17, she actually went to the westward four

miles. Thus, in a week she made one hundred and fifteen miles

easting, which was equivalent to sixteen miles a day. But, between

the longitude of Hilo and 128 degrees west longitude is a difference

of twenty-seven degrees, or, roughly, sixteen hundred miles. At

sixteen miles a day, one hundred days would be required to

accomplish this distance. And even then, our objective, l28 degrees

west longitude, was five degrees north of the Line, while Nuka-hiva,

in the Marquesas, lay nine degrees south of the Line and twelve

degrees to the west!

There remained only one thing to do--to work south out of the trade

and into the variables. It is true that Captain Bruce found no

variables on his traverse, and that he "never could make easting on

either tack." It was the variables or nothing with us, and we

prayed for better luck than he had had. The variables constitute

the belt of ocean lying between the trades and the doldrums, and are

conjectured to be the draughts of heated air which rise in the

doldrums, flow high in the air counter to the trades, and gradually

sink down till they fan the surface of the ocean where they are

found. And they are found where they are found; for they are wedged

between the trades and the doldrums, which same shift their

territory from day to day and month to month.

We found the variables in 11 degrees north latitude, and 11 degrees

north latitude we hugged jealously. To the south lay the doldrums.

To the north lay the northeast trade that refused to blow from the

northeast. The days came and went, and always they found the Snark

somewhere near the eleventh parallel. The variables were truly

variable. A light head-wind would die away and leave us rolling in

a calm for forty-eight hours. Then a light head-wind would spring

up, blow for three hours, and leave us rolling in another calm for

forty-eight hours. Then--hurrah!--the wind would come out of the

west, fresh, beautifully fresh, and send the Snark along, wing and

wing, her wake bubbling, the log-line straight astern. At the end

of half an hour, while we were preparing to set the spinnaker, with

a few sickly gasps the wind would die away. And so it went. We

wagered optimistically on every favourable fan of air that lasted

over five minutes; but it never did any good. The fans faded out

just the same.

But there were exceptions. In the variables, if you wait long

enough, something is bound to happen, and we were so plentifully

stocked with food and water that we could afford to wait. On

October 26, we actually made one hundred and three miles of easting,

and we talked about it for days afterwards. Once we caught a

moderate gale from the south, which blew itself out in eight hours,

but it helped us to seventy-one miles of easting in that particular

twenty-four hours. And then, just as it was expiring, the wind came

straight out from the north (the directly opposite quarter), and

fanned us along over another degree of easting.

In years and years no sailing vessel has attempted this traverse,

and we found ourselves in the midst of one of the loneliest of the

Pacific solitudes. In the sixty days we were crossing it we sighted

no sail, lifted no steamer's smoke above the horizon. A disabled

vessel could drift in this deserted expanse for a dozen generations,

and there would be no rescue. The only chance of rescue would be

from a vessel like the Snark, and the Snark happened to be there

principally because of the fact that the traverse had been begun

before the particular paragraph in the sailing directions had been

read. Standing upright on deck, a straight line drawn from the eye

to the horizon would measure three miles and a half. Thus, seven

miles was the diameter of the circle of the sea in which we had our

centre. Since we remained always in the centre, and since we

constantly were moving in some direction, we looked upon many

circles. But all circles looked alike. No tufted islets, gray

headlands, nor glistening patches of white canvas ever marred the

symmetry of that unbroken curve. Clouds came and went, rising up

over the rim of the circle, flowing across the space of it, and

spilling away and down across the opposite rim.

The world faded as the procession of the weeks marched by. The

world faded until at last there ceased to be any world except the

little world of the Snark, freighted with her seven souls and

floating on the expanse of the waters. Our memories of the world,

the great world, became like dreams of former lives we had lived

somewhere before we came to be born on the Snark. After we had been

out of fresh vegetables for some time, we mentioned such things in

much the same way I have heard my father mention the vanished apples

of his boyhood. Man is a creature of habit, and we on the Snark had

got the habit of the Snark. Everything about her and aboard her was

as a matter of course, and anything different would have been an

irritation and an offence.

There was no way by which the great world could intrude. Our bell

rang the hours, but no caller ever rang it. There were no guests to

dinner, no telegrams, no insistent telephone jangles invading our

privacy. We had no engagements to keep, no trains to catch, and

there were no morning newspapers over which to waste time in

learning what was happening to our fifteen hundred million other

fellow-creatures.

But it was not dull. The affairs of our little world had to be

regulated, and, unlike the great world, our world had to be steered

in its journey through space. Also, there were cosmic disturbances

to be encountered and baffled, such as do not afflict the big earth

in its frictionless orbit through the windless void. And we never

knew, from moment to moment, what was going to happen next. There

were spice and variety enough and to spare. Thus, at four in the

morning, I relieve Hermann at the wheel.

"East-northeast," he gives me the course. "She's eight points off,

but she ain't steering."

Small wonder. The vessel does not exist that can be steered in so

absolute a calm.

"I had a breeze a little while ago--maybe it will come back again,"

Hermann says hopefully, ere he starts forward to the cabin and his

bunk.

The mizzen is in and fast furled. In the night, what of the roll

and the absence of wind, it had made life too hideous to be

permitted to go on rasping at the mast, smashing at the tackles, and

buffeting the empty air into hollow outbursts of sound. But the big

mainsail is still on, and the staysail, jib, and flying-jib are

snapping and slashing at their sheets with every roll. Every star

is out. Just for luck I put the wheel hard over in the opposite

direction to which it had been left by Hermann, and I lean back and

gaze up at the stars. There is nothing else for me to do. There is

nothing to be done with a sailing vessel rolling in a stark calm.

Then I feel a fan on my cheek, faint, so faint, that I can just

sense it ere it is gone. But another comes, and another, until a

real and just perceptible breeze is blowing. How the Snark's sails

manage to feel it is beyond me, but feel it they do, as she does as

well, for the compass card begins slowly to revolve in the binnacle.

In reality, it is not revolving at all. It is held by terrestrial

magnetism in one place, and it is the Snark that is revolving,

pivoted upon that delicate cardboard device that floats in a closed

vessel of alcohol.

So the Snark comes back on her course. The breath increases to a

tiny puff. The Snark feels the weight of it and actually heels over

a trifle. There is flying scud overhead, and I notice the stars

being blotted out. Walls of darkness close in upon me, so that,

when the last star is gone, the darkness is so near that it seems I

can reach out and touch it on every side. When I lean toward it, I

can feel it loom against my face. Puff follows puff, and I am glad

the mizzen is furled. Phew! that was a stiff one! The Snark goes

over and down until her lee-rail is buried and the whole Pacific

Ocean is pouring in. Four or five of these gusts make me wish that

the jib and flying-jib were in. The sea is picking up, the gusts

are growing stronger and more frequent, and there is a splatter of

wet in the air. There is no use in attempting to gaze to windward.

The wall of blackness is within arm's length. Yet I cannot help

attempting to see and gauge the blows that are being struck at the

Snark. There is something ominous and menacing up there to

windward, and I have a feeling that if I look long enough and strong

enough, I shall divine it. Futile feeling. Between two gusts I

leave the wheel and run forward to the cabin companionway, where I

light matches and consult the barometer. "29-90" it reads. That

sensitive instrument refuses to take notice of the disturbance which

is humming with a deep, throaty voice in the rigging. I get back to

the wheel just in time to meet another gust, the strongest yet.

Well, anyway, the wind is abeam and the Snark is on her course,

eating up easting. That at least is well.

The jib and flying-jib bother me, and I wish they were in. She

would make easier weather of it, and less risky weather likewise.

The wind snorts, and stray raindrops pelt like birdshot. I shall

certainly have to call all hands, I conclude; then conclude the next

instant to hang on a little longer. Maybe this is the end of it,

and I shall have called them for nothing. It is better to let them

sleep. I hold the Snark down to her task, and from out of the

darkness, at right angles, comes a deluge of rain accompanied by

shrieking wind. Then everything eases except the blackness, and I

rejoice in that I have not called the men.

No sooner does the wind ease than the sea picks up. The combers are

breaking now, and the boat is tossing like a cork. Then out of the

blackness the gusts come harder and faster than before. If only I

knew what was up there to windward in the blackness! The Snark is

making heavy weather of it, and her lee-rail is buried oftener than

not. More shrieks and snorts of wind. Now, if ever, is the time to

call the men. I WILL call them, I resolve. Then there is a burst

of rain, a slackening of the wind, and I do not call. But it is

rather lonely, there at the wheel, steering a little world through

howling blackness. It is quite a responsibility to be all alone on

the surface of a little world in time of stress, doing the thinking

for its sleeping inhabitants. I recoil from the responsibility as

more gusts begin to strike and as a sea licks along the weather rail

and splashes over into the cockpit. The salt water seems strangely

warm to my body and is shot through with ghostly nodules of

phosphorescent light. I shall surely call all hands to shorten

sail. Why should they sleep? I am a fool to have any compunctions

in the matter. My intellect is arrayed against my heart. It was my

heart that said, "Let them sleep." Yes, but it was my intellect

that backed up my heart in that judgment. Let my intellect then

reverse the judgment; and, while I am speculating as to what

particular entity issued that command to my intellect, the gusts die

away. Solicitude for mere bodily comfort has no place in practical

seamanship, I conclude sagely; but study the feel of the next series

of gusts and do not call the men. After all, it IS my intellect,

behind everything, procrastinating, measuring its knowledge of what

the Snark can endure against the blows being struck at her, and

waiting the call of all hands against the striking of still severer

blows.

Daylight, gray and violent, steals through the cloud-pall and shows

a foaming sea that flattens under the weight of recurrent and

increasing squalls. Then comes the rain, filling the windy valleys

of the sea with milky smoke and further flattening the waves, which

but wait for the easement of wind and rain to leap more wildly than

before. Come the men on deck, their sleep out, and among them

Hermann, his face on the broad grin in appreciation of the breeze of

wind I have picked up. I turn the wheel over to Warren and start to

go below, pausing on the way to rescue the galley stovepipe which

has gone adrift. I am barefooted, and my toes have had an excellent

education in the art of clinging; but, as the rail buries itself in

a green sea, I suddenly sit down on the streaming deck. Hermann

good-naturedly elects to question my selection of such a spot. Then

comes the next roll, and he sits down, suddenly, and without

premeditation. The Snark heels over and down, the rail takes it

green, and Hermann and I, clutching the precious stove-pipe, are

swept down into the lee-scuppers. After that I finish my journey

below, and while changing my clothes grin with satisfaction--the

Snark is making easting.

No, it is not all monotony. When we had worried along our easting

to 126 degrees west longitude, we left the variables and headed

south through the doldrums, where was much calm weather and where,

taking advantage of every fan of air, we were often glad to make a

score of miles in as many hours. And yet, on such a day, we might

pass through a dozen squalls and be surrounded by dozens more. And

every squall was to be regarded as a bludgeon capable of crushing

the Snark. We were struck sometimes by the centres and sometimes by

the sides of these squalls, and we never knew just where or how we

were to be hit. The squall that rose up, covering half the heavens,

and swept down upon us, as likely as not split into two squalls

which passed us harmlessly on either side while the tiny, innocent

looking squall that appeared to carry no more than a hogshead of

water and a pound of wind, would abruptly assume cyclopean

proportions, deluging us with rain and overwhelming us with wind.

Then there were treacherous squalls that went boldly astern and

sneaked back upon us from a mile to leeward. Again, two squalls

would tear along, one on each side of us, and we would get a fillip

from each of them. Now a gale certainly grows tiresome after a few

hours, but squalls never. The thousandth squall in one's experience

is as interesting as the first one, and perhaps a bit more so. It

is the tyro who has no apprehension of them. The man of a thousand

squalls respects a squall. He knows what they are.

It was in the doldrums that our most exciting event occurred. On

November 20, we discovered that through an accident we had lost over

one-half of the supply of fresh water that remained to us. Since we

were at that time forty-three days out from Hilo, our supply of

fresh water was not large. To lose over half of it was a

catastrophe. On close allowance, the remnant of water we possessed

would last twenty days. But we were in the doldrums; there was no

telling where the southeast trades were, nor where we would pick

them up.

The handcuffs were promptly put upon the pump, and once a day the

water was portioned out. Each of us received a quart for personal

use, and eight quarts were given to the cook. Enters now the

psychology of the situation. No sooner had the discovery of the

water shortage been made than I, for one, was afflicted with a

burning thirst. It seemed to me that I had never been so thirsty in

my life. My little quart of water I could easily have drunk in one

draught, and to refrain from doing so required a severe exertion of

will. Nor was I alone in this. All of us talked water, thought

water, and dreamed water when we slept. We examined the charts for

possible islands to which to run in extremity, but there were no

such islands. The Marquesas were the nearest, and they were the

other side of the Line, and of the doldrums, too, which made it even

worse. We were in 3 degrees north latitude, while the Marquesas

were 9 degrees south latitude--a difference of over a thousand

miles. Furthermore, the Marquesas lay some fourteen degrees to the

west of our longitude. A pretty pickle for a handful of creatures

sweltering on the ocean in the heat of tropic calms.

We rigged lines on either side between the main and mizzen riggings.

To these we laced the big deck awning, hoisting it up aft with a

sailing pennant so that any rain it might collect would run forward

where it could be caught. Here and there squalls passed across the

circle of the sea. All day we watched them, now to port or

starboard, and again ahead or astern. But never one came near

enough to wet us. In the afternoon a big one bore down upon us. It

spread out across the ocean as it approached, and we could see it

emptying countless thousands of gallons into the salt sea. Extra

attention was paid to the awning and then we waited. Warren,

Martin, and Hermann made a vivid picture. Grouped together, holding

on to the rigging, swaying to the roll, they were gazing intently at

the squall. Strain, anxiety, and yearning were in every posture of

their bodies. Beside them was the dry and empty awning. But they

seemed to grow limp and to droop as the squall broke in half, one

part passing on ahead, the other drawing astern and going to

leeward.

But that night came rain. Martin, whose psychological thirst had

compelled him to drink his quart of water early, got his mouth down

to the lip of the awning and drank the deepest draught I ever have

seen drunk. The precious water came down in bucketfuls and tubfuls,

and in two hours we caught and stored away in the tanks one hundred

and twenty gallons. Strange to say, in all the rest of our voyage

to the Marquesas not another drop of rain fell on board. If that

squall had missed us, the handcuffs would have remained on the pump,

and we would have busied ourselves with utilizing our surplus

gasolene for distillation purposes.

Then there was the fishing. One did not have to go in search of it,

for it was there at the rail. A three-inch steel hook, on the end

of a stout line, with a piece of white rag for bait, was all that

was necessary to catch bonitas weighing from ten to twenty-five

pounds. Bonitas feed on flying-fish, wherefore they are

unaccustomed to nibbling at the hook. They strike as gamely as the

gamest fish in the sea, and their first run is something that no man

who has ever caught them will forget. Also, bonitas are the veriest

cannibals. The instant one is hooked he is attacked by his fellows.

Often and often we hauled them on board with fresh, clean-bitten

holes in them the size of teacups.

One school of bonitas, numbering many thousands, stayed with us day

and night for more than three weeks. Aided by the Snark, it was

great hunting; for they cut a swath of destruction through the ocean

half a mile wide and fifteen hundred miles in length. They ranged

along abreast of the Snark on either side, pouncing upon the flying-

fish her forefoot scared up. Since they were continually pursuing

astern the flying-fish that survived for several flights, they were

always overtaking the Snark, and at any time one could glance astern

and on the front of a breaking wave see scores of their silvery

forms coasting down just under the surface. When they had eaten

their fill, it was their delight to get in the shadow of the boat,

or of her sails, and a hundred or so were always to be seen lazily

sliding along and keeping cool.

But the poor flying-fish! Pursued and eaten alive by the bonitas

and dolphins, they sought flight in the air, where the swooping

seabirds drove them back into the water. Under heaven there was no

refuge for them. Flying-fish do not play when they essay the air.

It is a life-and-death affair with them. A thousand times a day we

could lift our eyes and see the tragedy played out. The swift,

broken circling of a guny might attract one's attention. A glance

beneath shows the back of a dolphin breaking the surface in a wild

rush. Just in front of its nose a shimmering palpitant streak of

silver shoots from the water into the air--a delicate, organic

mechanism of flight, endowed with sensation, power of direction, and

love of life. The guny swoops for it and misses, and the flying-

fish, gaining its altitude by rising, kite-like, against the wind,

turns in a half-circle and skims off to leeward, gliding on the

bosom of the wind. Beneath it, the wake of the dolphin shows in

churning foam. So he follows, gazing upward with large eyes at the

flashing breakfast that navigates an element other than his own. He

cannot rise to so lofty occasion, but he is a thorough-going

empiricist, and he knows, sooner or later, if not gobbled up by the

guny, that the flying-fish must return to the water. And then--

breakfast. We used to pity the poor winged fish. It was sad to see

such sordid and bloody slaughter. And then, in the night watches,

when a forlorn little flying-fish struck the mainsail and fell

gasping and splattering on the deck, we would rush for it just as

eagerly, just as greedily, just as voraciously, as the dolphins and

bonitas. For know that flying-fish are most toothsome for

breakfast. It is always a wonder to me that such dainty meat does

not build dainty tissue in the bodies of the devourers. Perhaps the

dolphins and bonitas are coarser-fibred because of the high speed at

which they drive their bodies in order to catch their prey. But

then again, the flying-fish drive their bodies at high speed, too.

Sharks we caught occasionally, on large hooks, with chain-swivels,

bent on a length of small rope. And sharks meant pilot-fish, and

remoras, and various sorts of parasitic creatures. Regular man-

eaters some of the sharks proved, tiger-eyed and with twelve rows of

teeth, razor-sharp. By the way, we of the Snark are agreed that we

have eaten many fish that will not compare with baked shark

smothered in tomato dressing. In the calms we occasionally caught a

fish called "hake" by the Japanese cook. And once, on a spoon-hook

trolling a hundred yards astern, we caught a snake-like fish, over

three feet in length and not more than three inches in diameter,

with four fangs in his jaw. He proved the most delicious fish--

delicious in meat and flavour--that we have ever eaten on board.

The most welcome addition to our larder was a green sea-turtle,

weighing a full hundred pounds and appearing on the table most

appetizingly in steaks, soups, and stews, and finally in a wonderful

curry which tempted all hands into eating more rice than was good

for them. The turtle was sighted to windward, calmly sleeping on

the surface in the midst of a huge school of curious dolphins. It

was a deep-sea turtle of a surety, for the nearest land was a

thousand miles away. We put the Snark about and went back for him,

Hermann driving the granes into his head and neck. When hauled

aboard, numerous remora were clinging to his shell, and out of the

hollows at the roots of his flippers crawled several large crabs.

It did not take the crew of the Snark longer than the next meal to

reach the unanimous conclusion that it would willingly put the Snark

about any time for a turtle.

But it is the dolphin that is the king of deep-sea fishes. Never is

his colour twice quite the same. Swimming in the sea, an ethereal

creature of palest azure, he displays in that one guise a miracle of

colour. But it is nothing compared with the displays of which he is

capable. At one time he will appear green--pale green, deep green,

phosphorescent green; at another time blue--deep blue, electric

blue, all the spectrum of blue. Catch him on a hook, and he turns

to gold, yellow gold, all gold. Haul him on deck, and he excels the

spectrum, passing through inconceivable shades of blues, greens, and

yellows, and then, suddenly, turning a ghostly white, in the midst

of which are bright blue spots, and you suddenly discover that he is

speckled like a trout. Then back from white he goes, through all

the range of colours, finally turning to a mother-of-pearl.

For those who are devoted to fishing, I can recommend no finer sport

than catching dolphin. Of course, it must be done on a thin line

with reel and pole. A No. 7, O'Shaughnessy tarpon hook is just the

thing, baited with an entire flying-fish. Like the bonita, the

dolphin's fare consists of flying-fish, and he strikes like

lightning at the bait. The first warning is when the reel screeches

and you see the line smoking out at right angles to the boat.

Before you have time to entertain anxiety concerning the length of

your line, the fish rises into the air in a succession of leaps.

Since he is quite certain to be four feet long or over, the sport of

landing so gamey a fish can be realized. When hooked, he invariably

turns golden. The idea of the series of leaps is to rid himself of

the hook, and the man who has made the strike must be of iron or

decadent if his heart does not beat with an extra flutter when he

beholds such gorgeous fish, glittering in golden mail and shaking

itself like a stallion in each mid-air leap. 'Ware slack! If you

don't, on one of those leaps the hook will be flung out and twenty

feet away. No slack, and away he will go on another run,

culminating in another series of leaps. About this time one begins

to worry over the line, and to wish that he had had nine hundred

feet on the reel originally instead of six hundred. With careful

playing the line can be saved, and after an hour of keen excitement

the fish can be brought to gaff. One such dolphin I landed on the

Snark measured four feet and seven inches.

Hermann caught dolphins more prosaically. A hand-line and a chunk

of shark-meat were all he needed. His hand-line was very thick, but

on more than one occasion it parted and lost the fish. One day a

dolphin got away with a lure of Hermann's manufacture, to which were

lashed four O'Shaughnessy hooks. Within an hour the same dolphin

was landed with the rod, and on dissecting him the four hooks were

recovered. The dolphins, which remained with us over a month,

deserted us north of the line, and not one was seen during the

remainder of the traverse.

So the days passed. There was so much to be done that time never

dragged. Had there been little to do, time could not have dragged

with such wonderful seascapes and cloudscapes--dawns that were like

burning imperial cities under rainbows that arched nearly to the

zenith; sunsets that bathed the purple sea in rivers of rose-

coloured light, flowing from a sun whose diverging, heaven-climbing

rays were of the purest blue. Overside, in the heat of the day, the

sea was an azure satiny fabric, in the depths of which the sunshine

focussed in funnels of light. Astern, deep down, when there was a

breeze, bubbled a procession of milky-turquoise ghosts--the foam

flung down by the hull of the Snark each time she floundered against

a sea. At night the wake was phosphorescent fire, where the medusa

slime resented our passing bulk, while far down could be observed

the unceasing flight of comets, with long, undulating, nebulous

tails--caused by the passage of the bonitas through the resentful

medusa slime. And now and again, from out of the darkness on either

hand, just under the surface, larger phosphorescent organisms

flashed up like electric lights, marking collisions with the

careless bonitas skurrying ahead to the good hunting just beyond our

bowsprit.

We made our easting, worked down through the doldrums, and caught a

fresh breeze out of south-by-west. Hauled up by the wind, on such a

slant, we would fetch past the Marquesas far away to the westward.

But the next day, on Tuesday, November 26, in the thick of a heavy

squall, the wind shifted suddenly to the southeast. It was the

trade at last. There were no more squalls, naught but fine weather,

a fair wind, and a whirling log, with sheets slacked off and with

spinnaker and mainsail swaying and bellying on either side. The

trade backed more and more, until it blew out of the northeast,

while we steered a steady course to the southwest. Ten days of

this, and on the morning of December 6, at five o'clock, we sighted

land "just where it ought to have been," dead ahead. We passed to

leeward of Ua-huka, skirted the southern edge of Nuka-hiva, and that

night, in driving squalls and inky darkness, fought our way in to an

anchorage in the narrow bay of Taiohae. The anchor rumbled down to

the blatting of wild goats on the cliffs, and the air we breathed

was heavy with the perfume of flowers. The traverse was

accomplished. Sixty days from land to land, across a lonely sea

above whose horizons never rise the straining sails of ships.

CHAPTER X--TYPEE

To the eastward Ua-huka was being blotted out by an evening rain-

squall that was fast overtaking the Snark. But that little craft,

her big spinnaker filled by the southeast trade, was making a good

race of it. Cape Martin, the southeasternmost point of Nuku-hiva,

was abeam, and Comptroller Bay was opening up as we fled past its

wide entrance, where Sail Rock, for all the world like the spritsail

of a Columbia River salmon-boat, was making brave weather of it in

the smashing southeast swell.

"What do you make that out to be?" I asked Hermann, at the wheel.

"A fishing-boat, sir," he answered after careful scrutiny.

Yet on the chart it was plainly marked, "Sail Rock."

But we were more interested in the recesses of Comptroller Bay,

where our eyes eagerly sought out the three bights of land and

centred on the midmost one, where the gathering twilight showed the

dim walls of a valley extending inland. How often we had pored over

the chart and centred always on that midmost bight and on the valley

it opened--the Valley of Typee. "Taipi" the chart spelled it, and

spelled it correctly, but I prefer "Typee," and I shall always spell

it "Typee." When I was a little boy, I read a book spelled in that

manner--Herman Melville's "Typee"; and many long hours I dreamed

over its pages. Nor was it all dreaming. I resolved there and

then, mightily, come what would, that when I had gained strength and

years, I, too, would voyage to Typee. For the wonder of the world

was penetrating to my tiny consciousness--the wonder that was to

lead me to many lands, and that leads and never pails. The years

passed, but Typee was not forgotten. Returned to San Francisco from

a seven months' cruise in the North Pacific, I decided the time had

come. The brig Galilee was sailing for the Marquesas, but her crew

was complete and I, who was an able-seaman before the mast and young

enough to be overweeningly proud of it, was willing to condescend to

ship as cabin-boy in order to make the pilgrimage to Typee. Of

course, the Galilee would have sailed from the Marquesas without me,

for I was bent on finding another Fayaway and another Kory-Kory. I

doubt that the captain read desertion in my eye. Perhaps even the

berth of cabin-boy was already filled. At any rate, I did not get

it.

Then came the rush of years, filled brimming with projects,

achievements, and failures; but Typee was not forgotten, and here I

was now, gazing at its misty outlines till the squall swooped down

and the Snark dashed on into the driving smother. Ahead, we caught

a glimpse and took the compass bearing of Sentinel Rock, wreathed

with pounding surf. Then it, too, was effaced by the rain and

darkness. We steered straight for it, trusting to hear the sound of

breakers in time to sheer clear. We had to steer for it. We had

naught but a compass bearing with which to orientate ourselves, and

if we missed Sentinel Rock, we missed Taiohae Bay, and we would have

to throw the Snark up to the wind and lie off and on the whole

night--no pleasant prospect for voyagers weary from a sixty days'

traverse of the vast Pacific solitude, and land-hungry, and fruit-

hungry, and hungry with an appetite of years for the sweet vale of

Typee.

Abruptly, with a roar of sound, Sentinel Rock loomed through the

rain dead ahead. We altered our course, and, with mainsail and

spinnaker bellying to the squall, drove past. Under the lea of the

rock the wind dropped us, and we rolled in an absolute calm. Then a

puff of air struck us, right in our teeth, out of Taiohae Bay. It

was in spinnaker, up mizzen, all sheets by the wind, and we were

moving slowly ahead, heaving the lead and straining our eyes for the

fixed red light on the ruined fort that would give us our bearings

to anchorage. The air was light and baffling, now east, now west,

now north, now south; while from either hand came the roar of unseen

breakers. From the looming cliffs arose the blatting of wild goats,

and overhead the first stars were peeping mistily through the ragged

train of the passing squall. At the end of two hours, having come a

mile into the bay, we dropped anchor in eleven fathoms. And so we

came to Taiohae.

