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\*\*\* START OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK TREASURE ISLAND \*\*\*

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TREASURE ISLAND

by Robert Louis Stevenson

TREASURE ISLAND

To S.L.O., an American gentleman in accordance with whose classic taste

the following narrative has been designed, it is now, in return for

numerous delightful hours, and with the kindest wishes, dedicated by his

affectionate friend, the author.

TO THE HESITATING PURCHASER

If sailor tales to sailor tunes,

Storm and adventure, heat and cold,

If schooners, islands, and maroons,

And buccaneers, and buried gold,

And all the old romance, retold

Exactly in the ancient way,

Can please, as me they pleased of old,

The wiser youngsters of today:

--So be it, and fall on! If not,

If studious youth no longer crave,

His ancient appetites forgot,

Kingston, or Ballantyne the brave,

Or Cooper of the wood and wave:

So be it, also! And may I

And all my pirates share the grave

Where these and their creations lie!

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TREASURE ISLAND

PART ONE--The Old Buccaneer

1

The Old Sea-dog at the Admiral Benbow

SQUIRE TRELAWNEY, Dr. Livesey, and the rest of these gentlemen having

asked me to write down the whole particulars about Treasure Island, from

the beginning to the end, keeping nothing back but the bearings of the

island, and that only because there is still treasure not yet lifted, I

take up my pen in the year of grace 17\_\_ and go back to the time when

my father kept the Admiral Benbow inn and the brown old seaman with the

sabre cut first took up his lodging under our roof.

I remember him as if it were yesterday, as he came plodding to the

inn door, his sea-chest following behind him in a hand-barrow--a

tall, strong, heavy, nut-brown man, his tarry pigtail falling over the

shoulder of his soiled blue coat, his hands ragged and scarred, with

black, broken nails, and the sabre cut across one cheek, a dirty, livid

white. I remember him looking round the cover and whistling to himself

as he did so, and then breaking out in that old sea-song that he sang so

often afterwards:

“Fifteen men on the dead man's chest--

Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!”

in the high, old tottering voice that seemed to have been tuned and

broken at the capstan bars. Then he rapped on the door with a bit of

stick like a handspike that he carried, and when my father appeared,

called roughly for a glass of rum. This, when it was brought to him,

he drank slowly, like a connoisseur, lingering on the taste and still

looking about him at the cliffs and up at our signboard.

“This is a handy cove,” says he at length; “and a pleasant sittyated

grog-shop. Much company, mate?”

My father told him no, very little company, the more was the pity.

“Well, then,” said he, “this is the berth for me. Here you, matey,” he

cried to the man who trundled the barrow; “bring up alongside and help

up my chest. I'll stay here a bit,” he continued. “I'm a plain man; rum

and bacon and eggs is what I want, and that head up there for to watch

ships off. What you mought call me? You mought call me captain. Oh, I

see what you're at--there”; and he threw down three or four gold pieces

on the threshold. “You can tell me when I've worked through that,” says

he, looking as fierce as a commander.

And indeed bad as his clothes were and coarsely as he spoke, he had none

of the appearance of a man who sailed before the mast, but seemed like

a mate or skipper accustomed to be obeyed or to strike. The man who came

with the barrow told us the mail had set him down the morning before at

the Royal George, that he had inquired what inns there were along the

coast, and hearing ours well spoken of, I suppose, and described as

lonely, had chosen it from the others for his place of residence. And

that was all we could learn of our guest.

He was a very silent man by custom. All day he hung round the cove or

upon the cliffs with a brass telescope; all evening he sat in a corner

of the parlour next the fire and drank rum and water very strong. Mostly

he would not speak when spoken to, only look up sudden and fierce and

blow through his nose like a fog-horn; and we and the people who came

about our house soon learned to let him be. Every day when he came back

from his stroll he would ask if any seafaring men had gone by along the

road. At first we thought it was the want of company of his own kind

that made him ask this question, but at last we began to see he was

desirous to avoid them. When a seaman did put up at the Admiral Benbow

(as now and then some did, making by the coast road for Bristol) he

would look in at him through the curtained door before he entered the

parlour; and he was always sure to be as silent as a mouse when any such

was present. For me, at least, there was no secret about the matter, for

I was, in a way, a sharer in his alarms. He had taken me aside one day

and promised me a silver fourpenny on the first of every month if I

would only keep my “weather-eye open for a seafaring man with one leg”

and let him know the moment he appeared. Often enough when the first

of the month came round and I applied to him for my wage, he would only

blow through his nose at me and stare me down, but before the week was

out he was sure to think better of it, bring me my four-penny piece, and

repeat his orders to look out for “the seafaring man with one leg.”

How that personage haunted my dreams, I need scarcely tell you. On

stormy nights, when the wind shook the four corners of the house and

the surf roared along the cove and up the cliffs, I would see him in a

thousand forms, and with a thousand diabolical expressions. Now the leg

would be cut off at the knee, now at the hip; now he was a monstrous

kind of a creature who had never had but the one leg, and that in the

middle of his body. To see him leap and run and pursue me over hedge and

ditch was the worst of nightmares. And altogether I paid pretty dear for

my monthly fourpenny piece, in the shape of these abominable fancies.

But though I was so terrified by the idea of the seafaring man with one

leg, I was far less afraid of the captain himself than anybody else who

knew him. There were nights when he took a deal more rum and water

than his head would carry; and then he would sometimes sit and sing his

wicked, old, wild sea-songs, minding nobody; but sometimes he would call

for glasses round and force all the trembling company to listen to his

stories or bear a chorus to his singing. Often I have heard the house

shaking with “Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum,” all the neighbours joining

in for dear life, with the fear of death upon them, and each singing

louder than the other to avoid remark. For in these fits he was the most

overriding companion ever known; he would slap his hand on the table for

silence all round; he would fly up in a passion of anger at a question,

or sometimes because none was put, and so he judged the company was not

following his story. Nor would he allow anyone to leave the inn till he

had drunk himself sleepy and reeled off to bed.

His stories were what frightened people worst of all. Dreadful stories

they were--about hanging, and walking the plank, and storms at sea, and

the Dry Tortugas, and wild deeds and places on the Spanish Main. By his

own account he must have lived his life among some of the wickedest men

that God ever allowed upon the sea, and the language in which he told

these stories shocked our plain country people almost as much as the

crimes that he described. My father was always saying the inn would be

ruined, for people would soon cease coming there to be tyrannized over

and put down, and sent shivering to their beds; but I really believe his

presence did us good. People were frightened at the time, but on looking

back they rather liked it; it was a fine excitement in a quiet country

life, and there was even a party of the younger men who pretended to

admire him, calling him a “true sea-dog” and a “real old salt” and

such like names, and saying there was the sort of man that made England

terrible at sea.

In one way, indeed, he bade fair to ruin us, for he kept on staying week

after week, and at last month after month, so that all the money had

been long exhausted, and still my father never plucked up the heart to

insist on having more. If ever he mentioned it, the captain blew through

his nose so loudly that you might say he roared, and stared my poor

father out of the room. I have seen him wringing his hands after such a

rebuff, and I am sure the annoyance and the terror he lived in must have

greatly hastened his early and unhappy death.

All the time he lived with us the captain made no change whatever in his

dress but to buy some stockings from a hawker. One of the cocks of his

hat having fallen down, he let it hang from that day forth, though it

was a great annoyance when it blew. I remember the appearance of his

coat, which he patched himself upstairs in his room, and which, before

the end, was nothing but patches. He never wrote or received a letter,

and he never spoke with any but the neighbours, and with these, for the

most part, only when drunk on rum. The great sea