In the morning we awoke in fairyland. The Snark rested in a placid

harbour that nestled in a vast amphitheatre, the towering, vine-clad

walls of which seemed to rise directly from the water. Far up, to

the east, we glimpsed the thin line of a trail, visible in one

place, where it scoured across the face of the wall.

"The path by which Toby escaped from Typee!" we cried.

We were not long in getting ashore and astride horses, though the

consummation of our pilgrimage had to be deferred for a day. Two

months at sea, bare-footed all the time, without space in which to

exercise one's limbs, is not the best preliminary to leather shoes

and walking. Besides, the land had to cease its nauseous rolling

before we could feel fit for riding goat-like horses over giddy

trails. So we took a short ride to break in, and crawled through

thick jungle to make the acquaintance of a venerable moss-grown

idol, where had foregathered a German trader and a Norwegian captain

to estimate the weight of said idol, and to speculate upon

depreciation in value caused by sawing him in half. They treated

the old fellow sacrilegiously, digging their knives into him to see

how hard he was and how deep his mossy mantle, and commanding him to

rise up and save them trouble by walking down to the ship himself.

In lieu of which, nineteen Kanakas slung him on a frame of timbers

and toted him to the ship, where, battened down under hatches, even

now he is cleaving the South Pacific Hornward and toward Europe--the

ultimate abiding-place for all good heathen idols, save for the few

in America and one in particular who grins beside me as I write, and

who, barring shipwreck, will grin somewhere in my neighbourhood

until I die. And he will win out. He will be grinning when I am

dust.

Also, as a preliminary, we attended a feast, where one Taiara

Tamarii, the son of an Hawaiian sailor who deserted from a

whaleship, commemorated the death of his Marquesan mother by

roasting fourteen whole hogs and inviting in the village. So we

came along, welcomed by a native herald, a young girl, who stood on

a great rock and chanted the information that the banquet was made

perfect by our presence--which information she extended impartially

to every arrival. Scarcely were we seated, however, when she

changed her tune, while the company manifested intense excitement.

Her cries became eager and piercing. From a distance came answering

cries, in men's voices, which blended into a wild, barbaric chant

that sounded incredibly savage, smacking of blood and war. Then,

through vistas of tropical foliage appeared a procession of savages,

naked save for gaudy loin-cloths. They advanced slowly, uttering

deep guttural cries of triumph and exaltation. Slung from young

saplings carried on their shoulders were mysterious objects of

considerable weight, hidden from view by wrappings of green leaves.

Nothing but pigs, innocently fat and roasted to a turn, were inside

those wrappings, but the men were carrying them into camp in

imitation of old times when they carried in "long-pig." Now long-

pig is not pig. Long-pig is the Polynesian euphemism for human

flesh; and these descendants of man-eaters, a king's son at their

head, brought in the pigs to table as of old their grandfathers had

brought in their slain enemies. Every now and then the procession

halted in order that the bearers should have every advantage in

uttering particularly ferocious shouts of victory, of contempt for

their enemies, and of gustatory desire. So Melville, two

generations ago, witnessed the bodies of slain Happar warriors,

wrapped in palm-leaves, carried to banquet at the Ti. At another

time, at the Ti, he "observed a curiously carved vessel of wood,"

and on looking into it his eyes "fell upon the disordered members of

a human skeleton, the bones still fresh with moisture, and with

particles of flesh clinging to them here and there."

Cannibalism has often been regarded as a fairy story by

ultracivilized men who dislike, perhaps, the notion that their own

savage forebears have somewhere in the past been addicted to similar

practices. Captain Cook was rather sceptical upon the subject,

until, one day, in a harbour of New Zealand, he deliberately tested

the matter. A native happened to have brought on board, for sale, a

nice, sun-dried head. At Cook's orders strips of the flesh were cut

away and handed to the native, who greedily devoured them. To say

the least, Captain Cook was a rather thorough-going empiricist. At

any rate, by that act he supplied one ascertained fact of which

science had been badly in need. Little did he dream of the

existence of a certain group of islands, thousands of miles away,

where in subsequent days there would arise a curious suit at law,

when an old chief of Maui would be charged with defamation of

character because he persisted in asserting that his body was the

living repository of Captain Cook's great toe. It is said that the

plaintiffs failed to prove that the old chief was not the tomb of

the navigator's great toe, and that the suit was dismissed.

I suppose I shall not have the chance in these degenerate days to

see any long-pig eaten, but at least I am already the possessor of a

duly certified Marquesan calabash, oblong in shape, curiously

carved, over a century old, from which has been drunk the blood of

two shipmasters. One of those captains was a mean man. He sold a

decrepit whale-boat, as good as new what of the fresh white paint,

to a Marquesan chief. But no sooner had the captain sailed away

than the whale-boat dropped to pieces. It was his fortune, some

time afterwards, to be wrecked, of all places, on that particular

island. The Marquesan chief was ignorant of rebates and discounts;

but he had a primitive sense of equity and an equally primitive

conception of the economy of nature, and he balanced the account by

eating the man who had cheated him.

We started in the cool dawn for Typee, astride ferocious little

stallions that pawed and screamed and bit and fought one another

quite oblivious of the fragile humans on their backs and of the

slippery boulders, loose rocks, and yawning gorges. The way led up

an ancient road through a jungle of hau trees. On every side were

the vestiges of a one-time dense population. Wherever the eye could

penetrate the thick growth, glimpses were caught of stone walls and

of stone foundations, six to eight feet in height, built solidly

throughout, and many yards in width and depth. They formed great

stone platforms, upon which, at one time, there had been houses.

But the houses and the people were gone, and huge trees sank their

roots through the platforms and towered over the under-running

jungle. These foundations are called pae-paes--the pi-pis of

Melville, who spelled phonetically.

The Marquesans of the present generation lack the energy to hoist

and place such huge stones. Also, they lack incentive. There are

plenty of pae-paes to go around, with a few thousand unoccupied ones

left over. Once or twice, as we ascended the valley, we saw

magnificent pae-paes bearing on their general surface pitiful little

straw huts, the proportions being similar to a voting booth perched

on the broad foundation of the Pyramid of Cheops. For the

Marquesans are perishing, and, to judge from conditions at Taiohae,

the one thing that retards their destruction is the infusion of

fresh blood. A pure Marquesan is a rarity. They seem to be all

half-breeds and strange conglomerations of dozens of different

races. Nineteen able labourers are all the trader at Taiohae can

muster for the loading of copra on shipboard, and in their veins

runs the blood of English, American, Dane, German, French, Corsican,

Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Hawaiian, Paumotan, Tahitian, and

Easter Islander. There are more races than there are persons, but

it is a wreckage of races at best. Life faints and stumbles and

gasps itself away. In this warm, equable clime--a truly terrestrial

paradise--where are never extremes of temperature and where the air

is like balm, kept ever pure by the ozone-laden southeast trade,

asthma, phthisis, and tuberculosis flourish as luxuriantly as the

vegetation. Everywhere, from the few grass huts, arises the racking

cough or exhausted groan of wasted lungs. Other horrible diseases

prosper as well, but the most deadly of all are those that attack

the lungs. There is a form of consumption called "galloping," which

is especially dreaded. In two months' time it reduces the strongest

man to a skeleton under a grave-cloth. In valley after valley the

last inhabitant has passed and the fertile soil has relapsed to

jungle. In Melville's day the valley of Hapaa (spelled by him

"Happar") was peopled by a strong and warlike tribe. A generation

later, it contained but two hundred persons. To-day it is an

untenanted, howling, tropical wilderness.

We climbed higher and higher in the valley, our unshod stallions

picking their steps on the disintegrating trail, which led in and

out through the abandoned pae-paes and insatiable jungle. The sight

of red mountain apples, the ohias, familiar to us from Hawaii,

caused a native to be sent climbing after them. And again he

climbed for cocoa-nuts. I have drunk the cocoanuts of Jamaica and

of Hawaii, but I never knew how delicious such draught could be till

I drank it here in the Marquesas. Occasionally we rode under wild

limes and oranges--great trees which had survived the wilderness

longer than the motes of humans who had cultivated them.

We rode through endless thickets of yellow-pollened cassi--if riding

it could be called; for those fragrant thickets were inhabited by

wasps. And such wasps! Great yellow fellows the size of small

canary birds, darting through the air with behind them drifting a

bunch of legs a couple of inches long. A stallion abruptly stands

on his forelegs and thrusts his hind legs skyward. He withdraws

them from the sky long enough to make one wild jump ahead, and then

returns them to their index position. It is nothing. His thick

hide has merely been punctured by a flaming lance of wasp virility.

Then a second and a third stallion, and all the stallions, begin to

cavort on their forelegs over the precipitous landscape. Swat! A

white-hot poniard penetrates my cheek. Swat again!! I am stabbed

in the neck. I am bringing up the rear and getting more than my

share. There is no retreat, and the plunging horses ahead, on a

precarious trail, promise little safety. My horse overruns

Charmian's horse, and that sensitive creature, fresh-stung at the

psychological moment, planks one of his hoofs into my horse and the

other hoof into me. I thank my stars that he is not steel-shod, and

half-arise from the saddle at the impact of another flaming dagger.

I am certainly getting more than my share, and so is my poor horse,

whose pain and panic are only exceeded by mine.

"Get out of the way! I'm coming!" I shout, frantically dashing my

cap at the winged vipers around me.

On one side of the trail the landscape rises straight up. On the

other side it sinks straight down. The only way to get out of my

way is to keep on going. How that string of horses kept their feet

is a miracle; but they dashed ahead, over-running one another,

galloping, trotting, stumbling, jumping, scrambling, and kicking

methodically skyward every time a wasp landed on them. After a

while we drew breath and counted our injuries. And this happened

not once, nor twice, but time after time. Strange to say, it never

grew monotonous. I know that I, for one, came through each brush

with the undiminished zest of a man flying from sudden death. No;

the pilgrim from Taiohae to Typee will never suffer from ennui on

the way.

At last we arose above the vexation of wasps. It was a matter of

altitude, however, rather than of fortitude. All about us lay the

jagged back-bones of ranges, as far as the eye could see, thrusting

their pinnacles into the trade-wind clouds. Under us, from the way

we had come, the Snark lay like a tiny toy on the calm water of

Taiohae Bay. Ahead we could see the inshore indentation of

Comptroller Bay. We dropped down a thousand feet, and Typee lay

beneath us. "Had a glimpse of the gardens of paradise been revealed

to me I could scarcely have been more ravished with the sight"--so

said Melville on the moment of his first view of the valley. He saw

a garden. We saw a wilderness. Where were the hundred groves of

the breadfruit tree he saw? We saw jungle, nothing but jungle, with

the exception of two grass huts and several clumps of cocoanuts

breaking the primordial green mantle. Where was the Ti of Mehevi,

the bachelors' hall, the palace where women were taboo, and where he

ruled with his lesser chieftains, keeping the half-dozen dusty and

torpid ancients to remind them of the valorous past? From the swift

stream no sounds arose of maids and matrons pounding tapa. And

where was the hut that old Narheyo eternally builded? In vain I

looked for him perched ninety feet from the ground in some tall

cocoanut, taking his morning smoke.

We went down a zigzag trail under overarching, matted jungle, where

great butterflies drifted by in the silence. No tattooed savage

with club and javelin guarded the path; and when we forded the

stream, we were free to roam where we pleased. No longer did the

taboo, sacred and merciless, reign in that sweet vale. Nay, the

taboo still did reign, a new taboo, for when we approached too near

the several wretched native women, the taboo was uttered warningly.

And it was well. They were lepers. The man who warned us was

afflicted horribly with elephantiasis. All were suffering from lung

trouble. The valley of Typee was the abode of death, and the dozen

survivors of the tribe were gasping feebly the last painful breaths

of the race.

Certainly the battle had not been to the strong, for once the

Typeans were very strong, stronger than the Happars, stronger than

the Taiohaeans, stronger than all the tribes of Nuku-hiva. The word

"typee," or, rather, "taipi," originally signified an eater of human

flesh. But since all the Marquesans were human-flesh eaters, to be

so designated was the token that the Typeans were the human-flesh

eaters par excellence. Not alone to Nuku-hiva did the Typean

reputation for bravery and ferocity extend. In all the islands of

the Marquesas the Typeans were named with dread. Man could not

conquer them. Even the French fleet that took possession of the

Marquesas left the Typeans alone. Captain Porter, of the frigate

Essex, once invaded the valley. His sailors and marines were

reinforced by two thousand warriors of Happar and Taiohae. They

penetrated quite a distance into the valley, but met with so fierce

a resistance that they were glad to retreat and get away in their

flotilla of boats and war-canoes.

Of all inhabitants of the South Seas, the Marquesans were adjudged

the strongest and the most beautiful. Melville said of them: "I

was especially struck by the physical strength and beauty they

displayed . . . In beauty of form they surpassed anything I had ever

seen. Not a single instance of natural deformity was observable in

all the throng attending the revels. Every individual appeared free

from those blemishes which sometimes mar the effect of an otherwise

perfect form. But their physical excellence did not merely consist

in an exemption from these evils; nearly every individual of the

number might have been taken for a sculptor's model." Mendana, the

discoverer of the Marquesas, described the natives as wondrously

beautiful to behold. Figueroa, the chronicler of his voyage, said

of them: "In complexion they were nearly white; of good stature and

finely formed." Captain Cook called the Marquesans the most

splendid islanders in the South Seas. The men were described, as

"in almost every instance of lofty stature, scarcely ever less than

six feet in height."

And now all this strength and beauty has departed, and the valley of

Typee is the abode of some dozen wretched creatures, afflicted by

leprosy, elephantiasis, and tuberculosis. Melville estimated the

population at two thousand, not taking into consideration the small

adjoining valley of Ho-o-u-mi. Life has rotted away in this

wonderful garden spot, where the climate is as delightful and

healthful as any to be found in the world. Not alone were the

Typeans physically magnificent; they were pure. Their air did not

contain the bacilli and germs and microbes of disease that fill our

own air. And when the white men imported in their ships these

various micro-organisms or disease, the Typeans crumpled up and went

down before them.

When one considers the situation, one is almost driven to the

conclusion that the white race flourishes on impurity and

corruption. Natural selection, however, gives the explanation. We

of the white race are the survivors and the descendants of the

thousands of generations of survivors in the war with the micro-

organisms. Whenever one of us was born with a constitution

peculiarly receptive to these minute enemies, such a one promptly

died. Only those of us survived who could withstand them. We who

are alive are the immune, the fit--the ones best constituted to live

in a world of hostile micro-organisms. The poor Marquesans had

undergone no such selection. They were not immune. And they, who

had made a custom of eating their enemies, were now eaten by enemies

so microscopic as to be invisible, and against whom no war of dart

and javelin was possible. On the other hand, had there been a few

hundred thousand Marquesans to begin with, there might have been

sufficient survivors to lay the foundation for a new race--a

regenerated race, if a plunge into a festering bath of organic

poison can be called regeneration.

We unsaddled our horses for lunch, and after we had fought the

stallions apart--mine with several fresh chunks bitten out of his

back--and after we had vainly fought the sand-flies, we ate bananas

and tinned meats, washed down by generous draughts of cocoanut milk.

There was little to be seen. The jungle had rushed back and

engulfed the puny works of man. Here and there pai-pais were to be

stumbled upon, but there were no inscriptions, no hieroglyphics, no

clues to the past they attested--only dumb stones, builded and

carved by hands that were forgotten dust. Out of the pai-pais grew

great trees, jealous of the wrought work of man, splitting and

scattering the stones back into the primeval chaos.

We gave up the jungle and sought the stream with the idea of evading

the sand-flies. Vain hope! To go in swimming one must take off his

clothes. The sand-flies are aware of the fact, and they lurk by the

river bank in countless myriads. In the native they are called the

nau-nau, which is pronounced "now-now." They are certainly well

named, for they are the insistent present. There is no past nor

future when they fasten upon one's epidermis, and I am willing to

wager that Omer Khayyam could never have written the Rubaiyat in the

valley of Typee--it would have been psychologically impossible. I

made the strategic mistake of undressing on the edge of a steep bank

where I could dive in but could not climb out. When I was ready to

dress, I had a hundred yards' walk on the bank before I could reach

my clothes. At the first step, fully ten thousand nau-naus landed

upon me. At the second step I was walking in a cloud. By the third

step the sun was dimmed in the sky. After that I don't know what

happened. When I arrived at my clothes, I was a maniac. And here

enters my grand tactical error. There is only one rule of conduct

in dealing with nau-naus. Never swat them. Whatever you do, don't

swat them. They are so vicious that in the instant of annihilation

they eject their last atom of poison into your carcass. You must

pluck them delicately, between thumb and forefinger, and persuade

them gently to remove their proboscides from your quivering flesh.

It is like pulling teeth. But the difficulty was that the teeth

sprouted faster than I could pull them, so I swatted, and, so doing,

filled myself full with their poison. This was a week ago. At the

present moment I resemble a sadly neglected smallpox convalescent.

Ho-o-u-mi is a small valley, separated from Typee by a low ridge,

and thither we started when we had knocked our indomitable and

insatiable riding-animals into submission. As it was, Warren's

mount, after a mile run, selected the most dangerous part of the

trail for an exhibition that kept us all on the anxious seat for

fully five minutes. We rode by the mouth of Typee valley and gazed

down upon the beach from which Melville escaped. There was where

the whale-boat lay on its oars close in to the surf; and there was

where Karakoee, the taboo Kanaka, stood in the water and trafficked

for the sailor's life. There, surely, was where Melville gave

Fayaway the parting embrace ere he dashed for the boat. And there

was the point of land from which Mehevi and Mow-mow and their

following swam off to intercept the boat, only to have their wrists

gashed by sheath-knives when they laid hold of the gunwale, though

it was reserved for Mow-mow to receive the boat-hook full in the

throat from Melville's hands.

We rode on to Ho-o-u-mi. So closely was Melville guarded that he

never dreamed of the existence of this valley, though he must

continually have met its inhabitants, for they belonged to Typee.

We rode through the same abandoned pae-paes, but as we neared the

sea we found a profusion of cocoanuts, breadfruit trees and taro

patches, and fully a dozen grass dwellings. In one of these we

arranged to pass the night, and preparations were immediately put on

foot for a feast. A young pig was promptly despatched, and while he

was being roasted among hot stones, and while chickens were stewing

in cocoanut milk, I persuaded one of the cooks to climb an unusually

tall cocoanut palm. The cluster of nuts at the top was fully one

hundred and twenty-five feet from the ground, but that native strode

up to the tree, seized it in both hands, jack-knived at the waist so

that the soles of his feet rested flatly against the trunk, and then

he walked right straight up without stopping. There were no notches

in the tree. He had no ropes to help him. He merely walked up the

tree, one hundred and twenty-five feet in the air, and cast down the

nuts from the summit. Not every man there had the physical stamina

for such a feat, or the lungs, rather, for most of them were

coughing their lives away. Some of the women kept up a ceaseless

moaning and groaning, so badly were their lungs wasted. Very few of

either sex were full-blooded Marquesans. They were mostly half-

breeds and three-quarter-breeds of French, English, Danish, and

Chinese extraction. At the best, these infusions of fresh blood

merely delayed the passing, and the results led one to wonder

whether it was worth while.

The feast was served on a broad pae-pae, the rear portion of which

was occupied by the house in which we were to sleep. The first

course was raw fish and poi-poi, the latter sharp and more acrid of

taste than the poi of Hawaii, which is made from taro. The poi-poi

of the Marquesas is made from breadfruit. The ripe fruit, after the

core is removed, is placed in a calabash and pounded with a stone

pestle into a stiff, sticky paste. In this stage of the process,

wrapped in leaves, it can be buried in the ground, where it will

keep for years. Before it can be eaten, however, further processes

are necessary. A leaf-covered package is placed among hot stones,

like the pig, and thoroughly baked. After that it is mixed with

cold water and thinned out--not thin enough to run, but thin enough

to be eaten by sticking one's first and second fingers into it. On

close acquaintance it proves a pleasant and most healthful food.

And breadfruit, ripe and well boiled or roasted! It is delicious.

Breadfruit and taro are kingly vegetables, the pair of them, though

the former is patently a misnomer and more resembles a sweet potato

than anything else, though it is not mealy like a sweet potato, nor

is it so sweet.

The feast ended, we watched the moon rise over Typee. The air was

like balm, faintly scented with the breath of flowers. It was a

magic night, deathly still, without the slightest breeze to stir the

foliage; and one caught one's breath and felt the pang that is

almost hurt, so exquisite was the beauty of it. Faint and far could

be heard the thin thunder of the surf upon the beach. There were no

beds; and we drowsed and slept wherever we thought the floor

softest. Near by, a woman panted and moaned in her sleep, and all

about us the dying islanders coughed in the night.

CHAPTER XI--THE NATURE MAN

I first met him on Market Street in San Francisco. It was a wet and

drizzly afternoon, and he was striding along, clad solely in a pair

of abbreviated knee-trousers and an abbreviated shirt, his bare feet

going slick-slick through the pavement-slush. At his heels trooped

a score of excited gamins. Every head--and there were thousands--

turned to glance curiously at him as he went by. And I turned, too.

Never had I seen such lovely sunburn. He was all sunburn, of the

sort a blond takes on when his skin does not peel. His long yellow

hair was burnt, so was his beard, which sprang from a soil

unploughed by any razor. He was a tawny man, a golden-tawny man,

all glowing and radiant with the sun. Another prophet, thought I,

come up to town with a message that will save the world.

A few weeks later I was with some friends in their bungalow in the

Piedmont hills overlooking San Francisco Bay. "We've got him, we've

got him," they barked. "We caught him up a tree; but he's all right

now, he'll feed from the hand. Come on and see him." So I

accompanied them up a dizzy hill, and in a rickety shack in the

midst of a eucalyptus grove found my sunburned prophet of the city

pavements.

He hastened to meet us, arriving in the whirl and blur of a

handspring. He did not shake hands with us; instead, his greeting

took the form of stunts. He turned more handsprings. He twisted

his body sinuously, like a snake, until, having sufficiently

limbered up, he bent from the hips, and, with legs straight and

knees touching, beat a tattoo on the ground with the palms of his

hands. He whirligigged and pirouetted, dancing and cavorting round

like an inebriated ape. All the sun-warmth of his ardent life

beamed in his face. I am so happy, was the song without words he

sang.

He sang it all evening, ringing the changes on it with an endless

variety of stunts. "A fool! a fool! I met a fool in the forest!"

thought I, and a worthy fool he proved. Between handsprings and

whirligigs he delivered his message that would save the world. It

was twofold. First, let suffering humanity strip off its clothing

and run wild in the mountains and valleys; and, second, let the very

miserable world adopt phonetic spelling. I caught a glimpse of the

great social problems being settled by the city populations swarming

naked over the landscape, to the popping of shot-guns, the barking

of ranch-dogs, and countless assaults with pitchforks wielded by

irate farmers.

The years passed, and, one sunny morning, the Snark poked her nose

into a narrow opening in a reef that smoked with the crashing impact

of the trade-wind swell, and beat slowly up Papeete harbour. Coming

off to us was a boat, flying a yellow flag. We knew it contained

the port doctor. But quite a distance off, in its wake, was a tiny

out rigger canoe that puzzled us. It was flying a red flag. I

studied it through the glasses, fearing that it marked some hidden

danger to navigation, some recent wreck or some buoy or beacon that

had been swept away. Then the doctor came on board. After he had

examined the state of our health and been assured that we had no

live rats hidden away in the Snark, I asked him the meaning of the

red flag. "Oh, that is Darling," was the answer.

And then Darling, Ernest Darling flying the red flag that is

indicative of the brotherhood of man, hailed us. "Hello, Jack!" he

called. "Hello, Charmian! He paddled swiftly nearer, and I saw

that he was the tawny prophet of the Piedmont hills. He came over

the side, a sun-god clad in a scarlet loin-cloth, with presents of

Arcady and greeting in both his hands--a bottle of golden honey and

a leaf-basket filled WITH great golden mangoes, golden bananas

specked with freckles of deeper gold, golden pine-apples and golden

limes, and juicy oranges minted from the same precious ore of sun

and soil. And in this fashion under the southern sky, I met once

more Darling, the Nature Man.

Tahiti is one of the most beautiful spots in the world, inhabited by

thieves and robbers and liars, also by several honest and truthful

men and women. Wherefore, because of the blight cast upon Tahiti's

wonderful beauty by the spidery human vermin that infest it, I am

minded to write, not of Tahiti, but of the Nature Man. He, at

least, is refreshing and wholesome. The spirit that emanates from

him is so gentle and sweet that it would harm nothing, hurt nobody's

feelings save the feelings of a predatory and plutocratic

capitalist.

"What does this red flag mean?" I asked.

"Socialism, of course."

"Yes, yes, I know that," I went on; "but what does it mean in your

hands?"

"Why, that I've found my message."

"And that you are delivering it to Tahiti?" I demanded

incredulously.

"Sure," he answered simply; and later on I found that he was, too.

When we dropped anchor, lowered a small boat into the water, and

started ashore, the Nature Man joined us. Now, thought I, I shall

be pestered to death by this crank. Waking or sleeping I shall

never be quit of him until I sail away from here.

But never in my life was I more mistaken. I took a house and went

to live and work in it, and the Nature Man never came near me. He

was waiting for the invitation. In the meantime he went aboard the

Snark and took possession of her library, delighted by the quantity

of scientific books, and shocked, as I learned afterwards, by the

inordinate amount of fiction. The Nature Man never wastes time on

fiction.

After a week or so, my conscience smote me, and I invited him to

dinner at a downtown hotel.

He arrived, looking unwontedly stiff and uncomfortable in a cotton

jacket. When invited to peel it off, he beamed his gratitude and

joy, and did so, revealing his sun-gold skin, from waist to

shoulder, covered only by a piece of fish-net of coarse twine and

large of mesh. A scarlet loin-cloth completed his costume. I began

my acquaintance with him that night, and during my long stay in

Tahiti that acquaintance ripened into friendship.

"So you write books," he said, one day when, tired and sweaty, I

finished my morning's work.

"I, too, write books," he announced.

Aha, thought I, now at last is he going to pester me with his

literary efforts. My soul was in revolt. I had not come all the

way to the South Seas to be a literary bureau.

"This is the book I write," he explained, smashing himself a

resounding blow on the chest with his clenched fist. "The gorilla

in the African jungle pounds his chest till the noise of it can be

heard half a mile away."

"A pretty good chest," quoth I, admiringly; "it would even make a

gorilla envious."

And then, and later, I learned the details of the marvellous book

Ernest Darling had written. Twelve years ago he lay close to death.

He weighed but ninety pounds, and was too weak to speak. The

doctors had given him up. His father, a practising physician, had

given him up. Consultations with other physicians had been held

upon him. There was no hope for him. Overstudy (as a school-

teacher and as a university student) and two successive attacks of

pneumonia were responsible for his breakdown. Day by day he was

losing strength. He could extract no nutrition from the heavy foods

they gave him; nor could pellets and powders help his stomach to do

the work of digestion. Not only was he a physical wreck, but he was

a mental wreck. His mind was overwrought. He was sick and tired of

medicine, and he was sick and tired of persons. Human speech jarred

upon him. Human attentions drove him frantic. The thought came to

him that since he was going to die, he might as well die in the

open, away from all the bother and irritation. And behind this idea

lurked a sneaking idea that perhaps he would not die after all if

only he could escape from the heavy foods, the medicines, and the

well-intentioned persons who made him frantic.

So Ernest Darling, a bag of bones and a death's-head, a

perambulating corpse, with just the dimmest flutter of life in it to

make it perambulate, turned his back upon men and the habitations of

men and dragged himself for five miles through the brush, away from

the city of Portland, Oregon. Of course he was crazy. Only a

lunatic would drag himself out of his death-bed.

But in the brush, Darling found what he was looking for--rest.

Nobody bothered him with beefsteaks and pork. No physicians

lacerated his tired nerves by feeling his pulse, nor tormented his

tired stomach with pellets and powders. He began to feel soothed.

The sun was shining warm, and he basked in it. He had the feeling

that the sun shine was an elixir of health. Then it seemed to him

that his whole wasted wreck of a body was crying for the sun. He

stripped off his clothes and bathed in the sunshine. He felt

better. It had done him good--the first relief in weary months of

pain.

As he grew better, he sat up and began to take notice. All about

him were the birds fluttering and chirping, the squirrels chattering

and playing. He envied them their health and spirits, their happy,

care-free existence. That he should contrast their condition with

his was inevitable; and that he should question why they were

splendidly vigorous while he was a feeble, dying wraith of a man,

was likewise inevitable. His conclusion was the very obvious one,

namely, that they lived naturally, while he lived most unnaturally

therefore, if he intended to live, he must return to nature.

Alone, there in the brush, he worked out his problem and began to

apply it. He stripped off his clothing and leaped and gambolled

about, running on all fours, climbing trees; in short, doing

physical stunts,--and all the time soaking in the sunshine. He

imitated the animals. He built a nest of dry leaves and grasses in

which to sleep at night, covering it over with bark as a protection

against the early fall rains. "Here is a beautiful exercise," he

told me, once, flapping his arms mightily against his sides; "I

learned it from watching the roosters crow." Another time I

remarked the loud, sucking intake with which he drank cocoanut-milk.

He explained that he had noticed the cows drinking that way and

concluded there must be something in it. He tried it and found it

good, and thereafter he drank only in that fashion.

He noted that the squirrels lived on fruits and nuts. He started on

a fruit-and-nut diet, helped out by bread, and he grew stronger and

put on weight. For three months he continued his primordial

existence in the brush, and then the heavy Oregon rains drove him

back to the habitations of men. Not in three months could a ninety-

pound survivor of two attacks of pneumonia develop sufficient

ruggedness to live through an Oregon winter in the open.

He had accomplished much, but he had been driven in. There was no

place to go but back to his father's house, and there, living in

close rooms with lungs that panted for all the air of the open sky,

he was brought down by a third attack of pneumonia. He grew weaker

even than before. In that tottering tabernacle of flesh, his brain

collapsed. He lay like a corpse, too weak to stand the fatigue of

speaking, too irritated and tired in his miserable brain to care to

listen to the speech of others. The only act of will of which he

was capable was to stick his fingers in his ears and resolutely to

refuse to hear a single word that was spoken to him. They sent for

the insanity experts. He was adjudged insane, and also the verdict

was given that he would not live a month.

By one such mental expert he was carted off to a sanatorium on Mt.

Tabor. Here, when they learned that he was harmless, they gave him

his own way. They no longer dictated as to the food he ate, so he

resumed his fruits and nuts--olive oil, peanut butter, and bananas

the chief articles of his diet. As he regained his strength he made

up his mind to live thenceforth his own life. If he lived like

others, according to social conventions, he would surely die. And

he did not want to die. The fear of death was one of the strongest

factors in the genesis of the Nature Man. To live, he must have a

natural diet, the open air, and the blessed sunshine.

Now an Oregon winter has no inducements for those who wish to return

to Nature, so Darling started out in search of a climate. He

mounted a bicycle and headed south for the sunlands. Stanford

University claimed him for a year. Here he studied and worked his

way, attending lectures in as scant garb as the authorities would

allow and applying as much as possible the principles of living that

he had learned in squirrel-town. His favourite method of study was

to go off in the hills back of the University, and there to strip

off his clothes and lie on the grass, soaking in sunshine and health

at the same time that he soaked in knowledge.

But Central California has her winters, and the quest for a Nature

Man's climate drew him on. He tried Los Angeles and Southern

California, being arrested a few times and brought before the

insanity commissions because, forsooth, his mode of life was not

modelled after the mode of life of his fellow-men. He tried Hawaii,

where, unable to prove him insane, the authorities deported him. It

was not exactly a deportation. He could have remained by serving a

year in prison. They gave him his choice. Now prison is death to

the Nature Man, who thrives only in the open air and in God's

sunshine. The authorities of Hawaii are not to be blamed. Darling

was an undesirable citizen. Any man is undesirable who disagrees

with one. And that any man should disagree to the extent Darling

did in his philosophy of the simple life is ample vindication of the

Hawaiian authorities verdict of his undesirableness.

So Darling went thence in search of a climate which would not only

be desirable, but wherein he would not be undesirable. And he found

it in Tahiti, the garden-spot of garden-spots. And so it was,

according to the narrative as given, that he wrote the pages of his

book. He wears only a loin-cloth and a sleeveless fish-net shirt.

His stripped weight is one hundred and sixty-five pounds. His

health is perfect. His eyesight, that at one time was considered

ruined, is excellent. The lungs that were practically destroyed by

three attacks of pneumonia have not only recovered, but are stronger

than ever before.

I shall never forget the first time, while talking to me, that he

squashed a mosquito. The stinging pest had settled in the middle of

his back between his shoulders. Without interrupting the flow of

conversation, without dropping even a syllable, his clenched fist

shot up in the air, curved backward, and smote his back between the

shoulders, killing the mosquito and making his frame resound like a

bass drum. It reminded me of nothing so much as of horses kicking

the woodwork in their stalls.

"The gorilla in the African jungle pounds his chest until the noise

of it can be heard half a mile away," he will announce suddenly, and

thereat beat a hair-raising, devil's tattoo on his own chest.

One day he noticed a set of boxing-gloves hanging on the wall, and

promptly his eyes brightened.

"Do you box?" I asked.

"I used to give lessons in boxing when I was at Stanford," was the

reply.

And there and then we stripped and put on the gloves. Bang! a long,

gorilla arm flashed out, landing the gloved end on my nose. Biff!

he caught me, in a duck, on the side of the head nearly knocking me

over sidewise. I carried the lump raised by that blow for a week.

I ducked under a straight left, and landed a straight right on his

stomach. It was a fearful blow. The whole weight of my body was

behind it, and his body had been met as it lunged forward. I looked

for him to crumple up and go down. Instead of which his face beamed

approval, and he said, "That was beautiful." The next instant I was

covering up and striving to protect myself from a hurricane of

hooks, jolts, and uppercuts. Then I watched my chance and drove in

for the solar plexus. I hit the mark. The Nature Man dropped his

arms, gasped, and sat down suddenly.

"I'll be all right," he said. "Just wait a moment."

And inside thirty seconds he was on his feet--ay, and returning the

compliment, for he hooked me in the solar plexus, and I gasped,

dropped my hands, and sat down just a trifle more suddenly than he

had.

All of which I submit as evidence that the man I boxed with was a

totally different man from the poor, ninety-pound weight of eight

years before, who, given up by physicians and alienists, lay gasping

his life away in a closed room in Portland, Oregon. The book that

Ernest Darling has written is a good book, and the binding is good,

too.

Hawaii has wailed for years her need for desirable immigrants. She

has spent much time, and thought, and money, in importing desirable

citizens, and she has, as yet, nothing much to show for it. Yet

Hawaii deported the Nature Man. She refused to give him a chance.

So it is, to chasten Hawaii's proud spirit, that I take this

opportunity to show her what she has lost in the Nature Man. When

he arrived in Tahiti, he proceeded to seek out a piece of land on

which to grow the food he ate. But land was difficult to find--that

is, inexpensive land. The Nature Man was not rolling in wealth. He

spent weeks in wandering over the steep hills, until, high up the

mountain, where clustered several tiny canyons, he found eighty

acres of brush-jungle which were apparently unrecorded as the

property of any one. The government officials told him that if he

would clear the land and till it for thirty years he would be given

a title for it.

Immediately he set to work. And never was there such work. Nobody

farmed that high up. The land was covered with matted jungle and

overrun by wild pigs and countless rats. The view of Papeete and

the sea was magnificent, but the outlook was not encouraging. He

spent weeks in building a road in order to make the plantation

accessible. The pigs and the rats ate up whatever he planted as

fast as it sprouted. He shot the pigs and trapped the rats. Of the

latter, in two weeks he caught fifteen hundred. Everything had to

be carried up on his back. He usually did his packhorse work at

night.

Gradually he began to win out. A grass-walled house was built. On

the fertile, volcanic soil he had wrested from the jungle and jungle

beasts were growing five hundred cocoanut trees, five hundred papaia

trees, three hundred mango trees, many breadfruit trees and

alligator-pear trees, to say nothing of vines, bushes, and

vegetables. He developed the drip of the hills in the canyons and

worked out an efficient irrigation scheme, ditching the water from

canyon to canyon and paralleling the ditches at different altitudes.

His narrow canyons became botanical gardens. The arid shoulders of

the hills, where formerly the blazing sun had parched the jungle and

beaten it close to earth, blossomed into trees and shrubs and

flowers. Not only had the Nature Man become self-supporting, but he

was now a prosperous agriculturist with produce to sell to the city-

dwellers of Papeete.

Then it was discovered that his land, which the government officials

had informed him was without an owner, really had an owner, and that

deeds, descriptions, etc., were on record. All his work bade fare

to be lost. The land had been valueless when he took it up, and the

owner, a large landholder, was unaware of the extent to which the

Nature Man had developed it. A just price was agreed upon, and

Darling's deed was officially filed.

Next came a more crushing blow. Darling's access to market was

destroyed. The road he had built was fenced across by triple barb-

wire fences. It was one of those jumbles in human affairs that is

so common in this absurdest of social systems. Behind it was the

fine hand of the same conservative element that haled the Nature Man

before the Insanity Commission in Los Angeles and that deported him

from Hawaii. It is so hard for self-satisfied men to understand any

man whose satisfactions are fundamentally different. It seems clear

that the officials have connived with the conservative element, for

to this day the road the Nature Man built is closed; nothing has

been done about it, while an adamant unwillingness to do anything

about it is evidenced on every hand. But the Nature Man dances and

sings along his way. He does not sit up nights thinking about the

wrong which has been done him; he leaves the worrying to the doers

of the wrong. He has no time for bitterness. He believes he is in

the world for the purpose of being happy, and he has not a moment to

waste in any other pursuit.

The road to his plantation is blocked. He cannot build a new road,

for there is no ground on which he can build it. The government has

restricted him to a wild-pig trail which runs precipitously up the

mountain. I climbed the trail with him, and we had to climb with

hands and feet in order to get up. Nor can that wild-pig trail be

made into a road by any amount of toil less than that of an

engineer, a steam-engine, and a steel cable. But what does the

Nature Man care? In his gentle ethics the evil men do him he

requites with goodness. And who shall say he is not happier than

they?

"Never mind their pesky road," he said to me as we dragged ourselves

up a shelf of rock and sat down, panting, to rest. "I'll get an air

machine soon and fool them. I'm clearing a level space for a

landing stage for the airships, and next time you come to Tahiti you

will alight right at my door."

Yes, the Nature Man has some strange ideas besides that of the

gorilla pounding his chest in the African jungle. The Nature Man

has ideas about levitation. "Yes, sir," he said to me, "levitation

is not impossible. And think of the glory of it--lifting one's self

from the ground by an act of will. Think of it! The astronomers

tell us that our whole solar system is dying; that, barring

accidents, it will all be so cold that no life can live upon it.

Very well. In that day all men will be accomplished levitationists,

and they will leave this perishing planet and seek more hospitable

worlds. How can levitation be accomplished? By progressive fasts.

Yes, I have tried them, and toward the end I could feel myself

actually getting lighter."

The man is a maniac, thought I.

"Of course," he added, "these are only theories of mine. I like to

speculate upon the glorious future of man. Levitation may not be

possible, but I like to think of it as possible."

One evening, when he yawned, I asked him how much sleep he allowed

himself.

"Seven hours," was the answer. "But in ten years I'll be sleeping

only six hours, and in twenty years only five hours. You see, I

shall cut off an hour's sleep every ten years."

"Then when you are a hundred you won't be sleeping at all," I

interjected.

"Just that. Exactly that. When I am a hundred I shall not require

sleep. Also, I shall be living on air. There are plants that live

on air, you know."

"But has any man ever succeeded in doing it?"

He shook his head.

"I never heard of him if he did. But it is only a theory of mine,

this living on air. It would be fine, wouldn't it? Of course it

may be impossible--most likely it is. You see, I am not

unpractical. I never forget the present. When I soar ahead into

the future, I always leave a string by which to find my way back

again."

I fear me the Nature Man is a joker. At any rate he lives the

simple life. His laundry bill cannot be large. Up on his

plantation he lives on fruit the labour cost of which, in cash, he

estimates at five cents a day. At present, because of his

obstructed road and because he is head over heels in the propaganda

of socialism, he is living in town, where his expenses, including

rent, are twenty-five cents a day. In order to pay those expenses

he is running a night school for Chinese.

The Nature Man is not bigoted. When there is nothing better to eat

than meat, he eats meat, as, for instance, when in jail or on

shipboard and the nuts and fruits give out. Nor does he seem to

crystallize into anything except sunburn.

"Drop anchor anywhere and the anchor will drag--that is, if your

soul is a limitless, fathomless sea, and not dog-pound," he quoted

to me, then added: "You see, my anchor is always dragging. I live

for human health and progress, and I strive to drag my anchor always

in that direction. To me, the two are identical. Dragging anchor

is what has saved me. My anchor did not hold me to my death-bed. I

dragged anchor into the brush and fooled the doctors. When I

recovered health and strength, I started, by preaching and by

example, to teach the people to become nature men and nature women.

But they had deaf ears. Then, on the steamer coming to Tahiti, a

quarter-master expounded socialism to me. He showed me that an

economic square deal was necessary before men and women could live

naturally. So I dragged anchor once more, and now I am working for

the co-operative commonwealth. When that arrives, it will be easy

to bring about nature living.

"I had a dream last night," he went on thoughtfully, his face slowly

breaking into a glow. "It seemed that twenty-five nature men and

nature women had just arrived on the steamer from California, and

that I was starting to go with them up the wild-pig trail to the

plantation."

Ah, me, Ernest Darling, sun-worshipper and nature man, there are

times when I am compelled to envy you and your carefree existence.

I see you now, dancing up the steps and cutting antics on the

veranda; your hair dripping from a plunge in the salt sea, your eyes

sparkling, your sun-gilded body flashing, your chest resounding to

the devil's own tattoo as you chant: "The gorilla in the African

jungle pounds his chest until the noise of it can be heard half a

mile away." And I shall see you always as I saw you that last day,

when the Snark poked her nose once more through the passage in the

smoking reef, outward bound, and I waved good-bye to those on shore.

Not least in goodwill and affection was the wave I gave to the

golden sun-god in the scarlet loin-cloth, standing upright in his

tiny outrigger canoe.

CHAPTER XII--THE HIGH SEAT OF ABUNDANCE

On the arrival of strangers, every man endeavoured to obtain one as

a friend and carry him off to his own habitation, where he is

treated with the greatest kindness by the inhabitants of the

district; they place him on a high seat and feed him with abundance

of the finest food.--Polynesian Researches.

The Snark was lying at anchor at Raiatea, just off the village of

Uturoa. She had arrived the night before, after dark, and we were

preparing to pay our first visit ashore. Early in the morning I had

noticed a tiny outrigger canoe, with an impossible spritsail,

skimming the surface of the lagoon. The canoe itself was coffin-

shaped, a mere dugout, fourteen feet long, a scant twelve inches

wide, and maybe twenty-four inches deep. It had no lines, except in

so far that it was sharp at both ends. Its sides were

perpendicular. Shorn of the outrigger, it would have capsized of

itself inside a tenth of a second. It was the outrigger that kept

it right side up.

I have said that the sail was impossible. It was. It was one of

those things, not that you have to see to believe, but that you

cannot believe after you have seen it. The hoist of it and the

length of its boom were sufficiently appalling; but, not content

with that, its artificer had given it a tremendous head. So large

was the head that no common sprit could carry the strain of it in an

ordinary breeze. So a spar had been lashed to the canoe, projecting

aft over the water. To this had been made fast a sprit guy: thus,

the foot of the sail was held by the main-sheet, and the peak by the

guy to the sprit.

It was not a mere boat, not a mere canoe, but a sailing machine.

And the man in it sailed it by his weight and his nerve--principally

by the latter. I watched the canoe beat up from leeward and run in

toward the village, its sole occupant far out on the outrigger and

luffing up and spilling the wind in the puffs.

"Well, I know one thing," I announced; "I don't leave Raiatea till I

have a ride in that canoe."

A few minutes later Warren called down the companionway, "Here's

that canoe you were talking about."

Promptly I dashed on deck and gave greeting to its owner, a tall,

slender Polynesian, ingenuous of face, and with clear, sparkling,

intelligent eyes. He was clad in a scarlet loin-cloth and a straw

hat. In his hands were presents--a fish, a bunch of greens, and

several enormous yams. All of which acknowledged by smiles (which

are coinage still in isolated spots of Polynesia) and by frequent

repetitions of mauruuru (which is the Tahitian "thank you"), I

proceeded to make signs that I desired to go for a sail in his

canoe.

His face lighted with pleasure and he uttered the single word,

"Tahaa," turning at the same time and pointing to the lofty, cloud-

draped peaks of an island three miles away--the island of Tahaa. It

was fair wind over, but a head-beat back. Now I did not want to go

to Tahaa. I had letters to deliver in Raiatea, and officials to

see, and there was Charmian down below getting ready to go ashore.

By insistent signs I indicated that I desired no more than a short

sail on the lagoon. Quick was the disappointment in his face, yet

smiling was the acquiescence.

"Come on for a sail," I called below to Charmian. "But put on your

swimming suit. It's going to be wet."

It wasn't real. It was a dream. That canoe slid over the water

like a streak of silver. I climbed out on the outrigger and

supplied the weight to hold her down, while Tehei (pronounced

Tayhayee) supplied the nerve. He, too, in the puffs, climbed part

way out on the outrigger, at the same time steering with both hands

on a large paddle and holding the mainsheet with his foot.

"Ready about!" he called.

I carefully shifted my weight inboard in order to maintain the

equilibrium as the sail emptied.

"Hard a-lee!" he called, shooting her into the wind.

I slid out on the opposite side over the water on a spar lashed

across the canoe, and we were full and away on the other tack.

"All right," said Tehei.

Those three phrases, "Ready about," "Hard a-lee," and "All right,"

comprised Tehei's English vocabulary and led me to suspect that at

some time he had been one of a Kanaka crew under an American

captain. Between the puffs I made signs to him and repeatedly and

interrogatively uttered the word SAILOR. Then I tried it in

atrocious French. MARIN conveyed no meaning to him; nor did

MATELOT. Either my French was bad, or else he was not up in it. I

have since concluded that both conjectures were correct. Finally, I

began naming over the adjacent islands. He nodded that he had been

to them. By the time my quest reached Tahiti, he caught my drift.

His thought-processes were almost visible, and it was a joy to watch

him think. He nodded his head vigorously. Yes, he had been to

Tahiti, and he added himself names of islands such as Tikihau,

Rangiroa, and Fakarava, thus proving that he had sailed as far as

the Paumotus--undoubtedly one of the crew of a trading schooner.

After our short sail, when he had returned on board, he by signs

inquired the destination of the Snark, and when I had mentioned

Samoa, Fiji, New Guinea, France, England, and California in their

geographical sequence, he said "Samoa," and by gestures intimated

that he wanted to go along. Whereupon I was hard put to explain

that there was no room for him. "Petit bateau" finally solved it,

and again the disappointment in his face was accompanied by smiling

acquiescence, and promptly came the renewed invitation to accompany

him to Tahaa.

Charmian and I looked at each other. The exhilaration of the ride

we had taken was still upon us. Forgotten were the letters to

Raiatea, the officials we had to visit. Shoes, a shirt, a pair of

trousers, cigarettes matches, and a book to read were hastily

crammed into a biscuit tin and wrapped in a rubber blanket, and we

were over the side and into the canoe.

"When shall we look for you?" Warren called, as the wind filled the

sail and sent Tehei and me scurrying out on the outrigger.

"I don't know," I answered. "When we get back, as near as I can

figure it."

And away we went. The wind had increased, and with slacked sheets

we ran off before it. The freeboard of the canoe was no more than

two and a half inches, and the little waves continually lapped over

the side. This required bailing. Now bailing is one of the

principal functions of the vahine. Vahine is the Tahitian for

woman, and Charmian being the only vahine aboard, the bailing fell

appropriately to her. Tehei and I could not very well do it, the

both of us being perched part way out on the outrigger and busied

with keeping the canoe bottom-side down. So Charmian bailed, with a

wooden scoop of primitive design, and so well did she do it that

there were occasions when she could rest off almost half the time.

Raiatea and Tahaa are unique in that they lie inside the same

encircling reef. Both are volcanic islands, ragged of sky-line,

with heaven-aspiring peaks and minarets. Since Raiatea is thirty

miles in circumference, and Tahaa fifteen miles, some idea may be

gained of the magnitude of the reef that encloses them. Between

them and the reef stretches from one to two miles of water, forming

a beautiful lagoon. The huge Pacific seas, extending in unbroken

lines sometimes a mile or half as much again in length, hurl

themselves upon the reef, overtowering and falling upon it with

tremendous crashes, and yet the fragile coral structure withstands

the shock and protects the land. Outside lies destruction to the

mightiest ship afloat. Inside reigns the calm of untroubled water,

whereon a canoe like ours can sail with no more than a couple of

inches of free-board.

We flew over the water. And such water!--clear as the clearest

spring-water, and crystalline in its clearness, all intershot with a

maddening pageant of colours and rainbow ribbons more magnificently

gorgeous than any rainbow. Jade green alternated with turquoise,

peacock blue with emerald, while now the canoe skimmed over reddish

purple pools, and again over pools of dazzling, shimmering white

where pounded coral sand lay beneath and upon which oozed monstrous

sea-slugs. One moment we were above wonder-gardens of coral,

wherein coloured fishes disported, fluttering like marine

butterflies; the next moment we were dashing across the dark surface

of deep channels, out of which schools of flying fish lifted their

silvery flight; and a third moment we were above other gardens of

living coral, each more wonderful than the last. And above all was

the tropic, trade-wind sky with its fluffy clouds racing across the

zenith and heaping the horizon with their soft masses.

Before we were aware, we were close in to Tahaa (pronounced Tah-hah-

ah, with equal accents), and Tehei was grinning approval of the

vahine's proficiency at bailing. The canoe grounded on a shallow

shore, twenty feet from land, and we waded out on a soft bottom

where big slugs curled and writhed under our feet and where small

octopuses advertised their existence by their superlative softness

when stepped upon. Close to the beach, amid cocoanut palms and

banana trees, erected on stilts, built of bamboo, with a grass-

thatched roof, was Tehei's house. And out of the house came Tehei's

vahine, a slender mite of a woman, kindly eyed and Mongolian of

feature--when she was not North American Indian. "Bihaura," Tehei

called her, but he did not pronounce it according to English notions

of spelling. Spelled "Bihaura," it sounded like Bee-ah-oo-rah, with

every syllable sharply emphasized.

She took Charmian by the hand and led her into the house, leaving

Tehei and me to follow. Here, by sign-language unmistakable, we

were informed that all they possessed was ours. No hidalgo was ever

more generous in the expression of giving, while I am sure that few

hidalgos were ever as generous in the actual practice. We quickly

discovered that we dare not admire their possessions, for whenever

we did admire a particular object it was immediately presented to

us. The two vahines, according to the way of vahines, got together

in a discussion and examination of feminine fripperies, while Tehei

and I, manlike, went over fishing-tackle and wild-pig-hunting, to

say nothing of the device whereby bonitas are caught on forty-foot

poles from double canoes. Charmian admired a sewing basket--the

best example she had seen of Polynesian basketry; it was hers. I

admired a bonita hook, carved in one piece from a pearl-shell; it

was mine. Charmian was attracted by a fancy braid of straw sennit,

thirty feet of it in a roll, sufficient to make a hat of any design

one wished; the roll of sennit was hers. My gaze lingered upon a

poi-pounder that dated back to the old stone days; it was mine.

Charmian dwelt a moment too long on a wooden poi-bowl, canoe-shaped,

with four legs, all carved in one piece of wood; it was hers. I

glanced a second time at a gigantic cocoanut calabash; it was mine.

Then Charmian and I held a conference in which we resolved to admire

no more--not because it did not pay well enough, but because it paid

too well. Also, we were already racking our brains over the

contents of the Snark for suitable return presents. Christmas is an

easy problem compared with a Polynesian giving-feast.

We sat on the cool porch, on Bihaura's best mats while dinner was

preparing, and at the same time met the villagers. In twos and

threes and groups they strayed along, shaking hands and uttering the

Tahitian word of greeting--Ioarana, pronounced yo-rah-nah. The men,

big strapping fellows, were in loin-cloths, with here and there no

shirt, while the women wore the universal ahu, a sort of adult

pinafore that flows in graceful lines from the shoulders to the

ground. Sad to see was the elephantiasis that afflicted some of

them. Here would be a comely woman of magnificent proportions, with

the port of a queen, yet marred by one arm four times--or a dozen

times--the size of the other. Beside her might stand a six-foot

man, erect, mighty-muscled, bronzed, with the body of a god, yet

with feet and calves so swollen that they ran together, forming

legs, shapeless, monstrous, that were for all the world like

elephant legs.

No one seems really to know the cause of the South Sea

elephantiasis. One theory is that it is caused by the drinking of

polluted water. Another theory attributes it to inoculation through

mosquito bites. A third theory charges it to predisposition plus

the process of acclimatization. On the other hand, no one that

stands in finicky dread of it and similar diseases can afford to

travel in the South Seas. There will be occasions when such a one

must drink water. There may be also occasions when the mosquitoes

let up biting. But every precaution of the finicky one will be

useless. If he runs barefoot across the beach to have a swim, he

will tread where an elephantiasis case trod a few minutes before.

If he closets himself in his own house, yet every bit of fresh food

on his table will have been subjected to the contamination, be it

flesh, fish, fowl, or vegetable. In the public market at Papeete

two known lepers run stalls, and heaven alone knows through what

channels arrive at that market the daily supplies of fish, fruit,

meat, and vegetables. The only happy way to go through the South

Seas is with a careless poise, without apprehension, and with a

Christian Science-like faith in the resplendent fortune of your own

particular star. When you see a woman, afflicted with elephantiasis

wringing out cream from cocoanut meat with her naked hands, drink

and reflect how good is the cream, forgetting the hands that pressed

it out. Also, remember that diseases such as elephantiasis and

leprosy do not seem to be caught by contact.

We watched a Raratongan woman, with swollen, distorted limbs,

prepare our cocoanut cream, and then went out to the cook-shed where

Tehei and Bihaura were cooking dinner. And then it was served to us

on a dry-goods box in the house. Our hosts waited until we were

done and then spread their table on the floor. But our table! We

were certainly in the high seat of abundance. First, there was

glorious raw fish, caught several hours before from the sea and

steeped the intervening time in lime-juice diluted with water. Then

came roast chicken. Two cocoanuts, sharply sweet, served for drink.

There were bananas that tasted like strawberries and that melted in

the mouth, and there was banana-poi that made one regret that his

Yankee forebears ever attempted puddings. Then there was boiled

yam, boiled taro, and roasted feis, which last are nothing more or

less than large mealy, juicy, red-coloured cooking bananas. We

marvelled at the abundance, and, even as we marvelled, a pig was

brought on, a whole pig, a sucking pig, swathed in green leaves and

roasted upon the hot stones of a native oven, the most honourable

and triumphant dish in the Polynesian cuisine. And after that came

coffee, black coffee, delicious coffee, native coffee grown on the

hillsides of Tahaa.

Tehei's fishing-tackle fascinated me, and after we arranged to go

fishing, Charmian and I decided to remain all night. Again Tehei

broached Samoa, and again my petit bateau brought the disappointment

and the smile of acquiescence to his face. Bora Bora was my next

port. It was not so far away but that cutters made the passage back

and forth between it and Raiatea. So I invited Tehei to go that far

with us on the Snark. Then I learned that his wife had been born on

Bora Bora and still owned a house there. She likewise was invited,

and immediately came the counter invitation to stay with them in

their house in Born Bora. It was Monday. Tuesday we would go

fishing and return to Raiatea. Wednesday we would sail by Tahaa and

off a certain point, a mile away, pick up Tehei and Bihaura and go

on to Bora Bora. All this we arranged in detail, and talked over

scores of other things as well, and yet Tehei knew three phrases in

English, Charmian and I knew possibly a dozen Tahitian words, and

among the four of us there were a dozen or so French words that all

understood. Of course, such polyglot conversation was slow, but,

eked out with a pad, a lead pencil, the face of a clock Charmian

drew on the back of a pad, and with ten thousand and one gestures,

we managed to get on very nicely.

At the first moment we evidenced an inclination for bed the visiting

natives, with soft Iaoranas, faded away, and Tehei and Bihaura

likewise faded away. The house consisted of one large room, and it

was given over to us, our hosts going elsewhere to sleep. In truth,

their castle was ours. And right here, I want to say that of all

the entertainment I have received in this world at the hands of all

sorts of races in all sorts of places, I have never received

entertainment that equalled this at the hands of this brown-skinned

couple of Tahaa. I do not refer to the presents, the free-handed

generousness, the high abundance, but to the fineness of courtesy

and consideration and tact, and to the sympathy that was real

sympathy in that it was understanding. They did nothing they

thought ought to be done for us, according to their standards, but

they did what they divined we waited to be done for us, while their

divination was most successful. It would be impossible to enumerate

the hundreds of little acts of consideration they performed during

the few days of our intercourse. Let it suffice for me to say that

of all hospitality and entertainment I have known, in no case was

theirs not only not excelled, but in no case was it quite equalled.

Perhaps the most delightful feature of it was that it was due to no

training, to no complex social ideals, but that it was the untutored

and spontaneous outpouring from their hearts.

The next morning we went fishing, that is, Tehei, Charmian, and I

did, in the coffin-shaped canoe; but this time the enormous sail was

left behind. There was no room for sailing and fishing at the same

time in that tiny craft. Several miles away, inside the reef, in a

channel twenty fathoms deep, Tehei dropped his baited hooks and

rock-sinkers. The bait was chunks of octopus flesh, which he bit

out of a live octopus that writhed in the bottom of the canoe. Nine

of these lines he set, each line attached to one end of a short

length of bamboo floating on the surface. When a fish was hooked,

the end of the bamboo was drawn under the water. Naturally, the

other end rose up in the air, bobbing and waving frantically for us

to make haste. And make haste we did, with whoops and yells and

driving paddles, from one signalling bamboo to another, hauling up

from the depths great glistening beauties from two to three feet in

length.

Steadily, to the eastward, an ominous squall had been rising and

blotting out the bright trade-wind sky. And we were three miles to

leeward of home. We started as the first wind-gusts whitened the

water. Then came the rain, such rain as only the tropics afford,

where every tap and main in the sky is open wide, and when, to top

it all, the very reservoir itself spills over in blinding deluge.

Well, Charmian was in a swimming suit, I was in pyjamas, and Tehei

wore only a loin-cloth. Bihaura was on the beach waiting for us,

and she led Charmian into the house in much the same fashion that

the mother leads in the naughty little girl who has been playing in

mud-puddles.

It was a change of clothes and a dry and quiet smoke while kai-kai

was preparing. Kai-kai, by the way, is the Polynesian for "food" or

"to eat," or, rather, it is one form of the original root, whatever

it may have been, that has been distributed far and wide over the

vast area of the Pacific. It is kai in the Marquesas, Raratonga,

Manahiki, Niue, Fakaafo, Tonga, New Zealand, and Vate. In Tahiti

"to eat" changes to amu, in Hawaii and Samoa to ai, in Ban to kana,

in Nina to kana, in Nongone to kaka, and in New Caledonia to ki.

But by whatsoever sound or symbol, it was welcome to our ears after

that long paddle in the rain. Once more we sat in the high seat of

abundance until we regretted that we had been made unlike the image

of the giraffe and the camel.

Again, when we were preparing to return to the Snark, the sky to

windward turned black and another squall swooped down. But this

time it was little rain and all wind. It blew hour after hour,

moaning and screeching through the palms, tearing and wrenching and

shaking the frail bamboo dwelling, while the outer reef set no a

mighty thundering as it broke the force of the swinging seas.

Inside the reef, the lagoon, sheltered though it was, was white with

fury, and not even Tehei's seamanship could have enabled his slender

canoe to live in such a welter.

By sunset, the back of the squall had broken though it was still too

rough for the canoe. So I had Tehei find a native who was willing

to venture his cutter across to Raiatea for the outrageous sum of

two dollars, Chili, which is equivalent in our money to ninety

cents. Half the village was told off to carry presents, with which

Tehei and Bihaura speeded their parting guests--captive chickens,

fishes dressed and swathed in wrappings of green leaves, great

golden bunches of bananas, leafy baskets spilling over with oranges

and limes, alligator pears (the butter-fruit, also called the

avoca), huge baskets of yams, bunches of taro and cocoanuts, and

last of all, large branches and trunks of trees--firewood for the

Snark.

While on the way to the cutter we met the only white man on Tahaa,

and of all men, George Lufkin, a native of New England! Eighty-six

years of age he was, sixty-odd of which, he said, he had spent in

the Society Islands, with occasional absences, such as the gold rush

to Eldorado in 'forty-nine and a short period of ranching in

California near Tulare. Given no more than three months by the

doctors to live, he had returned to his South Seas and lived to

eighty-six and to chuckle over the doctors aforesaid, who were all

in their graves. Fee-fee he had, which is the native for

elephantiasis and which is pronounced fay-fay. A quarter of a

century before, the disease had fastened upon him, and it would

remain with him until he died. We asked him about kith and kin.

Beside him sat a sprightly damsel of sixty, his daughter. "She is

all I have," he murmured plaintively, "and she has no children

living."

The cutter was a small, sloop-rigged affair, but large it seemed

alongside Tehei's canoe. On the other hand, when we got out on the

lagoon and were struck by another heavy wind-squall, the cutter

became liliputian, while the Snark, in our imagination, seemed to

promise all the stability and permanence of a continent. They were

good boatmen. Tehei and Bihaura had come along to see us home, and

the latter proved a good boatwoman herself. The cutter was well

ballasted, and we met the squall under full sail. It was getting

dark, the lagoon was full of coral patches, and we were carrying on.

In the height of the squall we had to go about, in order to make a

short leg to windward to pass around a patch of coral no more than a

foot under the surface. As the cutter filled on the other tack, and

while she was in that "dead" condition that precedes gathering way,

she was knocked flat. Jib-sheet and main-sheet were let go, and she

righted into the wind. Three times she was knocked down, and three

times the sheets were flung loose, before she could get away on that

tack.

By the time we went about again, darkness had fallen. We were now

to windward of the Snark, and the squall was howling. In came the

jib, and down came the mainsail, all but a patch of it the size of a

pillow-slip. By an accident we missed the Snark, which was riding

it out to two anchors, and drove aground upon the inshore coral.

Running the longest line on the Snark by means of the launch, and

after an hour's hard work, we heaved the cutter off and had her

lying safely astern.

The day we sailed for Bora Bora the wind was light, and we crossed

the lagoon under power to the point where Tehei and Bihaura were to

meet us. As we made in to the land between the coral banks, we

vainly scanned the shore for our friends. There was no sign of

them.

"We can't wait," I said. "This breeze won't fetch us to Bora Bora

by dark, and I don't want to use any more gasolene than I have to."

You see, gasolene in the South Seas is a problem. One never knows

when he will be able to replenish his supply.

But just then Tehei appeared through the trees as he came down to

the water. He had peeled off his shirt and was wildly waving it.

Bihaura apparently was not ready. Once aboard, Tehei informed us by

signs that we must proceed along the land till we got opposite to

his house. He took the wheel and conned the Snark through the

coral, around point after point till we cleared the last point of

all. Cries of welcome went up from the beach, and Bihaura, assisted

by several of the villagers, brought off two canoe-loads of

abundance. There were yams, taro, feis, breadfruit, cocoanuts,

oranges, limes, pineapples, watermelons, alligator pears,

pomegranates, fish, chickens galore crowing and cackling and laying

eggs on our decks, and a live pig that squealed infernally and all

the time in apprehension of imminent slaughter.

Under the rising moon we came in through the perilous passage of the

reef of Bora Bora and dropped anchor off Vaitape village. Bihaura,

with housewifely anxiety, could not get ashore too quickly to her

house to prepare more abundance for us. While the launch was taking

her and Tehei to the little jetty, the sound of music and of singing

drifted across the quiet lagoon. Throughout the Society Islands we

had been continually informed that we would find the Bora Borans

very jolly. Charmian and I went ashore to see, and on the village

green, by forgotten graves on the beach, found the youths and

maidens dancing, flower-garlanded and flower-bedecked, with strange

phosphorescent flowers in their hair that pulsed and dimmed and

glowed in the moonlight. Farther along the beach we came upon a

huge grass house, oval-shaped seventy feet in length, where the

elders of the village were singing himines. They, too, were flower-

garlanded and jolly, and they welcomed us into the fold as little

lost sheep straying along from outer darkness.

Early next morning Tehei was on board, with a string of fresh-caught

fish and an invitation to dinner for that evening. On the way to

dinner, we dropped in at the himine house. The same elders were

singing, with here or there a youth or maiden that we had not seen

the previous night. From all the signs, a feast was in preparation.

Towering up from the floor was a mountain of fruits and vegetables,

flanked on either side by numerous chickens tethered by cocoanut

strips. After several himines had been sung, one of the men arose

and made oration. The oration was made to us, and though it was

Greek to us, we knew that in some way it connected us with that

mountain of provender.

"Can it be that they are presenting us with all that?" Charmian

whispered.

"Impossible," I muttered back. "Why should they be giving it to us?

Besides, there is no room on the Snark for it. We could not eat a

tithe of it. The rest would spoil. Maybe they are inviting us to

the feast. At any rate, that they should give all that to us is

impossible."

Nevertheless we found ourselves once more in the high seat of

abundance. The orator, by gestures unmistakable, in detail

presented every item in the mountain to us, and next he presented it

to us in toto. It was an embarrassing moment. What would you do if

you lived in a hall bedroom and a friend gave you a white elephant?

Our Snark was no more than a hall bedroom, and already she was

loaded down with the abundance of Tahaa. This new supply was too

much. We blushed, and stammered, and mauruuru'd. We mauruuru'd

with repeated nui's which conveyed the largeness and

overwhelmingness of our thanks. At the same time, by signs, we

committed the awful breach of etiquette of not accepting the

present. The himine singers' disappointment was plainly betrayed,

and that evening, aided by Tehei, we compromised by accepting one

chicken, one bunch of bananas, one bunch of taro, and so on down the

list.

But there was no escaping the abundance. I bought a dozen chickens

from a native out in the country, and the following day he delivered

thirteen chickens along with a canoe-load of fruit. The French

storekeeper presented us with pomegranates and lent us his finest

horse. The gendarme did likewise, lending us a horse that was the

very apple of his eye. And everybody sent us flowers. The Snark

was a fruit-stand and a greengrocer's shop masquerading under the

guise of a conservatory. We went around flower-garlanded all the

time. When the himine singers came on board to sing, the maidens

kissed us welcome, and the crew, from captain to cabin-boy, lost its

heart to the maidens of Bora Bora. Tehei got up a big fishing

expedition in our honour, to which we went in a double canoe,

paddled by a dozen strapping Amazons. We were relieved that no fish

were caught, else the Snark would have sunk at her moorings.

The days passed, but the abundance did not diminish. On the day of

departure, canoe after canoe put off to us. Tehei brought cucumbers

and a young papaia tree burdened with splendid fruit. Also, for me

he brought a tiny, double canoe with fishing apparatus complete.

Further, he brought fruits and vegetables with the same lavishness

as at Tahaa. Bihaura brought various special presents for Charmian,

such as silk-cotton pillows, fans, and fancy mats. The whole

population brought fruits, flowers, and chickens. And Bihaura added

a live sucking pig. Natives whom I did not remember ever having

seen before strayed over the rail and presented me with such things

as fish-poles, fish-lines, and fish-hooks carved from pearl-shell.

As the Snark sailed out through the reef, she had a cutter in tow.

This was the craft that was to take Bihaura back to Tahaa--but not

Tehei. I had yielded at last, and he was one of the crew of the

Snark. When the cutter cast off and headed east, and the Snark's

bow turned toward the west, Tehei knelt down by the cockpit and

breathed a silent prayer, the tears flowing down his cheeks. A week

later, when Martin got around to developing and printing, he showed

Tehei some of the photographs. And that brown-skinned son of

Polynesia, gazing on the pictured lineaments of his beloved Bihaura

broke down in tears.

But the abundance! There was so much of it. We could not work the

Snark for the fruit that was in the way. She was festooned with

fruit. The life-boat and launch were packed with it. The awning-

guys groaned under their burdens. But once we struck the full

trade-wind sea, the disburdening began. At every roll the Snark

shook overboard a bunch or so of bananas and cocoanuts, or a basket

of limes. A golden flood of limes washed about in the lee-scuppers.

The big baskets of yams burst, and pineapples and pomegranates

rolled back and forth. The chickens had got loose and were

everywhere, roosting on the awnings, fluttering and squawking out on

the jib-boom, and essaying the perilous feat of balancing on the

spinnaker-boom. They were wild chickens, accustomed to flight.

When attempts were made to catch them, they flew out over the ocean,

circled about, and came lack. Sometimes they did not come back.

And in the confusion, unobserved, the little sucking pig got loose

and slipped overboard.

"On the arrival of strangers, every man endeavoured to obtain one as

a friend and carry him off to his own habitation, where he is

treated with the greatest kindness by the inhabitants of the

district: they place him on a high seat and feed him with abundance

of the finest foods."

CHAPTER XIII--THE STONE-FISHING OF BORA BORA

At five in the morning the conches began to blow. From all along

the beach the eerie sounds arose, like the ancient voice of War,

calling to the fishermen to arise and prepare to go forth. We on

the Snark likewise arose, for there could be no sleep in that mad

din of conches. Also, we were going stone-fishing, though our

preparations were few.

Tautai-taora is the name for stone-fishing, tautai meaning a

"fishing instrument." And taora meaning "thrown." But tautai-

taora, in combination, means "stone-fishing," for a stone is the

instrument that is thrown. Stone-fishing is in reality a fish-

drive, similar in principle to a rabbit-drive or a cattle-drive,

though in the latter affairs drivers and driven operate in the same

medium, while in the fish-drive the men must be in the air to

breathe and the fish are driven through the water. It does not

matter if the water is a hundred feet deep, the men, working on the

surface, drive the fish just the same.

This is the way it is done. The canoes form in line, one hundred to

two hundred feet apart. In the bow of each canoe a man wields a

stone, several pounds in weight, which is attached to a short rope.

He merely smites the water with the stone, pulls up the stone, and

smites again. He goes on smiting. In the stern of each canoe

another man paddles, driving the canoe ahead and at the same time

keeping it in the formation. The line of canoes advances to meet a

second line a mile or two away, the ends of the lines hurrying

together to form a circle, the far edge of which is the shore. The

circle begins to contract upon the shore, where the women, standing

in a long row out into the sea, form a fence of legs, which serves

to break any rushes of the frantic fish. At the right moment when

the circle is sufficiently small, a canoe dashes out from shore,

dropping overboard a long screen of cocoanut leaves and encircling

the circle, thus reinforcing the palisade of legs. Of course, the

fishing is always done inside the reef in the lagoon.

"Tres jolie," the gendarme said, after explaining by signs and

gestures that thousands of fish would be caught of all sizes from

minnows to sharks, and that the captured fish would boil up and upon

the very sand of the beach.

It is a most successful method of fishing, while its nature is more

that of an outing festival, rather than of a prosaic, food-getting

task. Such fishing parties take place about once a month at Bora

Bora, and it is a custom that has descended from old time. The man

who originated it is not remembered. They always did this thing.

But one cannot help wondering about that forgotten savage of the

long ago, into whose mind first flashed this scheme of easy fishing,

of catching huge quantities of fish without hook, or net, or spear.

One thing about him we can know: he was a radical. And we can be

sure that he was considered feather-brained and anarchistic by his

conservative tribesmen. His difficulty was much greater than that

of the modern inventor, who has to convince in advance only one or

two capitalists. That early inventor had to convince his whole

tribe in advance, for without the co-operation of the whole tribe

the device could not be tested. One can well imagine the nightly

pow-wow-ings in that primitive island world, when he called his

comrades antiquated moss-backs, and they called him a fool, a freak,

and a crank, and charged him with having come from Kansas. Heaven

alone knows at what cost of grey hairs and expletives he must

finally have succeeded in winning over a sufficient number to give

his idea a trial. At any rate, the experiment succeeded. It stood

the test of truth--it worked! And thereafter, we can be confident,

there was no man to be found who did not know all along that it was

going to work.

Our good friends, Tehei and Bihaura, who were giving the fishing in

our honour, had promised to come for us. We were down below when

the call came from on deck that they were coming. We dashed up the

companionway, to be overwhelmed by the sight of the Polynesian barge

in which we were to ride. It was a long double canoe, the canoes

lashed together by timbers with an interval of water between, and

the whole decorated with flowers and golden grasses. A dozen

flower-crowned Amazons were at the paddles, while at the stern of

each canoe was a strapping steersman. All were garlanded with gold

and crimson and orange flowers, while each wore about the hips a

scarlet pareu. There were flowers everywhere, flowers, flowers,

flowers, without out end. The whole thing was an orgy of colour.

On the platform forward resting on the bows of the canoes, Tehei and

Bihaura were dancing. All voices were raised in a wild song or

greeting.

Three times they circled the Snark before coming alongside to take

Charmian and me on board. Then it was away for the fishing-grounds,

a five-mile paddle dead to windward. "Everybody is jolly in Bora

Bora," is the saying throughout the Society Islands, and we

certainly found everybody jolly. Canoe songs, shark songs, and

fishing songs were sung to the dipping of the paddles, all joining

in on the swinging choruses. Once in a while the cry Mao! was

raised, whereupon all strained like mad at the paddles. Mao is

shark, and when the deep-sea tigers appear, the natives paddle for

dear life for the shore, knowing full well the danger they run of

having their frail canoes overturned and of being devoured. Of

course, in our case there were no sharks, but the cry of mao was

used to incite them to paddle with as much energy as if a shark were

really after them. "Hoe! Hoe!" was another cry that made us foam

through the water.

On the platform Tehei and Bihaura danced, accompanied by songs and

choruses or by rhythmic hand-clappings. At other times a musical

knocking of the paddles against the sides of the canoes marked the

accent. A young girl dropped her paddle, leaped to the platform,

and danced a hula, in the midst of which, still dancing, she swayed

and bent, and imprinted on our cheeks the kiss of welcome. Some of

the songs, or himines, were religious, and they were especially

beautiful, the deep basses of the men mingling with the altos and

thin sopranos of the women and forming a combination of sound that

irresistibly reminded one of an organ. In fact, "kanaka organ" is

the scoffer's description of the himine. On the other hand, some of

the chants or ballads were very barbaric, having come down from pre-

Christian times.

And so, singing, dancing, paddling, these joyous Polynesians took us

to the fishing. The gendarme, who is the French ruler of Bora Bora,

accompanied us with his family in a double canoe of his own, paddled

by his prisoners; for not only is he gendarme and ruler, but he is

jailer as well, and in this jolly land when anybody goes fishing,

all go fishing. A score of single canoes, with outriggers, paddled

along with us. Around a point a big sailing-canoe appeared, running

beautifully before the wind as it bore down to greet us. Balancing

precariously on the outrigger, three young men saluted us with a

wild rolling of drums.

The next point, half a mile farther on, brought us to the place of

meeting. Here the launch, which had been brought along by Warren

and Martin, attracted much attention. The Bora Borans could not see

what made it go. The canoes were drawn upon the sand, and all hands

went ashore to drink cocoanuts and sing and dance. Here our numbers

were added to by many who arrived on foot from near-by dwellings,

and a pretty sight it was to see the flower-crowned maidens, hand in

hand and two by two, arriving along the sands.

"They usually make a big catch," Allicot, a half-caste trader, told

us. "At the finish the water is fairly alive with fish. It is lots

of fun. Of course you know all the fish will be yours."

"All?" I groaned, for already the Snark was loaded down with lavish

presents, by the canoe-load, of fruits, vegetables, pigs, and

chickens.

"Yes, every last fish," Allicot answered. "You see, when the

surround is completed, you, being the guest of honour, must take a

harpoon and impale the first one. It is the custom. Then everybody

goes in with their hands and throws the catch out on the sand.

There will be a mountain of them. Then one of the chiefs will make

a speech in which he presents you with the whole kit and boodle.

But you don't have to take them all. You get up and make a speech,

selecting what fish you want for yourself and presenting all the

rest back again. Then everybody says you are very generous."

"But what would be the result if I kept the whole present?" I asked.

"It has never happened," was the answer. "It is the custom to give

and give back again."

The native minister started with a prayer for success in the

fishing, and all heads were bared. Next, the chief fishermen told

off the canoes and allotted them their places. Then it was into the

canoes and away. No women, however, came along, with the exception

of Bihaura and Charmian. In the old days even they would have been

tabooed. The women remained behind to wade out into the water and

form the palisade of legs.

The big double canoe was left on the beech, and we went in the

launch. Half the canoes paddled off to leeward, while we, with the

other half, headed to windward a mile and a half, until the end of

our line was in touch with the reef. The leader of the drive

occupied a canoe midway in our line. He stood erect, a fine figure

of an old man, holding a flag in his hand. He directed the taking

of positions and the forming of the two lines by blowing on a conch.

When all was ready, he waved his flag to the right. With a single

splash the throwers in every canoe on that side struck the water

with their stones. While they were hauling them back--a matter of a

moment, for the stones scarcely sank beneath the surface--the flag

waved to the left, and with admirable precision every stone on that

side struck the water. So it went, back and forth, right and left;

with every wave of the flag a long line of concussion smote the

lagoon. At the same time the paddles drove the canoes forward and

what was being done in our line was being done in the opposing line

of canoes a mile and more away.

On the bow of the launch, Tehei, with eyes fixed on the leader,

worked his stone in unison with the others. Once, the stone slipped

from the rope, and the same instant Tehei went overboard after it.

I do not know whether or not that stone reached the bottom, but I do

know that the next instant Tehei broke surface alongside with the

stone in his hand. I noticed this same accident occur several times

among the near-by canoes, but in each instance the thrower followed

the stone and brought it back.

The reef ends of our lines accelerated, the shore ends lagged, all

under the watchful supervision of the leader, until at the reef the

two lines joined, forming the circle. Then the contraction of the

circle began, the poor frightened fish harried shoreward by the

streaks of concussion that smote the water. In the same fashion

elephants are driven through the jungle by motes of men who crouch

in the long grasses or behind trees and make strange noises.

Already the palisade of legs had been built. We could see the heads

of the women, in a long line, dotting the placid surface of the

lagoon. The tallest women went farthest out, thus, with the

exception of those close inshore, nearly all were up to their necks

in the water.

Still the circle narrowed, till canoes were almost touching. There

was a pause. A long canoe shot out from shore, following the line

of the circle. It went as fast as paddles could drive. In the

stern a man threw overboard the long, continuous screen of cocoanut

leaves. The canoes were no longer needed, and overboard went the

men to reinforce the palisade with their legs. For the screen was

only a screen, and not a net, and the fish could dash through it if

they tried. Hence the need for legs that ever agitated the screen,

and for hands that splashed and throats that yelled. Pandemonium

reigned as the trap tightened.

But no fish broke surface or collided against the hidden legs. At

last the chief fisherman entered the trap. He waded around

everywhere, carefully. But there were no fish boiling up and out

upon the sand. There was not a sardine, not a minnow, not a polly-

wog. Something must have been wrong with that prayer; or else, and

more likely, as one grizzled fellow put it, the wind was not in its

usual quarter and the fish were elsewhere in the lagoon. In fact,

there had been no fish to drive.

"About once in five these drives are failures," Allicot consoled us.

Well, it was the stone-fishing that had brought us to Bora Bora, and

it was our luck to draw the one chance in five. Had it been a

raffle, it would have been the other way about. This is not

pessimism. Nor is it an indictment of the plan of the universe. It

is merely that feeling which is familiar to most fishermen at the

empty end of a hard day.

CHAPTER XIV--THE AMATEUR NAVIGATOR

There are captains and captains, and some mighty fine captains, I

know; but the run of the captains on the Snark has been remarkably

otherwise. My experience with them has been that it is harder to

take care of one captain on a small boat than of two small babies.

Of course, this is no more than is to be expected. The good men

have positions, and are not likely to forsake their one-thousand-to-

fifteen-thousand-ton billets for the Snark with her ten tons net.

The Snark has had to cull her navigators from the beach, and the

navigator on the beach is usually a congenital inefficient--the sort

of man who beats about for a fortnight trying vainly to find an

ocean isle and who returns with his schooner to report the island

sunk with all on board, the sort of man whose temper or thirst for

strong waters works him out of billets faster than he can work into

them.

The Snark has had three captains, and by the grace of God she shall

have no more. The first captain was so senile as to be unable to

give a measurement for a boom-jaw to a carpenter. So utterly agedly

helpless was he, that he was unable to order a sailor to throw a few

buckets of salt water on the Snark's deck. For twelve days, at

anchor, under an overhead tropic sun, the deck lay dry. It was a

new deck. It cost me one hundred and thirty-five dollars to recaulk

it. The second captain was angry. He was born angry. "Papa is

always angry," was the description given him by his half-breed son.

The third captain was so crooked that he couldn't hide behind a

corkscrew. The truth was not in him, common honesty was not in him,

and he was as far away from fair play and square-dealing as he was

from his proper course when he nearly wrecked the Snark on the Ring-

gold Isles.

It was at Suva, in the Fijis, that I discharged my third and last

captain and took up gain the role of amateur navigator. I had

essayed it once before, under my first captain, who, out of San

Francisco, jumped the Snark so amazingly over the chart that I

really had to find out what was doing. It was fairly easy to find

out, for we had a run of twenty-one hundred miles before us. I knew

nothing of navigation; but, after several hours of reading up and

half an hour's practice with the sextant, I was able to find the

Snark's latitude by meridian observation and her longitude by the

simple method known as "equal altitudes." This is not a correct

method. It is not even a safe method, but my captain was attempting

to navigate by it, and he was the only one on board who should have

been able to tell me that it was a method to be eschewed. I brought

the Snark to Hawaii, but the conditions favoured me. The sun was in

northern declination and nearly overhead. The legitimate

"chronometer-sight" method of ascertaining the longitude I had not

heard of--yes, I had heard of it. My first captain mentioned it

vaguely, but after one or two attempts at practice of it he

mentioned it no more.

I had time in the Fijis to compare my chronometer with two other

chronometers. Two weeks previous, at Pago Pago, in Samoa, I had

asked my captain to compare our chronometer with the chronometers on

the American cruiser, the Annapolis. This he told me he had done--

of course he had done nothing of the sort; and he told me that the

difference he had ascertained was only a small fraction of a second.

He told it to me with finely simulated joy and with words of praise

for my splendid time-keeper. I repeat it now, with words of praise

for his splendid and unblushing unveracity. For behold, fourteen

days later, in Suva, I compared the chronometer with the one on the

Atua, an Australian steamer, and found that mine was thirty-one

seconds fast. Now thirty-one seconds of time, converted into arc,

equals seven and one-quarter miles. That is to say, if I were

sailing west, in the night-time, and my position, according to my

dead reckoning from my afternoon chronometer sight, was shown to be

seven miles off the land, why, at that very moment I would be

crashing on the reef. Next I compared my chronometer with Captain

Wooley's. Captain Wooley, the harbourmaster, gives the time to

Suva, firing a gun signal at twelve, noon, three times a week.

According to his chronometer mine was fifty-nine seconds fast, which

is to say, that, sailing west, I should be crashing on the reef when

I thought I was fifteen miles off from it.

I compromised by subtracting thirty-one seconds from the total of my

chronometer's losing error, and sailed away for Tanna, in the New

Hebrides, resolved, when nosing around the land on dark nights, to

bear in mind the other seven miles I might be out according to

Captain Wooley's instrument. Tanna lay some six hundred miles west-

southwest from the Fijis, and it was my belief that while covering

that distance I could quite easily knock into my head sufficient

navigation to get me there. Well, I got there, but listen first to

my troubles. Navigation IS easy, I shall always contend that; but

when a man is taking three gasolene engines and a wife around the

world and is writing hard every day to keep the engines supplied

with gasolene and the wife with pearls and volcanoes, he hasn't much

time left in which to study navigation. Also, it is bound to be

easier to study said science ashore, where latitude and longitude

are unchanging, in a house whose position never alters, than it is

to study navigation on a boat that is rushing along day and night

toward land that one is trying to find and which he is liable to

find disastrously at a moment when he least expects it.

To begin with, there are the compasses and the setting of the

courses. We sailed from Suva on Saturday afternoon, June 6, 1908,

and it took us till after dark to run the narrow, reef-ridden

passage between the islands of Viti Levu and Mbengha. The open

ocean lay before me. There was nothing in the way with the

exception of Vatu Leile, a miserable little island that persisted in

poking up through the sea some twenty miles to the west-southwest--

just where I wanted to go. Of course, it seemed quite simple to

avoid it by steering a course that would pass it eight or ten miles

to the north. It was a black night, and we were running before the

wind. The man at the wheel must be told what direction to steer in

order to miss Vatu Leile. But what direction? I turned me to the

navigation books. "True Course" I lighted upon. The very thing!

What I wanted was the true course. I read eagerly on:

"The True Course is the angle made with the meridian by a straight

line on the chart drawn to connect the ship's position with the

place bound to."

Just what I wanted. The Snark's position was at the western

entrance of the passage between Viti Levu and Mbengha. The

immediate place she was bound to was a place on the chart ten miles

north of Vatu Leile. I pricked that place off on the chart with my

dividers, and with my parallel rulers found that west-by-south was

the true course. I had but to give it to the man at the wheel and

the Snark would win her way to the safety of the open sea.

But alas and alack and lucky for me, I read on. I discovered that

the compass, that trusty, everlasting friend of the mariner, was not

given to pointing north. It varied. Sometimes it pointed east of

north, sometimes west of north, and on occasion it even turned tail

on north and pointed south. The variation at the particular spot on

the globe occupied by the Snark was 9 degrees 40 minutes easterly.

Well, that had to be taken in to account before I gave the steering

course to the man at the wheel. I read:

"The Correct Magnetic Course is derived from the True Course by

applying to it the variation."

Therefore, I reasoned, if the compass points 9 degrees 40 minutes

eastward of north, and I wanted to sail due north, I should have to

steer 9 degrees 40 minutes westward of the north indicated by the

compass and which was not north at all. So I added 9 degrees 40

minutes to the left of my west-by-south course, thus getting my

correct Magnetic Course, and was ready once more to run to open sea.

Again alas and alack! The Correct Magnetic Course was not the

Compass Course. There was another sly little devil lying in wait to

trip me up and land me smashing on the reefs of Vatu Leile. This

little devil went by the name of Deviation. I read:

"The Compass Course is the course to steer, and is derived from the

Correct Magnetic Course by applying to it the Deviation."

Now Deviation is the variation in the needle caused by the

distribution of iron on board of ship. This purely local variation

I derived from the deviation card of my standard compass and then

applied to the Correct Magnetic Course. The result was the Compass

Course. And yet, not yet. My standard compass was amidships on the

companionway. My steering compass was aft, in the cockpit, near the

wheel. When the steering compass pointed west-by-south three-

quarters-south (the steering course), the standard compass pointed

west-one-half-north, which was certainly not the steering course. I

kept the Snark up till she was heading west-by-south-three-quarters-

south on the standard compass, which gave, on the steering compass,

south-west-by-west.

The foregoing operations constitute the simple little matter of

setting a course. And the worst of it is that one must perform

every step correctly or else he will hear "Breakers ahead!" some

pleasant night, a nice sea-bath, and be given the delightful

diversion of fighting his way to the shore through a horde of man-

eating sharks.

Just as the compass is tricky and strives to fool the mariner by

pointing in all directions except north, so does that guide post of

the sky, the sun, persist in not being where it ought to be at a

given time. This carelessness of the sun is the cause of more

trouble--at least it caused trouble for me. To find out where one

is on the earth's surface, he must know, at precisely the same time,

where the sun is in the heavens. That is to say, the sun, which is

the timekeeper for men, doesn't run on time. When I discovered

this, I fell into deep gloom and all the Cosmos was filled with

doubt. Immutable laws, such as gravitation and the conservation of

energy, became wobbly, and I was prepared to witness their violation

at any moment and to remain unastonished. For see, if the compass

lied and the sun did not keep its engagements, why should not

objects lose their mutual attraction and why should not a few bushel

baskets of force be annihilated? Even perpetual motion became

possible, and I was in a frame of mind prone to purchase Keeley-

Motor stock from the first enterprising agent that landed on the

Snark's deck. And when I discovered that the earth really rotated

on its axis 366 times a year, while there were only 365 sunrises and

sunsets, I was ready to doubt my own identity.

This is the way of the sun. It is so irregular that it is

impossible for man to devise a clock that will keep the sun's time.

The sun accelerates and retards as no clock could be made to

accelerate and retard. The sun is sometimes ahead of its schedule;

at other times it is lagging behind; and at still other times it is

breaking the speed limit in order to overtake itself, or, rather, to

catch up with where it ought to be in the sky. In this last case it

does not slow down quick enough, and, as a result, goes dashing

ahead of where it ought to be. In fact, only four days in a year do

the sun and the place where the sun ought to be happen to coincide.

The remaining 361 days the sun is pothering around all over the

shop. Man, being more perfect than the sun, makes a clock that

keeps regular time. Also, he calculates how far the sun is ahead of

its schedule or behind. The difference between the sun's position

and the position where the sun ought to be if it were a decent,

self-respecting sun, man calls the Equation of Time. Thus, the

navigator endeavouring to find his ship's position on the sea, looks

in his chronometer to see where precisely the sun ought to be

according to the Greenwich custodian of the sun. Then to that

location he applies the Equation of Time and finds out where the sun

ought to be and isn't. This latter location, along with several

other locations, enables him to find out what the man from Kansas

demanded to know some years ago.

The Snark sailed from Fiji on Saturday, June 6, and the next day,

Sunday, on the wide ocean, out of sight of land, I proceeded to

endeavour to find out my position by a chronometer sight for

longitude and by a meridian observation for latitude. The

chronometer sight was taken in the morning when the sun was some 21

degrees above the horizon. I looked in the Nautical Almanac and

found that on that very day, June 7, the sun was behind time 1

minute and 26 seconds, and that it was catching up at a rate of

14.67 seconds per hour. The chronometer said that at the precise

moment of taking the sun's altitude it was twenty-five minutes after

eight o'clock at Greenwich. From this date it would seem a

schoolboy's task to correct the Equation of Time. Unfortunately, I

was not a schoolboy. Obviously, at the middle of the day, at

Greenwich, the sun was 1 minute and 26 seconds behind time. Equally

obviously, if it were eleven o'clock in the morning, the sun would

be 1 minute and 26 seconds behind time plus 14.67 seconds. If it

were ten o'clock in the morning, twice 14.67 seconds would have to

be added. And if it were 8: 25 in the morning, then 3.5 times

14.67 seconds would have to be added. Quite clearly, then, if,

instead of being 8:25 A.M., it were 8:25 P.M., then 8.5 times 14.67

seconds would have to be, not added, but SUBTRACTED; for, if, at

noon, the sun were 1 minute and 26 seconds behind time, and if it

were catching up with where it ought to be at the rate of 14.67

seconds per hour, then at 8.25 P.M. it would be much nearer where it

ought to be than it had been at noon.

So far, so good. But was that 8:25 of the chronometer A.M., or

P.M.? I looked at the Snark's clock. It marked 8:9, and it was

certainly A.M. for I had just finished breakfast. Therefore, if it

was eight in the morning on board the Snark, the eight o'clock of

the chronometer (which was the time of the day at Greenwich) must be

a different eight o'clock from the Snark's eight o'clock. But what

eight o'clock was it? It can't be the eight o'clock of this

morning, I reasoned; therefore, it must be either eight o'clock this

evening or eight o'clock last night.

It was at this juncture that I fell into the bottomless pit of

intellectual chaos. We are in east longitude, I reasoned, therefore

we are ahead of Greenwich. If we are behind Greenwich, then to-day

is yesterday; if we are ahead of Greenwich, then yesterday is to-

day, but if yesterday is to-day, what under the sun is to-day!--to-

morrow? Absurd! Yet it must be correct. When I took the sun this

morning at 8:25, the sun's custodians at Greenwich were just arising

from dinner last night.

"Then correct the Equation of Time for yesterday," says my logical

mind.

"But to-day is to-day," my literal mind insists. "I must correct

the sun for to-day and not for yesterday."

"Yet to-day is yesterday," urges my logical mind.

"That's all very well," my literal mind continues, "If I were in

Greenwich I might be in yesterday. Strange things happen in

Greenwich. But I know as sure as I am living that I am here, now,

in to-day, June 7, and that I took the sun here, now, to-day, June

7. Therefore, I must correct the sun here, now, to-day, June 7."

"Bosh!" snaps my logical mind. "Lecky says--"

"Never mind what Lecky says," interrupts my literal mind. "Let me

tell you what the Nautical Almanac says. The Nautical Almanac says

that to-day, June 7, the sun was 1 minute and 26 seconds behind time

and catching up at the rate of 14.67 seconds per hour. It says that

yesterday, June 6, the sun was 1 minute and 36 seconds behind time

and catching up at the rate of 15.66 seconds per hour. You see, it

is preposterous to think of correcting to-day's sun by yesterday's

time-table."

"Fool!"

"Idiot!"

Back and forth they wrangle until my head is whirling around and I

am ready to believe that I am in the day after the last week before

next.

I remembered a parting caution of the Suva harbour-master: "IN EAST

LONGITUDE TAKE FROM THE NAUTICAL ALMANAC THE ELEMENTS FOR THE

PRECEDING DAY."

Then a new thought came to me. I corrected the Equation of Time for

Sunday and for Saturday, making two separate operations of it, and

lo, when the results were compared, there was a difference only of

four-tenths of a second. I was a changed man. I had found my way

out of the crypt. The Snark was scarcely big enough to hold me and

my experience. Four-tenths of a second would make a difference of

only one-tenth of a mile--a cable-length!

All went merrily for ten minutes, when I chanced upon the following

rhyme for navigators:

"Greenwich time least

Longitude east;

Greenwich best,

Longitude west."

Heavens! The Snark's time was not as good as Greenwich time. When

it was 8 25 at Greenwich, on board the Snark it was only 8:9.

"Greenwich time best, longitude west." There I was. In west

longitude beyond a doubt.

"Silly!" cries my literal mind. "You are 8:9 A.M. and Greenwich is

8:25 P.M."

"Very well," answers my logical mind. "To be correct, 8.25 P.M. is

really twenty hours and twenty-five minutes, and that is certainly

better than eight hours and nine minutes. No, there is no

discussion; you are in west longitude."

Then my literal mind triumphs.

"We sailed from Suva, in the Fijis, didn't we?" it demands, and

logical mind agrees. "And Suva is in east longitude?" Again

logical mind agrees. "And we sailed west (which would take us

deeper into east longitude), didn't we? Therefore, and you can't

escape it, we are in east longitude."

"Greenwich time best, longitude west," chants my logical mind; "and

you must grant that twenty hours and twenty-five minutes is better

than eight hours and nine minutes."

"All right," I break in upon the squabble; "we'll work up the sight

and then we'll see."

And work it up I did, only to find that my longitude was 184 degrees

west.

"I told you so," snorts my logical mind.

I am dumbfounded. So is my literal mind, for several minutes. Then

it enounces:

"But there is no 184 degrees west longitude, nor east longitude, nor

any other longitude. The largest meridian is 180 degrees as you

ought to know very well."

Having got this far, literal mind collapses from the brain strain,

logical mind is dumb flabbergasted; and as for me, I get a bleak and

wintry look in my eyes and go around wondering whether I am sailing

toward the China coast or the Gulf of Darien.

Then a thin small voice, which I do not recognize, coming from

nowhere in particular in my consciousness, says:

"The total number of degrees is 360. Subtract the 184 degrees west

longitude from 360 degrees, and you will get 176 degrees east

longitude."

"That is sheer speculation," objects literal mind; and logical mind

remonstrates. "There is no rule for it."

"Darn the rules!" I exclaim. "Ain't I here?"

"The thing is self-evident," I continue. "184 degrees west

longitude means a lapping over in east longitude of four degrees.

Besides I have been in east longitude all the time. I sailed from

Fiji, and Fiji is in east longitude. Now I shall chart my position

and prove it by dead reckoning."

But other troubles and doubts awaited me. Here is a sample of one.

In south latitude, when the sun is in northern declination,

chronometer sights may be taken early in the morning. I took mine

at eight o'clock. Now, one of the necessary elements in working up

such a sight is latitude. But one gets latitude at twelve o'clock,

noon, by a meridian observation. It is clear that in order to work

up my eight o'clock chronometer sight I must have my eight o'clock

latitude. Of course, if the Snark were sailing due west at six

knots per hour, for the intervening four hours her latitude would

not change. But if she were sailing due south, her latitude would

change to the tune of twenty-four miles. In which case a simple

addition or subtraction would convert the twelve o'clock latitude

into eight o'clock latitude. But suppose the Snark were sailing

southwest. Then the traverse tables must be consulted.

This is the illustration. At eight A.M. I took my chronometer

sight. At the same moment the distance recorded on the log was

noted. At twelve M., when the sight for latitude was taken. I

again noted the log, which showed me that since eight o'clock the

Snark had run 24 miles. Her true course had been west 0.75 south.

I entered Table I, in the distance column, on the page for 0.75

point courses, and stopped at 24, the number of miles run.

Opposite, in the next two columns, I found that the Snark had made

3.5 miles of southing or latitude, and that she had made 23.7 miles

of westing. To find my eight o'clock' latitude was easy. I had but

to subtract 3.5 miles from my noon latitude. All the elements being

present, I worked up my longitude.

But this was my eight o'clock longitude. Since then, and up till

noon, I had made 23.7 miles of westing. What was my noon longitude?

I followed the rule, turning to Traverse Table No. II. Entering the

table, according to rule, and going through every detail, according

to rule, I found the difference of longitude for the four hours to

be 25 miles. I was aghast. I entered the table again, according to

rule; I entered the table half a dozen times, according to rule, and

every time found that my difference of longitude was 25 miles. I

leave it to you, gentle reader. Suppose you had sailed 24 miles and

that you had covered 3.5 miles of latitude, then how could you have

covered 25 miles of longitude? Even if you had sailed due west 24

miles, and not changed your latitude, how could you have changed

your longitude 25 miles? In the name of human reason, how could you

cover one mile more of longitude than the total number of miles you

had sailed?

It was a reputable traverse table, being none other than Bowditch's.

The rule was simple (as navigators' rules go); I had made no error.

I spent an hour over it, and at the end still faced the glaring

impossibility of having sailed 24 miles, in the course of which I

changed my latitude 3.5 miles and my longitude 25 miles. The worst

of it was that there was nobody to help me out. Neither Charmian

nor Martin knew as much as I knew about navigation. And all the

time the Snark was rushing madly along toward Tanna, in the New

Hebrides. Something had to be done.

How it came to me I know not--call it an inspiration if you will;

but the thought arose in me: if southing is latitude, why isn't

westing longitude? Why should I have to change westing into

longitude? And then the whole beautiful situation dawned upon me.

The meridians of longitude are 60 miles (nautical) apart at the

equator. At the poles they run together. Thus, if I should travel

up the 180 degrees meridian of longitude until I reached the North

Pole, and if the astronomer at Greenwich travelled up the 0 meridian

of longitude to the North Pole, then, at the North Pole, we could

shake hands with each other, though before we started for the North

Pole we had been some thousands of miles apart. Again: if a degree

of longitude was 60 miles wide at the equator, and if the same

degree, at the point of the Pole, had no width, then somewhere

between the Pole and the equator that degree would be half a mile

wide, and at other places a mile wide, two miles wide, ten miles

wide, thirty miles wide, ay, and sixty miles wide.

All was plain again. The Snark was in 19 degrees south latitude.

The world wasn't as big around there as at the equator. Therefore,

every mile of westing at 19 degrees south was more than a minute of

longitude; for sixty miles were sixty miles, but sixty minutes are

sixty miles only at the equator. George Francis Train broke Jules

Verne's record of around the world. But any man that wants can

break George Francis Train's record. Such a man would need only to

go, in a fast steamer, to the latitude of Cape Horn, and sail due

east all the way around. The world is very small in that latitude,

and there is no land in the way to turn him out of his course. If

his steamer maintained sixteen knots, he would circumnavigate the

globe in just about forty days.

But there are compensations. On Wednesday evening, June 10, I

brought up my noon position by dead reckoning to eight P.M. Then I

projected the Snark's course and saw that she would strike Futuna,

one of the easternmost of the New Hebrides, a volcanic cone two

thousand feet high that rose out of the deep ocean. I altered the

course so that the Snark would pass ten miles to the northward.

Then I spoke to Wada, the cook, who had the wheel every morning from

four to six.

"Wada San, to-morrow morning, your watch, you look sharp on weather-

bow you see land."

And then I went to bed. The die was cast. I had staked my

reputation as a navigator. Suppose, just suppose, that at daybreak

there was no land. Then, where would my navigation be? And where

would we be? And how would we ever find ourselves? or find any

land? I caught ghastly visions of the Snark sailing for months

through ocean solitudes and seeking vainly for land while we

consumed our provisions and sat down with haggard faces to stare

cannibalism in the face.

I confess my sleep was not

" . . . like a summer sky

That held the music of a lark."

Rather did "I waken to the voiceless dark," and listen to the

creaking of the bulkheads and the rippling of the sea alongside as

the Snark logged steadily her six knots an hour. I went over my

calculations again and again, striving to find some mistake, until

my brain was in such fever that it discovered dozens of mistakes.

Suppose, instead of being sixty miles off Futuna, that my navigation

was all wrong and that I was only six miles off? In which case my

course would be wrong, too, and for all I knew the Snark might be

running straight at Futuna. For all I knew the Snark might strike

Futuna the next moment. I almost sprang from the bunk at that

thought; and, though I restrained myself, I know that I lay for a

moment, nervous and tense, waiting for the shock.

My sleep was broken by miserable nightmares. Earthquake seemed the

favourite affliction, though there was one man, with a bill, who

persisted in dunning me throughout the night. Also, he wanted to

fight; and Charmian continually persuaded me to let him alone.

Finally, however, the man with the everlasting dun ventured into a

dream from which Charmian was absent. It was my opportunity, and we

went at it, gloriously, all over the sidewalk and street, until he

cried enough. Then I said, "Now how about that bill?" Having

conquered, I was willing to pay. But the man looked at me and

groaned. "It was all a mistake," he said; "the bill is for the

house next door."

That settled him, for he worried my dreams no more; and it settled

me, too, for I woke up chuckling at the episode. It was three in

the morning. I went up on deck. Henry, the Rapa islander, was

steering. I looked at the log. It recorded forty-two miles. The

Snark had not abated her six-knot gait, and she had not struck

Futuna yet. At half-past five I was again on deck. Wada, at the

wheel, had seen no land. I sat on the cockpit rail, a prey to

morbid doubt for a quarter of an hour. Then I saw land, a small,

high piece of land, just where it ought to be, rising from the water

on the weather-bow. At six o'clock I could clearly make it out to

be the beautiful volcanic cone of Futuna. At eight o'clock, when it

was abreast, I took its distance by the sextant and found it to be

9.3 miles away. And I had elected to pass it 10 miles away!

Then, to the south, Aneiteum rose out of the sea, to the north,

Aniwa, and, dead ahead, Tanna. There was no mistaking Tanna, for

the smoke of its volcano was towering high in the sky. It was forty

miles away, and by afternoon, as we drew close, never ceasing to log

our six knots, we saw that it was a mountainous, hazy land, with no

apparent openings in its coast-line. I was looking for Port

Resolution, though I was quite prepared to find that as an

anchorage, it had been destroyed. Volcanic earthquakes had lifted

its bottom during the last forty years, so that where once the

largest ships rode at anchor there was now, by last reports,

scarcely space and depth sufficient for the Snark. And why should

not another convulsion, since the last report, have closed the

harbour completely?

I ran in close to the unbroken coast, fringed with rocks awash upon

which the crashing trade-wind sea burst white and high. I searched

with my glasses for miles, but could see no entrance. I took a

compass bearing of Futuna, another of Aniwa, and laid them off on

the chart. Where the two bearings crossed was bound to be the

position of the Snark. Then, with my parallel rulers, I laid down a

course from the Snark's position to Port Resolution. Having

corrected this course for variation and deviation, I went on deck,

and lo, the course directed me towards that unbroken coast-line of

bursting seas. To my Rapa islander's great concern, I held on till

the rocks awash were an eighth of a mile away.

"No harbour this place," he announced, shaking his head ominously.

But I altered the course and ran along parallel with the coast.

Charmian was at the wheel. Martin was at the engine, ready to throw

on the propeller. A narrow silt of an opening showed up suddenly.

Through the glasses I could see the seas breaking clear across.

Henry, the Rapa man, looked with troubled eyes; so did Tehei, the

Tahaa man.

"No passage, there," said Henry. "We go there, we finish quick,

sure."

I confess I thought so, too; but I ran on abreast, watching to see

if the line of breakers from one side the entrance did not overlap

the line from the other side. Sure enough, it did. A narrow place

where the sea ran smooth appeared. Charmian put down the wheel and

steadied for the entrance. Martin threw on the engine, while all

hands and the cook sprang to take in sail.

A trader's house showed up in the bight of the bay. A geyser, on

the shore, a hundred yards away; spouted a column of steam. To

port, as we rounded a tiny point, the mission station appeared.

"Three fathoms," cried Wada at the lead-line. "Three fathoms," "two

fathoms," came in quick succession.

Charmian put the wheel down, Martin stopped the engine, and the

Snark rounded to and the anchor rumbled down in three fathoms.

Before we could catch our breaths a swarm of black Tannese was

alongside and aboard--grinning, apelike creatures, with kinky hair

and troubled eyes, wearing safety-pins and clay-pipes in their

slitted ears: and as for the rest, wearing nothing behind and less

than that before. And I don't mind telling that that night, when

everybody was asleep, I sneaked up on deck, looked out over the

quiet scene, and gloated--yes, gloated--over my navigation.

CHAPTER XV--CRUISING IN THE SOLOMONS

"Why not come along now?" said Captain Jansen to us, at Penduffryn,

on the island of Guadalcanar.

Charmian and I looked at each other and debated silently for half a

minute. Then we nodded our heads simultaneously. It is a way we

have of making up our minds to do things; and a very good way it is

when one has no temperamental tears to shed over the last tin-of

condensed milk when it has capsized. (We are living on tinned goods

these days, and since mind is rumoured to be an emanation of matter,

our similes are naturally of the packing-house variety.)

"You'd better bring your revolvers along, and a couple of rifles,"

said Captain Jansen. "I've got five rifles aboard, though the one

Mauser is without ammunition. Have you a few rounds to spare?"

We brought our rifles on board, several handfuls of Mauser

cartridges, and Wada and Nakata, the Snark's cook and cabin-boy

respectively. Wada and Nakata were in a bit of a funk. To say the

least, they were not enthusiastic, though never did Nakata show the

white feather in the face of danger. The Solomon Islands had not

dealt kindly with them. In the first place, both had suffered from

Solomon sores. So had the rest of us (at the time, I was nursing

two fresh ones on a diet of corrosive sublimate); but the two

Japanese had had more than their share. And the sores are not nice.

They may be described as excessively active ulcers. A mosquito

bite, a cut, or the slightest abrasion, serves for lodgment of the

poison with which the air seems to be filled. Immediately the ulcer

commences to eat. It eats in every direction, consuming skin and

muscle with astounding rapidity. The pin-point ulcer of the first

day is the size of a dime by the second day, and by the end of the

week a silver dollar will not cover it.

Worse than the sores, the two Japanese had been afflicted with

Solomon Island fever. Each had been down repeatedly with it, and in

their weak, convalescent moments they were wont to huddle together

on the portion of the Snark that happened to be nearest to faraway

Japan, and to gaze yearningly in that direction.

But worst of all, they were now brought on board the Minota for a

recruiting cruise along the savage coast of Malaita. Wada, who had

the worse funk, was sure that he would never see Japan again, and

with bleak, lack-lustre eyes he watched our rifles and ammunition

going on board the Minota. He knew about the Minota and her Malaita

cruises. He knew that she had been captured six months before on

the Malaita coast, that her captain had been chopped to pieces with

tomahawks, and that, according to the barbarian sense of equity on

that sweet isle, she owed two more heads. Also, a labourer on

Penduffryn Plantation, a Malaita boy, had just died of dysentery,

and Wada knew that Penduffryn had been put in the debt of Malaita by

one more head. Furthermore, in stowing our luggage away in the

skipper's tiny cabin, he saw the axe gashes on the door where the

triumphant bushmen had cut their way in. And, finally, the galley

stove was without a pipe--said pipe having been part of the loot.

The Minota was a teak-built, Australian yacht, ketch-rigged, long

and lean, with a deep fin-keel, and designed for harbour racing

rather than for recruiting blacks. When Charmian and I came on

board, we found her crowded. Her double boat's crew, including

substitutes, was fifteen, and she had a score and more of "return"

boys, whose time on the plantations was served and who were bound

back to their bush villages. To look at, they were certainly true

head-hunting cannibals. Their perforated nostrils were thrust

through with bone and wooden bodkins the size of lead-pencils.

Numbers of them had punctured the extreme meaty point of the nose,

from which protruded, straight out, spikes of turtle-shell or of

beads strung on stiff wire. A few had further punctured their noses

with rows of holes following the curves of the nostrils from lip to

point. Each ear of every man had from two to a dozen holes in it--

holes large enough to carry wooden plugs three inches in diameter

down to tiny holes in which were carried clay-pipes and similar

trifles. In fact, so many holes did they possess that they lacked

ornaments to fill them; and when, the following day, as we neared

Malaita, we tried out our rifles to see that they were in working

order, there was a general scramble for the empty cartridges, which

were thrust forthwith into the many aching voids in our passengers'

ears.

At the time we tried out our rifles we put up our barbed wire

railings. The Minota, crown-decked, without any house, and with a

rail six inches high, was too accessible to boarders. So brass

stanchions were screwed into the rail and a double row of barbed

wire stretched around her from stem to stern and back again. Which

was all very well as a protection from savages, but it was mighty

uncomfortable to those on board when the Minota took to jumping and

plunging in a sea-way. When one dislikes sliding down upon the lee-

rail barbed wire, and when he dares not catch hold of the weather-

rail barbed wire to save himself from sliding, and when, with these

various disinclinations, he finds himself on a smooth flush-deck

that is heeled over at an angle of forty-five degrees, some of the

delights of Solomon Islands cruising may be comprehended. Also, it

must be remembered, the penalty of a fall into the barbed wire is

more than the mere scratches, for each scratch is practically

certain to become a venomous ulcer. That caution will not save one

from the wire was evidenced one fine morning when we were running

along the Malaita coast with the breeze on our quarter. The wind

was fresh, and a tidy sea was making. A black boy was at the wheel.

Captain Jansen, Mr. Jacobsen (the mate), Charmian, and I had just

sat down on deck to breakfast. Three unusually large seas caught

us. The boy at the wheel lost his head. Three times the Minota was

swept. The breakfast was rushed over the lee-rail. The knives and

forks went through the scuppers; a boy aft went clean overboard and

was dragged back; and our doughty skipper lay half inboard and half

out, jammed in the barbed wire. After that, for the rest of the

cruise, our joint use of the several remaining eating utensils was a

splendid example of primitive communism. On the Eugenie, however,

it was even worse, for we had but one teaspoon among four of us--but

the Eugenie is another story.

Our first port was Su'u on the west coast of Malaita. The Solomon

Islands are on the fringe of things. It is difficult enough sailing

on dark nights through reef-spiked channels and across erratic

currents where there are no lights to guide (from northwest to

southeast the Solomons extend across a thousand miles of sea, and on

all the thousands of miles of coasts there is not one lighthouse);

but the difficulty is seriously enhanced by the fact that the land

itself is not correctly charted. Su'u is an example. On the

Admiralty chart of Malaita the coast at this point runs a straight,

unbroken line. Yet across this straight, unbroken line the Minota

sailed in twenty fathoms of water. Where the land was alleged to

be, was a deep indentation. Into this we sailed, the mangroves

closing about us, till we dropped anchor in a mirrored pond.

Captain Jansen did not like the anchorage. It was the first time he

had been there, and Su'u had a bad reputation. There was no wind

with which to get away in case of attack, while the crew could be

bushwhacked to a man if they attempted to tow out in the whale-boat.

It was a pretty trap, if trouble blew up.

"Suppose the Minota went ashore--what would you do?" I asked.

"She's not going ashore," was Captain Jansen's answer.

"But just in case she did?" I insisted. He considered for a moment

and shifted his glance from the mate buckling on a revolver to the

boat's crew climbing into the whale-boat each man with a rifle.

"We'd get into the whale-boat, and get out of here as fast as God'd

let us," came the skipper's delayed reply.

He explained at length that no white man was sure of his Malaita

crew in a tight place; that the bushmen looked upon all wrecks as

their personal property; that the bushmen possessed plenty of Snider

rifles; and that he had on board a dozen "return" boys for Su'u who

were certain to join in with their friends and relatives ashore when

it came to looting the Minota.

The first work of the whale-boat was to take the "return" boys and

their trade-boxes ashore. Thus one danger was removed. While this

was being done, a canoe came alongside manned by three naked

savages. And when I say naked, I mean naked. Not one vestige of

clothing did they have on, unless nose-rings, ear-plugs, and shell

armlets be accounted clothing. The head man in the canoe was an old

chief, one-eyed, reputed to be friendly, and so dirty that a boat-

scraper would have lost its edge on him. His mission was to warn

the skipper against allowing any of his people to go ashore. The

old fellow repeated the warning again that night.

In vain did the whale-boat ply about the shores of the bay in quest

of recruits. The bush was full of armed natives; all willing enough

to talk with the recruiter, but not one would engage to sign on for

three years' plantation labour at six pounds per year. Yet they

were anxious enough to get our people ashore. On the second day

they raised a smoke on the beach at the head of the bay. This being

the customary signal of men desiring to recruit, the boat was sent.

But nothing resulted. No one recruited, nor were any of our men

lured ashore. A little later we caught glimpses of a number of

armed natives moving about on the beach.

Outside of these rare glimpses, there was no telling how many might

be lurking in the bush. There was no penetrating that primeval

jungle with the eye. In the afternoon, Captain Jansen, Charmian,

and I went dynamiting fish. Each one of the boat's crew carried a

Lee-Enfield. "Johnny," the native recruiter, had a Winchester

beside him at the steering sweep. We rowed in close to a portion of

the shore that looked deserted. Here the boat was turned around and

backed in; in case of attack, the boat would be ready to dash away.

In all the time I was on Malaita I never saw a boat land bow on. In

fact, the recruiting vessels use two boats--one to go in on the

beach, armed, of course, and the other to lie off several hundred

feet and "cover" the first boat. The Minota, however, being a small

vessel, did not carry a covering boat.

We were close in to the shore and working in closer, stern-first,

when a school of fish was sighted. The fuse was ignited and the

stick of dynamite thrown. With the explosion, the surface of the

water was broken by the flash of leaping fish. At the same instant

the woods broke into life. A score of naked savages, armed with

bows and arrows, spears, and Sniders, burst out upon the shore. At

the same moment our boat's crew, lifted their rifles. And thus the

opposing parties faced each other, while our extra boys dived over

after the stunned fish.

Three fruitless days were spent at Su'u. The Minota got no recruits

from the bush, and the bushmen got no heads from the Minota. In

fact, the only one who got anything was Wade, and his was a nice

dose of fever. We towed out with the whale-boat, and ran along the

coast to Langa Langa, a large village of salt-water people, built

with prodigious labour on a lagoon sand-bank--literally BUILT up, an

artificial island reared as a refuge from the blood-thirsty bushmen.

Here, also, on the shore side of the lagoon, was Binu, the place

where the Minota was captured half a year previously and her captain

killed by the bushmen. As we sailed in through the narrow entrance,

a canoe came alongside with the news that the man-of-war had just

left that morning after having burned three villages, killed some

thirty pigs, and drowned a baby. This was the Cambrian, Captain

Lewes commanding. He and I had first met in Korea during the

Japanese-Russian War, and we had been crossing each ether's trail

ever since without ever a meeting. The day the Snark sailed into

Suva, in the Fijis, we made out the Cambrian going out. At Vila, in

the New Hebrides, we missed each other by one day. We passed each

other in the night-time off the island of Santo. And the day the

Cambrian arrived at Tulagi, we sailed from Penduffryn, a dozen miles

away. And here at Langa Langa we had missed by several hours.

The Cambrian had come to punish the murderers of the Minota's

captain, but what she had succeeded in doing we did not learn until

later in the day, when a Mr. Abbot, a missionary, came alongside in

his whale-boat. The villages had been burned and the pigs killed.

But the natives had escaped personal harm. The murderers had not

been captured, though the Minota's flag and other of her gear had

been recovered. The drowning of the baby had come about through a

misunderstanding. Chief Johnny, of Binu, had declined to guide the

landing party into the bush, nor could any of his men be induced to

perform that office. Whereupon Captain Lewes, righteously

indignant, had told Chief Johnny that he deserved to have his

village burned. Johnny's beche de mer English did not include the

word "deserve." So his understanding of it was that his village was

to be burned anyway. The immediate stampede of the inhabitants was

so hurried that the baby was dropped into the water. In the

meantime Chief Johnny hastened to Mr. Abbot. Into his hand he put

fourteen sovereigns and requested him to go on board the Cambrian

and buy Captain Lewes off. Johnny's village was not burned. Nor

did Captain Lewes get the fourteen sovereigns, for I saw them later

in Johnny's possession when he boarded the Minota. The excuse

Johnny gave me for not guiding the landing party was a big boil

which he proudly revealed. His real reason, however, and a

perfectly valid one, though he did not state it, was fear of revenge

on the part of the bushmen. Had he, or any of his men, guided the

marines, he could have looked for bloody reprisals as soon as the

Cambrian weighed anchor.

As an illustration of conditions in the Solomons, Johnny's business

on board was to turn over, for a tobacco consideration, the sprit,

mainsail, and jib of a whale-boat. Later in the day, a Chief Billy

came on board and turned over, for a tobacco consideration, the mast

and boom. This gear belonged to a whale-boat which Captain Jansen

had recovered the previous trip of the Minota. The whale-boat

belonged to Meringe Plantation on the island of Ysabel. Eleven

contract labourers, Malaita men and bushmen at that, had decided to

run away. Being bushmen, they knew nothing of salt water nor of the

way of a boat in the sea. So they persuaded two natives of San

Cristoval, salt-water men, to run away with them. It served the San

Cristoval men right. They should have known better. When they had

safely navigated the stolen boat to Malaita, they had their heads

hacked off for their pains. It was this boat and gear that Captain

Jansen had recovered.

Not for nothing have I journeyed all the way to the Solomons. At

last I have seen Charmian's proud spirit humbled and her imperious

queendom of femininity dragged in the dust. It happened at Langa

Langa, ashore, on the manufactured island which one cannot see for

the houses. Here, surrounded by hundreds of unblushing naked men,

women, and children, we wandered about and saw the sights. We had

our revolvers strapped on, and the boat's crew, fully armed, lay at

the oars, stern in; but the lesson of the man-of-war was too recent

for us to apprehend trouble. We walked about everywhere and saw

everything until at last we approached a large tree trunk that

served as a bridge across a shallow estuary. The blacks formed a

wall in front of us and refused to let us pass. We wanted to know

why we were stopped. The blacks said we could go on. We

misunderstood, and started. Explanations became more definite.

Captain Jansen and I, being men, could go on. But no Mary was

allowed to wade around that bridge, much less cross it. "Mary" is

beche de mer for woman. Charmian was a Mary. To her the bridge was

tambo, which is the native for taboo. Ah, how my chest expanded!

At last my manhood was vindicated. In truth I belonged to the

lordly sex. Charmian could trapse along at our heels, but we were

MEN, and we could go right over that bridge while she would have to

go around by whale-boat.

Now I should not care to be misunderstood by what follows; but it is

a matter of common knowledge in the Solomons that attacks of fever

are often brought on by shock. Inside half an hour after Charmian

had been refused the right of way, she was being rushed aboard the

Minota, packed in blankets, and dosed with quinine. I don't know

what kind of shock had happened to Wada and Nakata, but at any rate

they were down with fever as well. The Solomons might be

healthfuller.

Also, during the attack of fever, Charmian developed a Solomon sore.

It was the last straw. Every one on the Snark had been afflicted

except her. I had thought that I was going to lose my foot at the

ankle by one exceptionally malignant boring ulcer. Henry and Tehei,

the Tahitian sailors, had had numbers of them. Wada had been able

to count his by the score. Nakata had had single ones three inches

in length. Martin had been quite certain that necrosis of his

shinbone had set in from the roots of the amazing colony he elected

to cultivate in that locality. But Charmian had escaped. Out of

her long immunity had been bred contempt for the rest of us. Her

ego was flattered to such an extent that one day she shyly informed

me that it was all a matter of pureness of blood. Since all the

rest of us cultivated the sores, and since she did not--well,

anyway, hers was the size of a silver dollar, and the pureness of

her blood enabled her to cure it after several weeks of strenuous

nursing. She pins her faith to corrosive sublimate. Martin swears

by iodoform. Henry uses lime-juice undiluted. And I believe that

when corrosive sublimate is slow in taking hold, alternate dressings

of peroxide of hydrogen are just the thing. There are white men in

the Solomons who stake all upon boracic acid, and others who are

prejudiced in favour of lysol. I also have the weakness of a

panacea. It is California. I defy any man to get a Solomon Island

sore in California.

We ran down the lagoon from Langa Langa, between mangrove swamps,

through passages scarcely wider than the Minota, and past the reef

villages of Kaloka and Auki. Like the founders of Venice, these

salt-water men were originally refugees from the mainland. Too weak

to hold their own in the bush, survivors of village massacres, they

fled to the sand-banks of the lagoon. These sand-banks they built

up into islands. They were compelled to seek their provender from

the sea, and in time they became salt-water men. They learned the

ways of the fish and the shellfish, and they invented hooks and

lines, nets and fish-traps. They developed canoe-bodies. Unable to

walk about, spending all their time in the canoes, they became

thick-armed and broad-shouldered, with narrow waists and frail

spindly legs. Controlling the sea-coast, they became wealthy, trade

with the interior passing largely through their hands. But

perpetual enmity exists between them and the bushmen. Practically

their only truces are on market-days, which occur at stated

intervals, usually twice a week. The bushwomen and the salt-water

women do the bartering. Back in the bush, a hundred yards away,

fully armed, lurk the bushmen, while to seaward, in the canoes, are

the salt-water men. There are very rare instances of the market-day

truces being broken. The bushmen like their fish too well, while

the salt-water men have an organic craving for the vegetables they

cannot grow on their crowded islets.

Thirty miles from Langa Langa brought us to the passage between

Bassakanna Island and the mainland. Here, at nightfall, the wind

left us, and all night, with the whale-boat towing ahead and the

crew on board sweating at the sweeps, we strove to win through. But

the tide was against us. At midnight, midway in the passage, we

came up with the Eugenie, a big recruiting schooner, towing with two

whale-boats. Her skipper, Captain Keller, a sturdy young German of

twenty-two, came on board for a "gam," and the latest news of

Malaita was swapped back and forth. He had been in luck, having

gathered in twenty recruits at the village of Fiu. While lying

there, one of the customary courageous killings had taken place.

The murdered boy was what is called a salt-water bushman--that is, a

salt-water man who is half bushman and who lives by the sea but does

not live on an islet. Three bushmen came down to this man where he

was working in his garden. They behaved in friendly fashion, and

after a time suggested kai-kai. Kai-kai means food. He built a

fire and started to boil some taro. While bending over the pot, one

of the bushmen shot him through the head. He fell into the flames,

whereupon they thrust a spear through his stomach, turned it around,

and broke it off.

"My word," said Captain Keller, "I don't want ever to be shot with a

Snider. Spread! You could drive a horse and carriage through that

hole in his head."

Another recent courageous killing I heard of on Malaita was that of

an old man. A bush chief had died a natural death. Now the bushmen

don't believe in natural deaths. No one was ever known to die a

natural death. The only way to die is by bullet, tomahawk, or spear

thrust. When a man dies in any other way, it is a clear case of

having been charmed to death. When the bush chief died naturally,

his tribe placed the guilt on a certain family. Since it did not

matter which one of the family was killed, they selected this old

man who lived by himself. This would make it easy. Furthermore, he

possessed no Snider. Also, he was blind. The old fellow got an

inkling of what was coming and laid in a large supply of arrows.

Three brave warriors, each with a Snider, came down upon him in the

night time. All night they fought valiantly with him. Whenever

they moved in the bush and made a noise or a rustle, he discharged

an arrow in that direction. In the morning, when his last arrow was

gone, the three heroes crept up to him and blew his brains out.

Morning found us still vainly toiling through the passage. At last,

in despair, we turned tail, ran out to sea, and sailed clear round

Bassakanna to our objective, Malu. The anchorage at Malu was very

good, but it lay between the shore and an ugly reef, and while easy

to enter, it was difficult to leave. The direction of the southeast

trade necessitated a beat to windward; the point of the reef was

widespread and shallow; while a current bore down at all times upon

the point.

Mr. Caulfeild, the missionary at Malu, arrived in his whale-boat

from a trip down the coast. A slender, delicate man he was,

enthusiastic in his work, level-headed and practical, a true

twentieth-century soldier of the Lord. When he came down to this

station on Malaita, as he said, he agreed to come for six months.

He further agreed that if he were alive at the end of that time, he

would continue on. Six years had passed and he was still continuing

on. Nevertheless he was justified in his doubt as to living longer

than six months. Three missionaries had preceded him on Malaita,

and in less than that time two had died of fever and the third had

gone home a wreck.

"What murder are you talking about?" he asked suddenly, in the midst

of a confused conversation with Captain Jansen.

Captain Jansen explained.

"Oh, that's not the one I have reference to," quoth Mr. Caulfeild.

"That's old already. It happened two weeks ago."

It was here at Malu that I atoned for all the exulting and gloating

I had been guilty of over the Solomon sore Charmian had collected at

Langa Langa. Mr. Caulfeild was indirectly responsible for my

atonement. He presented us with a chicken, which I pursued into the

bush with a rifle. My intention was to clip off its head. I

succeeded, but in doing so fell over a log and barked my shin.

Result: three Solomon sores. This made five all together that were

adorning my person. Also, Captain Jansen and Nakata had caught

gari-gari. Literally translated, gari-gari is scratch-scratch. But

translation was not necessary for the rest of us. The skipper's and

Nakata's gymnastics served as a translation without words.

(No, the Solomon Islands are not as healthy as they might be. I am

writing this article on the island of Ysabel, where we have taken

the Snark to careen and clean her cooper. I got over my last attack

of fever this morning, and I have had only one free day between

attacks. Charmian's are two weeks apart. Wada is a wreck from

fever. Last night he showed all the symptoms of coming down with

pneumonia. Henry, a strapping giant of a Tahitian, just up from his

last dose of fever, is dragging around the deck like a last year's

crab-apple. Both he and Tehei have accumulated a praiseworthy

display of Solomon sores. Also, they have caught a new form of

gari-gari, a sort of vegetable poisoning like poison oak or poison

ivy. But they are not unique in this. A number of days ago

Charmian, Martin, and I went pigeon-shooting on a small island, and

we have had a foretaste of eternal torment ever since. Also, on

that small island, Martin cut the soles of his feet to ribbons on

the coral whilst chasing a shark--at least, so he says, but from the

glimpse I caught of him I thought it was the other way about. The

coral-cuts have all become Solomon sores. Before my last fever I

knocked the skin off my knuckles while heaving on a line, and I now

have three fresh sores. And poor Nakata! For three weeks he has

been unable to sit down. He sat down yesterday for the first time,

and managed to stay down for fifteen minutes. He says cheerfully

that he expects to be cured of his gari-gari in another month.

Furthermore, his gari-gari, from too enthusiastic scratch-

scratching, has furnished footholds for countless Solomon sores.

Still furthermore, he has just come down with his seventh attack of

fever. If I were king, the worst punishment I could inflict on my

enemies would be to banish them to the Solomons. On second thought,

king or no king, I don't think I'd have the heart to do it.)

Recruiting plantation labourers on a small, narrow yacht, built for

harbour sailing, is not any too nice. The decks swarm with recruits

and their families. The main cabin is packed with them. At night

they sleep there. The only entrance to our tiny cabin is through

the main cabin, and we jam our way through them or walk over them.

Nor is this nice. One and all, they are afflicted with every form

of malignant skin disease. Some have ringworm, others have bukua.

This latter is caused by a vegetable parasite that invades the skin

and eats it away. The itching is intolerable. The afflicted ones

scratch until the air is filled with fine dry flakes. Then there

are yaws and many other skin ulcerations. Men come aboard with

Solomon sores in their feet so large that they can walk only on

their toes, or with holes in their legs so terrible that a fist

could be thrust in to the bone. Blood-poisoning is very frequent,

and Captain Jansen, with sheath-knife and sail needle, operates

lavishly on one and all. No matter how desperate the situation,

after opening and cleansing, he claps on a poultice of sea-biscuit

soaked in water. Whenever we see a particularly horrible case, we

retire to a corner and deluge our own sores with corrosive

sublimate. And so we live and eat and sleep on the Minota, taking

our chance and "pretending it is good."

At Suava, another artificial island, I had a second crow over

Charmian. A big fella marster belong Suava (which means the high

chief of Suava) came on board. But first he sent an emissary to

Captain Jansen for a fathom of calico with which to cover his royal

nakedness. Meanwhile he lingered in the canoe alongside. The regal

dirt on his chest I swear was half an inch thick, while it was a

good wager that the underneath layers were anywhere from ten to

twenty years of age. He sent his emissary on board again, who

explained that the big fella marster belong Suava was

condescendingly willing enough to shake hands with Captain Jansen

and me and cadge a stick or so of trade tobacco, but that

nevertheless his high-born soul was still at so lofty an altitude

that it could not sink itself to such a depth of degradation as to

shake hands with a mere female woman. Poor Charmian! Since her

Malaita experiences she has become a changed woman. Her meekness

and humbleness are appallingly becoming, and I should not be

surprised, when we return to civilization and stroll along a

sidewalk, to see her take her station, with bowed head, a yard in

the rear.

Nothing much happened at Suava. Bichu, the native cook, deserted.

The Minota dragged anchor. It blew heavy squalls of wind and rain.

The mate, Mr. Jacobsen, and Wada were prostrated with fever. Our

Solomon sores increased and multiplied. And the cockroaches on

board held a combined Fourth of July and Coronation Parade. They

selected midnight for the time, and our tiny cabin for the place.

They were from two to three inches long; there were hundreds of

them, and they walked all over us. When we attempted to pursue

them, they left solid footing, rose up in the air, and fluttered

about like humming-birds. They were much larger than ours on the

Snark. But ours are young yet, and haven't had a chance to grow.

Also, the Snark has centipedes, big ones, six inches long. We kill

them occasionally, usually in Charmian's bunk. I've been bitten

twice by them, both times foully, while I was asleep. But poor

Martin had worse luck. After being sick in bed for three weeks, the

first day he sat up he sat down on one. Sometimes I think they are

the wisest who never go to Carcassonne.

Later on we returned to Malu, picked up seven recruits, hove up

anchor, and started to beat out the treacherous entrance. The wind

was chopping about, the current upon the ugly point of reef setting

strong. Just as we were on the verge of clearing it and gaining

open sea, the wind broke off four points. The Minota attempted to

go about, but missed stays. Two of her anchors had been lost at

Tulagi. Her one remaining anchor was let go. Chain was let out to

give it a hold on the coral. Her fin keel struck bottom, and her

main topmast lurched and shivered as if about to come down upon our

heads. She fetched up on the slack of the anchors at the moment a

big comber smashed her shoreward. The chain parted. It was our

only anchor. The Minota swung around on her heel and drove headlong

into the breakers.

Bedlam reigned. All the recruits below, bushmen and afraid of the

sea, dashed panic-stricken on deck and got in everybody's way. At

the same time the boat's crew made a rush for the rifles. They knew

what going ashore on Malaita meant--one hand for the ship and the

other hand to fight off the natives. What they held on with I don't

know, and they needed to hold on as the Minota lifted, rolled, and

pounded on the coral. The bushmen clung in the rigging, too witless

to watch out for the topmast. The whale-boat was run out with a

tow-line endeavouring in a puny way to prevent the Minota from being

flung farther in toward the reef, while Captain Jansen and the mate,

the latter pallid and weak with fever, were resurrecting a scrap-

anchor from out the ballast and rigging up a stock for it. Mr.

Caulfeild, with his mission boys, arrived in his whale-boat to help.

When the Minota first struck, there was not a canoe in sight; but

like vultures circling down out of the blue, canoes began to arrive

from every quarter. The boat's crew, with rifles at the ready, kept

them lined up a hundred feet away with a promise of death if they

ventured nearer. And there they clung, a hundred feet away, black

and ominous, crowded with men, holding their canoes with their

paddles on the perilous edge of the breaking surf. In the meantime

the bushmen were flocking down from the hills armed with spears,

Sniders, arrows, and clubs, until the beach was massed with them.

To complicate matters, at least ten of our recruits had been

enlisted from the very bushmen ashore who were waiting hungrily for

the loot of the tobacco and trade goods and all that we had on

board.

The Minota was honestly built, which is the first essential for any

boat that is pounding on a reef. Some idea of what she endured may

be gained from the fact that in the first twenty-four hours she

parted two anchor-chains and eight hawsers. Our boat's crew was

kept busy diving for the anchors and bending new lines. There were

times when she parted the chains reinforced with hawsers. And yet

she held together. Tree trunks were brought from ashore and worked

under her to save her keel and bilges, but the trunks were gnawed

and splintered and the ropes that held them frayed to fragments, and

still she pounded and held together. But we were luckier than the

Ivanhoe, a big recruiting schooner, which had gone ashore on Malaita

several months previously and been promptly rushed by the natives.

The captain and crew succeeded in getting away in the whale-boats,

and the bushmen and salt-water men looted her clean of everything

portable.

Squall after squall, driving wind and blinding rain, smote the

Minota, while a heavier sea was making. The Eugenie lay at anchor

five miles to windward, but she was behind a point of land and could

not know of our mishap. At Captain Jansen's suggestion, I wrote a

note to Captain Keller, asking him to bring extra anchors and gear

to our aid. But not a canoe could be persuaded to carry the letter.

I offered half a case of tobacco, but the blacks grinned and held

their canoes bow-on to the breaking seas. A half a case of tobacco

was worth three pounds. In two hours, even against the strong wind

and sea, a man could have carried the letter and received in payment

what he would have laboured half a year for on a plantation. I

managed to get into a canoe and paddle out to where Mr. Caulfeild

was running an anchor with his whale-boat. My idea was that he

would have more influence over the natives. He called the canoes up

to him, and a score of them clustered around and heard the offer of

half a case of tobacco. No one spoke.

"I know what you think," the missionary called out to them. "You

think plenty tobacco on the schooner and you're going to get it. I

tell you plenty rifles on schooner. You no get tobacco, you get

bullets."

At last, one man, alone in a small canoe, took the letter and

started. Waiting for relief, work went on steadily on the Minota.

Her water-tanks were emptied, and spars, sails, and ballast started

shoreward. There were lively times on board when the Minota rolled

one bilge down and then the other, a score of men leaping for life

and legs as the trade-boxes, booms, and eighty-pound pigs of iron

ballast rushed across from rail to rail and back again. The poor

pretty harbour yacht! Her decks and running rigging were a raffle.

Down below everything was disrupted. The cabin floor had been torn

up to get at the ballast, and rusty bilge-water swashed and

splashed. A bushel of limes, in a mess of flour and water, charged

about like so many sticky dumplings escaped from a half-cooked stew.

In the inner cabin, Nakata kept guard over our rifles and

ammunition.

Three hours from the time our messenger started, a whale-boat,

pressing along under a huge spread of canvas, broke through the

thick of a shrieking squall to windward. It was Captain Keller, wet

with rain and spray, a revolver in belt, his boat's crew fully

armed, anchors and hawsers heaped high amidships, coming as fast as

wind could drive--the white man, the inevitable white man, coming to

a white man's rescue.

The vulture line of canoes that had waited so long broke and

disappeared as quickly as it had formed. The corpse was not dead

after all. We now had three whale-boats, two plying steadily

between the vessel and shore, the other kept busy running out

anchors, rebending parted hawsers, and recovering the lost anchors.

Later in the afternoon, after a consultation, in which we took into

consideration that a number of our boat's crew, as well as ten of

the recruits, belonged to this place, we disarmed the boat's crew.

This, incidently, gave them both hands free to work for the vessel.

The rifles were put in the charge of five of Mr. Caulfeild's mission

boys. And down below in the wreck of the cabin the missionary and

his converts prayed to God to save the Minota. It was an impressive

scene! the unarmed man of God praying with cloudless faith, his

savage followers leaning on their rifles and mumbling amens. The

cabin walls reeled about them. The vessel lifted and smashed upon

the coral with every sea. From on deck came the shouts of men

heaving and toiling, praying, in another fashion, with purposeful

will and strength of arm.

That night Mr. Caulfeild brought off a warning. One of our recruits

had a price on his head of fifty fathoms of shell-money and forty

pigs. Baffled in their desire to capture the vessel, the bushmen

decided to get the head of the man. When killing begins, there is

no telling where it will end, so Captain Jansen armed a whale-boat

and rowed in to the edge of the beach. Ugi, one of his boat's crew,

stood up and orated for him. Ugi was excited. Captain Jansen's

warning that any canoe sighted that night would be pumped full of

lead, Ugi turned into a bellicose declaration of war, which wound up

with a peroration somewhat to the following effect: "You kill my

captain, I drink his blood and die with him!"

The bushmen contented themselves with burning an unoccupied mission

house, and sneaked back to the bush. The next day the Eugenie

sailed in and dropped anchor. Three days and two nights the Minota

pounded on the reef; but she held together, and the shell of her was

pulled off at last and anchored in smooth water. There we said

good-bye to her and all on board, and sailed away on the Eugenie,

bound for Florida Island. {1}

CHAPTER XVI--BECHE DE MER ENGLISH

Given a number of white traders, a wide area of land, and scores of

savage languages and dialects, the result will be that the traders

will manufacture a totally new, unscientific, but perfectly

adequate, language. This the traders did when they invented the

Chinook lingo for use over British Columbia, Alaska, and the

Northwest Territory. So with the lingo of the Kroo-boys of Africa,

the pigeon English of the Far East, and the beche de mer of the

westerly portion of the South Seas. This latter is often called

pigeon English, but pigeon English it certainly is not. To show how

totally different it is, mention need be made only of the fact that

the classic piecee of China has no place in it.

There was once a sea captain who needed a dusky potentate down in

his cabin. The potentate was on deck. The captain's command to the

Chinese steward was "Hey, boy, you go top-side catchee one piecee

king." Had the steward been a New Hibridean or a Solomon islander,

the command would have been: "Hey, you fella boy, go look 'm eye

belong you along deck, bring 'm me fella one big fella marster

belong black man."

It was the first white men who ventured through Melanesia after the

early explorers, who developed beche de mer English--men such as the

beche de mer fishermen, the sandalwood traders, the pearl hunters,

and the labour recruiters. In the Solomons, for instance, scores of

languages and dialects are spoken. Unhappy the trader who tried to

learn them all; for in the next group to which he might wander he

would find scores of additional tongues. A common language was

necessary--a language so simple that a child could learn it, with a

vocabulary as limited as the intelligence of the savages upon whom

it was to be used. The traders did not reason this out. Beche do

mer English was the product of conditions and circumstances.

Function precedes organ; and the need for a universal Melanesian

lingo preceded beche de mer English. Beche de mer was purely

fortuitous, but it was fortuitous in the deterministic way. Also,

from the fact that out of the need the lingo arose, beche de mer

English is a splendid argument for the Esperanto enthusiasts.

A limited vocabulary means that each word shall be overworked.

Thus, fella, in beche de mer, means all that piecee does and quite a

bit more, and is used continually in every possible connection.

Another overworked word is belong. Nothing stands alone.

Everything is related. The thing desired is indicated by its

relationship with other things. A primitive vocabulary means

primitive expression, thus, the continuance of rain is expressed as

rain he stop. SUN HE COME UP cannot possibly be misunderstood,

while the phrase-structure itself can be used without mental

exertion in ten thousand different ways, as, for instance, a native

who desires to tell you that there are fish in the water and who

says FISH HE STOP. It was while trading on Ysabel island that I

learned the excellence of this usage. I wanted two or three pairs

of the large clam-shells (measuring three feet across), but I did

not want the meat inside. Also, I wanted the meat of some of the

smaller clams to make a chowder. My instruction to the natives

finally ripened into the following "You fella bring me fella big

fella clam--kai-kai he no stop, he walk about. You fella bring me

fella small fella clam--kai-kai he stop."

Kai-kai is the Polynesian for food, meat, eating, and to eat: but

it would be hard to say whether it was introduced into Melanesia by

the sandalwood traders or by the Polynesian westward drift. Walk

about is a quaint phrase. Thus, if one orders a Solomon sailor to

put a tackle on a boom, he will suggest, "That fella boom he walk

about too much." And if the said sailor asks for shore liberty, he

will state that it is his desire to walk about. Or if said sailor

be seasick, he will explain his condition by stating, "Belly belong

me walk about too much."

Too much, by the way, does not indicate anything excessive. It is

merely the simple superlative. Thus, if a native is asked the

distance to a certain village, his answer will be one of these four:

"Close-up"; "long way little bit"; "long way big bit"; or "long way

too much." Long way too much does not mean that one cannot walk to

the village; it means that he will have to walk farther than if the

village were a long way big bit.

Gammon is to lie, to exaggerate, to joke. Mary is a woman. Any

woman is a Mary. All women are Marys. Doubtlessly the first dim

white adventurer whimsically called a native woman Mary, and of

similar birth must have been many other words in beche de mer. The

white men were all seamen, and so capsize and sing out were

introduced into the lingo. One would not tell a Melanesian cook to

empty the dish-water, but he would tell him to capsize it. To sing

out is to cry loudly, to call out, or merely to speak. Sing-sing is

a song. The native Christian does not think of God calling for Adam

in the Garden of Eden; in the native's mind, God sings out for Adam.

Savvee or catchee are practically the only words which have been

introduced straight from pigeon English. Of course, pickaninny has

happened along, but some of its uses are delicious. Having bought a

fowl from a native in a canoe, the native asked me if I wanted

"Pickaninny stop along him fella." It was not until he showed me a

handful of hen's eggs that I understood his meaning. My word, as an

exclamation with a thousand significances, could have arrived from

nowhere else than Old England. A paddle, a sweep, or an oar, is

called washee, and washee is also the verb.

Here is a letter, dictated by one Peter, a native trader at Santa

Anna, and addressed to his employer. Harry, the schooner captain,

started to write the letter, but was stopped by Peter at the end of

the second sentence. Thereafter the letter runs in Peter's own

words, for Peter was afraid that Harry gammoned too much, and he

wanted the straight story of his needs to go to headquarters.

"SANTA ANNA

"Trader Peter has worked 12 months for your firm and has not

received any pay yet. He hereby wants 12 pounds." (At this point

Peter began dictation). "Harry he gammon along him all the time

too much. I like him 6 tin biscuit, 4 bag rice, 24 tin bullamacow.

Me like him 2 rifle, me savvee look out along boat, some place me go

man he no good, he kai-kai along me.

"PETER."

Bullamacow means tinned beef. This word was corrupted from the

English language by the Samoans, and from them learned by the

traders, who carried it along with them into Melanesia. Captain

Cook and the other early navigators made a practice of introducing

seeds, plants, and domestic animals amongst the natives. It was at

Samoa that one such navigator landed a bull and a cow. "This is a

bull and cow," said he to the Samoans. They thought he was giving

the name of the breed, and from that day to this, beef on the hoof

and beef in the tin is called bullamacow.

A Solomon islander cannot say FENCE, so, in beche de mer, it becomes

fennis; store is sittore, and box is bokkis. Just now the fashion

in chests, which are known as boxes, is to have a bell-arrangement

on the lock so that the box cannot be opened without sounding an

alarm. A box so equipped is not spoken of as a mere box, but as the

bokkis belong bell.

FRIGHT is the beche de mer for fear. If a native appears timid and

one asks him the cause, he is liable to hear in reply: "Me fright

along you too much." Or the native may be fright along storm, or

wild bush, or haunted places. CROSS covers every form of anger. A

man may be cross at one when he is feeling only petulant; or he may

be cross when he is seeking to chop off your head and make a stew

out of you. A recruit, after having toiled three years on a

plantation, was returned to his own village on Malaita. He was clad

in all kinds of gay and sportive garments. On his head was a top-

hat. He possessed a trade-box full of calico, beads, porpoise-

teeth, and tobacco. Hardly was the anchor down, when the villagers

were on board. The recruit looked anxiously for his own relatives,

but none was to be seen. One of the natives took the pipe out of

his mouth. Another confiscated the strings of beads from around his

neck. A third relieved him of his gaudy loin-cloth, and a fourth

tried on the top-hat and omitted to return it. Finally, one of them

took his trade-box, which represented three years' toil, and dropped

it into a canoe alongside. "That fella belong you?" the captain

asked the recruit, referring to the thief. "No belong me," was the

answer. "Then why in Jericho do you let him take the box?" the

captain demanded indignantly. Quoth the recruit, "Me speak along

him, say bokkis he stop, that fella he cross along me"--which was

the recruit's way of saying that the other man would murder him.

God's wrath, when He sent the Flood, was merely a case of being

cross along mankind.

What name? is the great interrogation of beche de mer. It all

depends on how it is uttered. It may mean: What is your business?

What do you mean by this outrageous conduct? What do you want?

What is the thing you are after? You had best watch out; I demand

an explanation; and a few hundred other things. Call a native out

of his house in the middle of the night, and he is likely to demand,

"What name you sing out along me?"

Imagine the predicament of the Germans on the plantations of

Bougainville Island, who are compelled to learn beche de mer English

in order to handle the native labourers. It is to them an

unscientific polyglot, and there are no text-books by which to study

it. It is a source of unholy delight to the other white planters

and traders to hear the German wrestling stolidly with the

circumlocutions and short-cuts of a language that has no grammar and

no dictionary.

Some years ago large numbers of Solomon islanders were recruited to

labour on the sugar plantations of Queensland. A missionary urged

one of the labourers, who was a convert, to get up and preach a

sermon to a shipload of Solomon islanders who had just arrived. He

chose for his subject the Fall of Man, and the address he gave

became a classic in all Australasia. It proceeded somewhat in the

following manner:

"Altogether you boy belong Solomons you no savvee white man. Me

fella me savvee him. Me fella me savvee talk along white man.

"Before long time altogether no place he stop. God big fella

marster belong white man, him fella He make 'm altogether. God big

fella marster belong white man, He make 'm big fella garden. He

good fella too much. Along garden plenty yam he stop, plenty

cocoanut, plenty taro, plenty kumara (sweet potatoes), altogether

good fella kai-kai too much.

"Bimeby God big fella marster belong white man He make 'm one fella

man and put 'm along garden belong Him. He call 'm this fella man

Adam. He name belong him. He put him this fella man Adam along

garden, and He speak, 'This fella garden he belong you.' And He

look 'm this fella Adam he walk about too much. Him fella Adam all

the same sick; he no savvee kai-kai; he walk about all the time.

And God He no savvee. God big fella marster belong white man, He

scratch 'm head belong Him. God say: 'What name? Me no savvee

what name this fella Adam he want.'

"Bimeby God He scratch 'm head belong Him too much, and speak: 'Me

fella me savvee, him fella Adam him want 'm Mary.' So He make Adam

he go asleep, He take one fella bone belong him, and He make 'm one

fella Mary along bone. He call him this fella Mary, Eve. He give

'm this fella Eve along Adam, and He speak along him fella Adam:

'Close up altogether along this fella garden belong you two fella.

One fella tree he tambo (taboo) along you altogether. This fella

tree belong apple.'

"So Adam Eve two fella stop along garden, and they two fella have 'm

good time too much. Bimeby, one day, Eve she come along Adam, and

she speak, 'More good you me two fella we eat 'm this fella apple.'

Adam he speak, 'No,' and Eve she speak, 'What name you no like 'm

me?' And Adam he speak, 'Me like 'm you too much, but me fright

along God.' And Eve she speak, 'Gammon! What name? God He no

savvee look along us two fella all 'm time. God big fella marster,

He gammon along you.' But Adam he speak, 'No.' But Eve she talk,

talk, talk, allee time--allee same Mary she talk along boy along

Queensland and make 'm trouble along boy. And bimeby Adam he tired

too much, and he speak, 'All right.' So these two fella they go eat

'm. When they finish eat 'm, my word, they fright like hell, and

they go hide along scrub.

"And God He come walk about along garden, and He sing out, 'Adam!'

Adam he no speak. He too much fright. My word! And God He sing

out, 'Adam!' And Adam he speak, 'You call 'm me?' God He speak,

'Me call 'm you too much.' Adam he speak, 'Me sleep strong fella

too much.' And God He speak, 'You been eat 'm this fella apple.'

Adam he speak, 'No, me no been eat 'm.' God He speak. 'What name

you gammon along me? You been eat 'm.' And Adam he speak, 'Yes, me

been eat 'm.'

"And God big fella marster He cross along Adam Eve two fella too

much, and He speak, 'You two fella finish along me altogether. You

go catch 'm bokkis (box) belong you, and get to hell along scrub.'

"So Adam Eve these two fella go along scrub. And God He make 'm one

big fennis (fence) all around garden and He put 'm one fella marster

belong God along fennis. And He give this fella marster belong God

one big fella musket, and He speak, 'S'pose you look 'm these two

fella Adam Eve, you shoot 'm plenty too much.'"

CHAPTER XVII--THE AMATEUR M.D.

When we sailed from San Francisco on the Snark I knew as much about

sickness as the Admiral of the Swiss Navy knows about salt water.

And here, at the start, let me advise any one who meditates going to

out-of-the-way tropic places. Go to a first-class druggist--the

sort that have specialists on their salary list who know everything.

Talk the matter over with such an one. Note carefully all that he

says. Have a list made of all that he recommends. Write out a

cheque for the total cost, and tear it up.

I wish I had done the same. I should have been far wiser, I know

now, if I had bought one of those ready-made, self-acting, fool-

proof medicine chests such as are favoured by fourth-rate ship-

masters. In such a chest each bottle has a number. On the inside

of the lid is placed a simple table of directions: No. 1,

toothache; No. 2, smallpox; No. 3, stomachache; No. 4, cholera; No.

5, rheumatism; and so on, through the list of human ills. And I

might have used it as did a certain venerable skipper, who, when No.

3 was empty, mixed a dose from No. 1 and No. 2, or, when No. 7 was

all gone, dosed his crew with 4 and 3 till 3 gave out, when he used

5 and 2.

So far, with the exception of corrosive sublimate (which was

recommended as an antiseptic in surgical operations, and which I

have not yet used for that purpose), my medicine-chest has been

useless. It has been worse than useless, for it has occupied much

space which I could have used to advantage.

With my surgical instruments it is different. While I have not yet

had serious use for them, I do not regret the space they occupy.

The thought of them makes me feel good. They are so much life

insurance, only, fairer than that last grim game, one is not

supposed to die in order to win. Of course, I don't know how to use

them, and what I don't know about surgery would set up a dozen

quacks in prosperous practice. But needs must when the devil

drives, and we of the Snark have no warning when the devil may take

it into his head to drive, ay, even a thousand miles from land and

twenty days from the nearest port.

I did not know anything about dentistry, but a friend fitted me out

with forceps and similar weapons, and in Honolulu I picked up a book

upon teeth. Also, in that sub-tropical city I managed to get hold

of a skull, from which I extracted the teeth swiftly and painlessly.

Thus equipped, I was ready, though not exactly eager, to tackle any

tooth that get in my way. It was in Nuku-hiva, in the Marquesas,

that my first case presented itself in the shape of a little, old

Chinese. The first thing I did was to got the buck fever, and I

leave it to any fair-minded person if buck fever, with its attendant

heart-palpitations and arm-tremblings, is the right condition for a

man to be in who is endeavouring to pose as an old hand at the

business. I did not fool the aged Chinaman. He was as frightened

as I and a bit more shaky. I almost forgot to be frightened in the

fear that he would bolt. I swear, if he had tried to, that I would

have tripped him up and sat on him until calmness and reason

returned.

I wanted that tooth. Also, Martin wanted a snap-shot of me getting

it. Likewise Charmian got her camera. Then the procession started.

We were stopping at what had been the club-house when Stevenson was

in the Marquesas on the Casco. On the veranda, where he had passed

so many pleasant hours, the light was not good--for snapshots, I

mean. I led on into the garden, a chair in one hand, the other hand

filled with forceps of various sorts, my knees knocking together

disgracefully. The poor old Chinaman came second, and he was

shaking, too. Charmian and Martin brought up the rear, armed with

kodaks. We dived under the avocado trees, threaded our way through

the cocoanut palms, and came on a spot that satisfied Martin's

photographic eye.

I looked at the tooth, and then discovered that I could not remember

anything about the teeth I had pulled from the skull five months

previously. Did it have one prong? two prongs? or three prongs?

What was left of the part that showed appeared very crumbly, and I

knew that I should have take hold of the tooth deep down in the gum.

It was very necessary that I should know how many prongs that tooth

had. Back to the house I went for the book on teeth. The poor old

victim looked like photographs I had seen of fellow-countrymen of

his, criminals, on their knees, waiting the stroke of the beheading

sword.

"Don't let him get away," I cautioned to Martin. "I want that

tooth."

"I sure won't," he replied with enthusiasm, from behind his camera.

"I want that photograph."

For the first time I felt sorry for the Chinaman. Though the book

did not tell me anything about pulling teeth, it was all right, for

on one page I found drawings of all the teeth, including their

prongs and how they were set in the jaw. Then came the pursuit of

the forceps. I had seven pairs, but was in doubt as to which pair I

should use. I did not want any mistake. As I turned the hardware

over with rattle and clang, the poor victim began to lose his grip

and to turn a greenish yellow around the gills. He complained about

the sun, but that was necessary for the photograph, and he had to

stand it. I fitted the forceps around the tooth, and the patient

shivered and began to wilt.

"Ready?" I called to Martin.

"All ready," he answered.

I gave a pull. Ye gods! The tooth, was loose! Out it came on the

instant. I was jubilant as I held it aloft in the forceps.

"Put it back, please, oh, put it back," Martin pleaded. "You were

too quick for me."

And the poor old Chinaman sat there while I put the tooth back and

pulled over. Martin snapped the camera. The deed was done.

Elation? Pride? No hunter was ever prouder of his first pronged

buck than I was of that tree-pronged tooth. I did it! I did it!

With my of own hands and a pair of forceps I did it, to say nothing

of the forgotten memories of the dead man's skull.

My next case was a Tahitian sailor. He was a small man, in a state

of collapse from long days and nights of jumping toothache. I

lanced the gums first. I didn't know how to lance them, but I

lanced them just the same. It was a long pull and a strong pull.

The man was a hero. He groaned and moaned, and I thought he was

going to faint. But he kept his mouth open and let me pull. And

then it came.

After that I was ready to meet all comers--just the proper state of

mind for a Waterloo. And it came. Its name was Tomi. He was a

strapping giant of a heathen with a bad reputation. He was addicted

to deeds of violence. Among other things he had beaten two of his

wives to death with his fists. His father and mother had been naked

cannibals. When he sat down and I put the forceps into his mouth,

he was nearly as tall as I was standing up. Big men, prone to

violence, very often have a streak of fat in their make-up, so I was

doubtful of him. Charmian grabbed one arm and Warren grabbed the

other. Then the tug of war began. The instant the forceps closed

down on the tooth, his jaws closed down on the forceps. Also, both

his hands flew up and gripped my pulling hand. I held on, and he

held on. Charmian and Warren held on. We wrestled all about the

shop.

It was three against one, and my hold on an aching tooth was

certainly a foul one; but in spite of the handicap he got away with

us. The forceps slipped off, banging and grinding along against his

upper teeth with a nerve-scraping sound. Out of his month flew the

forceps, and he rose up in the air with a blood-curdling yell. The

three of us fell back. We expected to be massacred. But that

howling savage of sanguinary reputation sank back in the chair. He

held his head in both his hands, and groaned and groaned and

groaned. Nor would he listen to reason. I was a quack. My

painless tooth-extraction was a delusion and a snare and a low

advertising dodge. I was so anxious to get that tooth that I was

almost ready to bribe him. But that went against my professional

pride and I let him depart with the tooth still intact, the only

case on record up to date of failure on my part when once I had got

a grip. Since then I have never let a tooth go by me. Only the

other day I volunteered to beat up three days to windward to pull a

woman missionary's tooth. I expect, before the voyage of the Snark

is finished, to be doing bridge work and putting on gold crowns.

I don't know whether they are yaws or not--a physician in Fiji told

me they were, and a missionary in the Solomons told me they were

not; but at any rate I can vouch for the fact that they are most

uncomfortable. It was my luck to ship in Tahiti a French-sailor,

who, when we got to sea, proved to be afflicted with a vile skin

disease. The Snark was too small and too much of a family party to

permit retaining him on board; but perforce, until we could reach

land and discharge him, it was up to me to doctor him. I read up

the books and proceeded to treat him, taking care afterwards always

to use a thorough antiseptic wash. When we reached Tutuila, far

from getting rid of him, the port doctor declared a quarantine

against him and refused to allow him ashore. But at Apia, Samoa, I

managed to ship him off on a steamer to New Zealand. Here at Apia

my ankles were badly bitten by mosquitoes, and I confess to having

scratched the bites--as I had a thousand times before. By the time

I reached the island of Savaii, a small sore had developed on the

hollow of my instep. I thought it was due to chafe and to acid

fumes from the hot lava over which I tramped. An application of

salve would cure it--so I thought. The salve did heal it over,

whereupon an astonishing inflammation set in, the new skin came off,

and a larger sore was exposed. This was repeated many times. Each

time new skin formed, an inflammation followed, and the

circumference of the sore increased. I was puzzled and frightened.

All my life my skin had been famous for its healing powers, yet here

was something that would not heal. Instead, it was daily eating up

more skin, while it had eaten down clear through the skin and was

eating up the muscle itself.

By this time the Snark was at sea on her way to Fiji. I remembered

the French sailor, and for the first time became seriously alarmed.

Four other similar sores had appeared--or ulcers, rather, and the

pain of them kept me awake at night. All my plans were made to lay

up the Snark in Fiji and get away on the first steamer to Australia

and professional M.D.'s. In the meantime, in my amateur M.D. way, I

did my best. I read through all the medical works on board. Not a

line nor a word could I find descriptive of my affliction. I

brought common horse-sense to bear on the problem. Here were

malignant and excessively active ulcers that were eating me up.

There was an organic and corroding poison at work. Two things I

concluded must be done. First, some agent must be found to destroy

the poison. Secondly, the ulcers could not possibly heal from the

outside in; they must heal from the inside out. I decided to fight

the poison with corrosive sublimate. The very name of it struck me

as vicious. Talk of fighting fire with fire! I was being consumed

by a corrosive poison, and it appealed to my fancy to fight it with

another corrosive poison. After several days I alternated dressings

of corrosive sublimate with dressings of peroxide of hydrogen. And

behold, by the time we reached Fiji four of the five ulcers were

healed, while the remaining one was no bigger than a pea.

I now felt fully qualified to treat yaws. Likewise I had a

wholesome respect for them. Not so the rest of the crew of the

Snark. In their case, seeing was not believing. One and all, they

had seen my dreadful predicament; and all of them, I am convinced,

had a subconscious certitude that their own superb constitutions and

glorious personalities would never allow lodgment of so vile a

poison in their carcasses as my anaemic constitution and mediocre

personality had allowed to lodge in mine. At Port Resolution, in

the New Hebrides, Martin elected to walk barefooted in the bush and

returned on board with many cuts and abrasions, especially on his

shins.

"You'd better be careful," I warned him. "I'll mix up some

corrosive sublimate for you to wash those cuts with. An ounce of

prevention, you know."

But Martin smiled a superior smile. Though he did not say so. I

nevertheless was given to understand that he was not as other men (I

was the only man he could possibly have had reference to), and that

in a couple of days his cuts would be healed. He also read me a

dissertation upon the peculiar purity of his blood and his

remarkable healing powers. I felt quite humble when he was done

with me. Evidently I was different from other men in so far as

purity of blood was concerned.

Nakata, the cabin-boy, while ironing one day, mistook the calf of

his leg for the ironing-block and accumulated a burn three inches in

length and half an inch wide. He, too, smiled the superior smile

when I offered him corrosive sublimate and reminded him of my own

cruel experience. I was given to understand, with all due suavity

and courtesy, that no matter what was the matter with my blood, his

number-one, Japanese, Port-Arthur blood was all right and scornful

of the festive microbe.

Wada, the cook, took part in a disastrous landing of the launch,

when he had to leap overboard and fend the launch off the beach in a

smashing surf. By means of shells and coral he cut his legs and

feet up beautifully. I offered him the corrosive sublimate bottle.

Once again I suffered the superior smile and was given to understand

that his blood was the same blood that had licked Russia and was

going to lick the United States some day, and that if his blood

wasn't able to cure a few trifling cuts, he'd commit hari-kari in

sheer disgrace.

From all of which I concluded that an amateur M.D. is without honour

on his own vessel, even if he has cured himself. The rest of the

crew had begun to look upon me as a sort of mild mono-maniac on the

question of sores and sublimate. Just because my blood was impure

was no reason that I should think everybody else's was. I made no

more overtures. Time and microbes were with me, and all I had to do

was wait.

"I think there's some dirt in these cuts," Martin said tentatively,

after several days. "I'll wash them out and then they'll be all

right," he added, after I had refused to rise to the bait.

Two more days passed, but the cuts did not pass, and I caught Martin

soaking his feet and legs in a pail of hot water.

"Nothing like hot water," he proclaimed enthusiastically. "It beats

all the dope the doctors ever put up. These sores will be all right

in the morning."

But in the morning he wore a troubled look, and I knew that the hour

of my triumph approached.

"I think I WILL try some of that medicine," he announced later on in

the day. "Not that I think it'll do much good," he qualified, "but

I'll just give it a try anyway."

Next came the proud blood of Japan to beg medicine for its

illustrious sores, while I heaped coals of fire on all their houses

by explaining in minute and sympathetic detail the treatment that

should be given. Nakata followed instructions implicitly, and day

by day his sores grew smaller. Wada was apathetic, and cured less

readily. But Martin still doubted, and because he did not cure

immediately, he developed the theory that while doctor's dope was

all right, it did not follow that the same kind of dope was

efficacious with everybody. As for himself, corrosive sublimate had

no effect. Besides, how did I know that it was the right stuff? I

had had no experience. Just because I happened to get well while

using it was not proof that it had played any part in the cure.

There were such things as coincidences. Without doubt there was a

dope that would cure the sores, and when he ran across a real doctor

he would find what that dope was and get some of it.

About this time we arrived in the Solomon Islands. No physician

would ever recommend the group for invalids or sanitoriums. I spent

but little time there ere I really and for the first time in my life

comprehended how frail and unstable is human tissue. Our first

anchorage was Port Mary, on the island of Santa Anna. The one lone

white man, a trader, came alongside. Tom Butler was his name, and

he was a beautiful example of what the Solomons can do to a strong

man. He lay in his whale-boat with the helplessness of a dying man.

No smile and little intelligence illumined his face. He was a

sombre death's-head, too far gone to grin. He, too, had yaws, big

ones. We were compelled to drag him over the rail of the Snark. He

said that his health was good, that he had not had the fever for

some time, and that with the exception of his arm he was all right

and trim. His arm appeared to be paralysed. Paralysis he rejected

with scorn. He had had it before, and recovered. It was a common

native disease on Santa Anna, he said, as he was helped down the

companion ladder, his dead arm dropping, bump-bump, from step to

step. He was certainly the ghastliest guest we ever entertained,

and we've had not a few lepers and elephantiasis victims on board.

Martin inquired about yaws, for here was a man who ought to know.

He certainly did know, if we could judge by his scarred arms and

legs and by the live ulcers that corroded in the midst of the scars.

Oh, one got used to yaws, quoth Tom Butler. They were never really

serious until they had eaten deep into the flesh. Then they

attacked the walls of the arteries, the arteries burst, and there

was a funeral. Several of the natives had recently died that way

ashore. But what did it matter? If it wasn't yaws, it was

something else in the Solomons.

I noticed that from this moment Martin displayed a swiftly

increasing interest in his own yaws. Dosings with corrosive

sublimate were more frequent, while, in conversation, he began to

revert with growing enthusiasm to the clean climate of Kansas and

all other things Kansan. Charmian and I thought that California was

a little bit of all right. Henry swore by Rapa, and Tehei staked

all on Bora Bora for his own blood's sake; while Wada and Nakata

sang the sanitary paean of Japan.

One evening, as the Snark worked around the southern end of the

island of Ugi, looking for a reputed anchorage, a Church of England

missionary, a Mr. Drew, bound in his whaleboat for the coast of San

Cristoval, came alongside and stopped for dinner. Martin, his legs

swathed in Red Cross bandages till they looked like a mummy's,

turned the conversation upon yaws. Yes, said Mr. Drew, they were

quite common in the Solomons. All white men caught them.

"And have you had them?" Martin demanded, in the soul of him quite

shocked that a Church of England missionary could possess so vulgar

an affliction.

Mr. Drew nodded his head and added that not only had he had them,

but at that moment he was doctoring several.

"What do you use on them?" Martin asked like a flash.

My heart almost stood still waiting the answer. By that answer my

professional medical prestige stood or fell. Martin, I could see,

was quite sure it was going to fall. And then the answer--O blessed

answer!

"Corrosive sublimate," said Mr. Drew.

Martin gave in handsomely, I'll admit, and I am confident that at

that moment, if I had asked permission to pull one of his teeth, he

would not have denied me.

All white men in the Solomons catch yaws, and every cut or abrasion

practically means another yaw. Every man I met had had them, and

nine out of ten had active ones. There was but one exception, a

young fellow who had been in the islands five months, who had come

down with fever ten days after he arrived, and who had since then

been down so often with fever that he had had neither time nor

opportunity for yaws.

Every one on the Snark except Charmian came down with yaws. Hers

was the same egotism that Japan and Kansas had displayed. She

ascribed her immunity to the pureness of her blood, and as the days

went by she ascribed it more often and more loudly to the pureness

of her blood. Privately I ascribed her immunity to the fact that,

being a woman, she escaped most of the cuts and abrasions to which

we hard-working men were subject in the course of working the Snark

around the world. I did not tell her so. You see, I did not wish

to bruise her ego with brutal facts. Being an M.D., if only an

amateur one, I knew more about the disease than she, and I knew that

time was my ally. But alas, I abused my ally when it dealt a

charming little yaw on the shin. So quickly did I apply antiseptic

treatment, that the yaw was cured before she was convinced that she

had one. Again, as an M.D., I was without honour on my own vessel;

and, worse than that, I was charged with having tried to mislead her

into the belief that she had had a yaw. The pureness of her blood

was more rampant than ever, and I poked my nose into my navigation

books and kept quiet. And then came the day. We were cruising

along the coast of Malaita at the time.

"What's that abaft your ankle-bone?" said I.

"Nothing," said she.

"All right," said I; "but put some corrosive sublimate on it just

the same. And some two or three weeks from now, when it is well and

you have a scar that you will carry to your grave, just forget about

the purity of your blood and your ancestral history and tell me what

you think about yaws anyway."

It was as large as a silver dollar, that yaw, and it took all of

three weeks to heal. There were times when Charmian could not walk

because of the hurt of it; and there were times upon times when she

explained that abaft the ankle-bone was the most painful place to

have a yaw. I explained, in turn, that, never having experienced a

yaw in that locality, I was driven to conclude the hollow of the

instep was the most painful place for yaw-culture. We left it to

Martin, who disagreed with both of us and proclaimed passionately

that the only truly painful place was the shin. No wonder horse-

racing is so popular.

But yaws lose their novelty after a time. At the present moment of

writing I have five yaws on my hands and three more on my shin.

Charmian has one on each side of her right instep. Tehei is frantic

with his. Martin's latest shin-cultures have eclipsed his earlier

ones. And Nakata has several score casually eating away at his

tissue. But the history of the Snark in the Solomons has been the

history of every ship since the early discoverers. From the

"Sailing Directions" I quote the following:

"The crews of vessels remaining any considerable time in the

Solomons find wounds and sores liable to change into malignant

ulcers."

Nor on the question of fever were the "Sailing Directions" any more

encouraging, for in them I read:

"New arrivals are almost certain sooner or later to suffer from

fever. The natives are also subject to it. The number of deaths

among the whites in the year 1897 amounted to 9 among a population

of 50."

Some of these deaths, however, were accidental.

Nakata was the first to come down with fever. This occurred at

Penduffryn. Wada and Henry followed him. Charmian surrendered

next. I managed to escape for a couple of months; but when I was

bowled over, Martin sympathetically joined me several days later.

Out of the seven of us all told Tehei is the only one who has

escaped; but his sufferings from nostalgia are worse than fever.

Nakata, as usual, followed instructions faithfully, so that by the

end of his third attack he could take a two hours' sweat, consume

thirty or forty grains of quinine, and be weak but all right at the

end of twenty-four hours.

Wada and Henry, however, were tougher patients with which to deal.

In the first place, Wada got in a bad funk. He was of the firm

conviction that his star had set and that the Solomons would receive

his bones. He saw that life about him was cheap. At Penduffryn he

saw the ravages of dysentery, and, unfortunately for him, he saw one

victim carried out on a strip of galvanized sheet-iron and dumped

without coffin or funeral into a hole in the ground. Everybody had

fever, everybody had dysentery, everybody had everything. Death was

common. Here to-day and gone to-morrow--and Wada forgot all about

to-day and made up his mind that to-morrow had come.

He was careless of his ulcers, neglected to sublimate them, and by

uncontrolled scratching spread them all over his body. Nor would he

follow instructions with fever, and, as a result, would be down five

days at a time, when a day would have been sufficient. Henry, who

is a strapping giant of a man, was just as bad. He refused point

blank to take quinine, on the ground that years before he had had

fever and that the pills the doctor gave him were of different size

and colour from the quinine tablets I offered him. So Henry joined

Wada.

But I fooled the pair of them, and dosed them with their own

medicine, which was faith-cure. They had faith in their funk that

they were going to die. I slammed a lot of quinine down their

throats and took their temperature. It was the first time I had

used my medicine-chest thermometer, and I quickly discovered that it

was worthless, that it had been produced for profit and not for

service. If I had let on to my two patients that the thermometer

did not work, there would have been two funerals in short order.

Their temperature I swear was 105 degrees. I solemnly made one and

then the other smoke the thermometer, allowed an expression of

satisfaction to irradiate my countenance, and joyfully told them

that their temperature was 94 degrees. Then I slammed more quinine

down their throats, told them that any sickness or weakness they

might experience would be due to the quinine, and left them to get

well. And they did get well, Wada in spite of himself. If a man

can die through a misapprehension, is there any immorality in making

him live through a misapprehension?

Commend me the white race when it comes to grit and surviving. One

of our two Japanese and both our Tahitians funked and had to be

slapped on the back and cheered up and dragged along by main

strength toward life. Charmian and Martin took their afflictions

cheerfully, made the least of them, and moved with calm certitude

along the way of life. When Wada and Henry were convinced that they

were going to die, the funeral atmosphere was too much for Tehei,

who prayed dolorously and cried for hours at a time. Martin, on the

other hand, cursed and got well, and Charmian groaned and made plans

for what she was going to do when she got well again.

Charmian had been raised a vegetarian and a sanitarian. Her Aunt

Netta, who brought her up and who lived in a healthful climate, did

not believe in drugs. Neither did Charmian. Besides, drugs

disagreed with her. Their effects were worse than the ills they

were supposed to alleviate. But she listened to the argument in

favour of quinine, accepted it as the lesser evil, and in

consequence had shorter, less painful, and less frequent attacks of

fever. We encountered a Mr. Caulfeild, a missionary, whose two

predecessors had died after less than six months' residence in the

Solomons. Like them he had been a firm believer in homeopathy,

until after his first fever, whereupon, unlike them, he made a grand

slide back to allopathy and quinine, catching fever and carrying on

his Gospel work.

But poor Wada! The straw that broke the cook's back was when

Charmian and I took him along on a cruise to the cannibal island of

Malaita, in a small yacht, on the deck of which the captain had been

murdered half a year before. Kai-kai means to eat, and Wada was

sure he was going to be kai-kai'd. We went about heavily armed, our

vigilance was unremitting, and when we went for a bath in the mouth

of a fresh-water stream, black boys, armed with rifles, did sentry

duty about us. We encountered English war vessels burning and

shelling villages in punishment for murders. Natives with prices on

their heads sought shelter on board of us. Murder stalked abroad in

the land. In out-of-they-way places we received warnings from

friendly savages of impending attacks. Our vessel owed two heads to

Malaita, which were liable to be collected any time. Then to cap it

all, we were wrecked on a reef, and with rifles in one hand warned

the canoes of wreckers off while with the other hand we toiled to

save the ship. All of which was too much for Wada, who went daffy,

and who finally quitted the Snark on the island of Ysabel, going

ashore for good in a driving rain-storm, between two attacks of

fever, while threatened with pneumonia. If he escapes being kai-

kai'd, and if he can survive sores and fever which are riotous

ashore, he can expect, if he is reasonably lucky, to get away from

that place to the adjacent island in anywhere from six to eight

weeks. He never did think much of my medicine, despite the fact

that I successfully and at the first trail pulled two aching teeth

for him.

The Snark has been a hospital for months, and I confess that we are

getting used to it. At Meringe Lagoon, where we careened and

cleaned the Snark's copper, there were times when only one man of us

was able to go into the water, while the three white men on the

plantation ashore were all down with fever. At the moment of

writing this we are lost at sea somewhere northeast of Ysabel and

trying vainly to find Lord Howe Island, which is an atoll that

cannot be sighted unless one is on top of it. The chronometer has

gone wrong. The sun does not shine anyway, nor can I get a star

observation at night, and we have had nothing but squalls and rain

for days and days. The cook is gone. Nakata, who has been trying

to be both cook and cabin boy, is down on his back with fever.

Martin is just up from fever, and going down again. Charmian, whose

fever has become periodical, is looking up in her date book to find

when the next attack will be. Henry has begun to eat quinine in an

expectant mood. And, since my attacks hit me with the suddenness of

bludgeon-blows I do not know from moment to moment when I shall be

brought down. By a mistake we gave our last flour away to some

white men who did not have any flour. We don't know when we'll make

land. Our Solomon sores are worse than ever, and more numerous.

The corrosive sublimate was accidentally left ashore at Penduffryn;

the peroxide of hydrogen is exhausted; and I am experimenting with

boracic acid, lysol, and antiphlogystine. At any rate, if I fail in

becoming a reputable M.D., it won't be from lack of practice.

P.S. It is now two weeks since the foregoing was written, and

Tehei, the only immune on board has been down ten days with far

severer fever than any of us and is still down. His temperature has

been repeatedly as high as 104, and his pulse 115.

P.S. At sea, between Tasman atoll and Manning Straits. Tehei's

attack developed into black water fever--the severest form of

malarial fever, which, the doctor-book assures me, is due to some

outside infection as well. Having pulled him through his fever, I

am now at my wit's end, for he has lost his wits altogether. I am

rather recent in practice to take up the cure of insanity. This

makes the second lunacy case on this short voyage.

P.S. Some day I shall write a book (for the profession), and

entitle it, "Around the World on the Hospital Ship Snark." Even our

pets have not escaped. We sailed from Meringe Lagoon with two, an

Irish terrier and a white cockatoo. The terrier fell down the cabin

companionway and lamed its nigh hind leg, then repeated the

manoeuvre and lamed its off fore leg. At the present moment it has

but two legs to walk on. Fortunately, they are on opposite sides

and ends, so that she can still dot and carry two. The cockatoo was

crushed under the cabin skylight and had to be killed. This was our

first funeral--though for that matter, the several chickens we had,

and which would have made welcome broth for the convalescents, flew

overboard and were drowned. Only the cockroaches flourish. Neither

illness nor accident ever befalls them, and they grow larger and

more carnivorous day by day, gnawing our finger-nails and toe-nails

while we sleep.

P.S. Charmian is having another bout with fever. Martin, in

despair, has taken to horse-doctoring his yaws with bluestone and to

blessing the Solomons. As for me, in addition to navigating,

doctoring, and writing short stories, I am far from well. With the

exception of the insanity cases, I'm the worst off on board. I

shall catch the next steamer to Australia and go on the operating

table. Among my minor afflictions, I may mention a new and

mysterious one. For the past week my hands have been swelling as

with dropsy. It is only by a painful effort that I can close them.

A pull on a rope is excruciating. The sensations are like those

that accompany severe chilblains. Also, the skin is peeling off

both hands at an alarming rate, besides which the new skin

underneath is growing hard and thick. The doctor-book fails to

mention this disease. Nobody knows what it is.

P.S. Well, anyway, I've cured the chronometer. After knocking

about the sea for eight squally, rainy days, most of the time hove

to, I succeeded in catching a partial observation of the sun at

midday. From this I worked up my latitude, then headed by log to

the latitude of Lord Howe, and ran both that latitude and the island

down together. Here I tested the chronometer by longitude sights

and found it something like three minutes out. Since each minute is

equivalent to fifteen miles, the total error can be appreciated. By

repeated observations at Lord Howe I rated the chronometer, finding

it to have a daily losing error of seven-tenths of a second. Now it

happens that a year ago, when we sailed from Hawaii, that selfsame

chronometer had that selfsame losing error of seven-tenths of a

second. Since that error was faithfully added every day, and since

that error, as proved by my observations at Lord Howe, has not

changed, then what under the sun made that chronometer all of a

sudden accelerate and catch up with itself three minutes? Can such

things be? Expert watchmakers say no; but I say that they have

never done any expert watch-making and watch-rating in the Solomons.

That it is the climate is my only diagnosis. At any rate, I have

successfully doctored the chronometer, even if I have failed with

the lunacy cases and with Martin's yaws.

P.S. Martin has just tried burnt alum, and is blessing the Solomons

more fervently than ever.

P.S. Between Manning Straits and Pavuvu Islands.

Henry has developed rheumatism in his back, ten skins have peeled

off my hands and the eleventh is now peeling, while Tehei is more

lunatic than ever and day and night prays God not to kill him.

Also, Nakata and I are slashing away at fever again. And finally up

to date, Nakata last evening had an attack of ptomaine poisoning,

and we spent half the night pulling him through.

BACK WORD

The Snark was forty-three feet on the water-line and fifty-five over

all, with fifteen feet beam (tumble-home sides) and seven feet eight

inches draught. She was ketch-rigged, carrying flying-jib, jib,

fore-staysail, main-sail, mizzen, and spinnaker. There were six

feet of head-room below, and she was crown-decked and flush-decked.

There were four alleged WATER-TIGHT compartments. A seventy-horse

power auxiliary gas-engine sporadically furnished locomotion at an

approximate cost of twenty dollars per mile. A five-horse power

engine ran the pumps when it was in order, and on two occasions

proved capable of furnishing juice for the search-light. The

storage batteries worked four or five times in the course of two

years. The fourteen-foot launch was rumoured to work at times, but

it invariably broke down whenever I stepped on board.

But the Snark sailed. It was the only way she could get anywhere.

She sailed for two years, and never touched rock, reef, nor shoal.

She had no inside ballast, her iron keel weighed five tons, but her

deep draught and high freeboard made her very stiff. Caught under

full sail in tropic squalls, she buried her rail and deck many

times, but stubbornly refused to turn turtle. She steered easily,

and she could run day and night, without steering, close-by, full-

and-by, and with the wind abeam. With the wind on her quarter and

the sails properly trimmed, she steered herself within two points,

and with the wind almost astern she required scarcely three points

for self-steering.

The Snark was partly built in San Francisco. The morning her iron

keel was to be cast was the morning of the great earthquake. Then

came anarchy. Six months overdue in the building, I sailed the

shell of her to Hawaii to be finished, the engine lashed to the

bottom, building materials lashed on deck. Had I remained in San

Francisco for completion, I'd still be there. As it was, partly

built, she cost four times what she ought to have cost.

The Snark was born unfortunately. She was libelled in San

Francisco, had her cheques protested as fraudulent in Hawaii, and

was fined for breach of quarantine in the Solomons. To save

themselves, the newspapers could not tell the truth about her. When

I discharged an incompetent captain, they said I had beaten him to a

pulp. When one young man returned home to continue at college, it

was reported that I was a regular Wolf Larsen, and that my whole

crew had deserted because I had beaten it to a pulp. In fact the

only blow struck on the Snark was when the cook was manhandled by a

captain who had shipped with me under false pretences, and whom I

discharged in Fiji. Also, Charmian and I boxed for exercise; but

neither of us was seriously maimed.

The voyage was our idea of a good time. I built the Snark and paid

for it, and for all expenses. I contracted to write thirty-five

thousand words descriptive of the trip for a magazine which was to

pay me the same rate I received for stories written at home.

Promptly the magazine advertised that it was sending me especially

around the world for itself. It was a wealthy magazine. And every

man who had business dealings with the Snark charged three prices

because forsooth the magazine could afford it. Down in the

uttermost South Sea isle this myth obtained, and I paid accordingly.

To this day everybody believes that the magazine paid for everything

and that I made a fortune out of the voyage. It is hard, after such

advertising, to hammer it into the human understanding that the

whole voyage was done for the fun of it.

I went to Australia to go into hospital, where I spent five weeks.

I spent five months miserably sick in hotels. The mysterious malady

that afflicted my hands was too much for the Australian specialists.

It was unknown in the literature of medicine. No case like it had

ever been reported. It extended from my hands to my feet so that at

times I was as helpless as a child. On occasion my hands were twice

their natural size, with seven dead and dying skins peeling off at

the same time. There were times when my toe-nails, in twenty-four

hours, grew as thick as they were long. After filing them off,

inside another twenty-four hours they were as thick as before.

The Australian specialists agreed that the malady was non-parasitic,

and that, therefore, it must be nervous. It did not mend, and it

was impossible for me to continue the voyage. The only way I could

have continued it would have been by being lashed in my bunk, for in

my helpless condition, unable to clutch with my hands, I could not

have moved about on a small rolling boat. Also, I said to myself

that while there were many boats and many voyages, I had but one

pair of hands and one set of toe-nails. Still further, I reasoned

that in my own climate of California I had always maintained a

stable nervous equilibrium. So back I came.

Since my return I have completely recovered. And I have found out

what was the matter with me. I encountered a book by Lieutenant-

Colonel Charles E. Woodruff of the United States Army entitled

"Effects of Tropical Light on White Men." Then I knew. Later, I

met Colonel Woodruff, and learned that he had been similarly

afflicted. Himself an Army surgeon, seventeen Army surgeons sat on

his case in the Philippines, and, like the Australian specialists,

confessed themselves beaten. In brief, I had a strong

predisposition toward the tissue-destructiveness of tropical light.

I was being torn to pieces by the ultra-violet rays just as many

experimenters with the X-ray have been torn to pieces.

In passing, I may mention that among the other afflictions that

jointly compelled the abandonment of the voyage, was one that is

variously called the healthy man's disease, European Leprosy, and

Biblical Leprosy. Unlike True Leprosy, nothing is known of this

mysterious malady. No doctor has ever claimed a cure for a case of

it, though spontaneous cures are recorded. It comes, they know not

how. It is, they know not what. It goes, they know not why.

Without the use of drugs, merely by living in the wholesome

California climate, my silvery skin vanished. The only hope the

doctors had held out to me was a spontaneous cure, and such a cure

was mine.

A last word: the test of the voyage. It is easy enough for me or

any man to say that it was enjoyable. But there is a better

witness, the one woman who made it from beginning to end. In

hospital when I broke the news to Charmian that I must go back to

California, the tears welled into her eyes. For two days she was

wrecked and broken by the knowledge that the happy, happy voyage was

abandoned.

GLEN ELLEN, CALIFORNIA,

April 7, 1911

Footnotes:

{1} To point out that we of the Snark are not a crowd of weaklings,

which might be concluded from our divers afflictions, I quote the

following, which I gleaned verbatim from the Eugenie's log and which

may be considered as a sample of Solomon Islands cruising:

Ulava, Thursday, March 12, 1908.

Boat went ashore in the morning. Got two loads ivory nut, 4000

copra. Skipper down with fever.

Ulava, Friday, March 13, 1908.

Buying nuts from bushmen, 1.5 ton. Mate and skipper down with

fever.

Ulava, Saturday, March 14, 1908.

At noon hove up and proceeded with a very light E.N.E. wind for

Ngora-Ngora. Anchored in 5 fathoms--shell and coral. Mate down

with fever.

Ngora-Ngora, Sunday, March 15, 1908.

At daybreak found that the boy Bagua had died during the night, on

dysentery. He was about 14 days sick. At sunset, big N.W. squall.

(Second anchor ready) Lasting one hour and 30 minutes.

At sea, Monday, March 16, 1908.

Set course for Sikiana at 4 P.M. Wind broke off. Heavy squalls

during the night. Skipper down on dysentery, also one man.

At sea, Tuesday, March 17, 1908.

Skipper and 2 crew down on dysentery. Mate fever.

At sea, Wednesday, March 18, 1908.

Big sea. Lee-rail under water all the time. Ship under reefed

mainsail, staysail, and inner jib. Skipper and 3 men dysentery.

Mate fever.

At sea, Thursday, March 19, 1908.

Too thick to see anything. Blowing a gale all the time. Pump

plugged up and bailing with buckets. Skipper and five boys down on

dysentery.

At sea, Friday, March 20, 1908.

During night squalls with hurricane force. Skipper and six men down

on dysentery.

At sea, Saturday, March 21, 1908.

Turned back from Sikiana. Squalls all day with heavy rain and sea.

Skipper and best part of crew on dysentery. Mate fever.

And so, day by day, with the majority of all on board prostrated,

the Eugenie's log goes on. The only variety occurred on March 31,

when the mate came down with dysentery and the skipper was floored

by fever.

End of the Project Gutenberg Etext of The Cruise of the Snark, by Jack

London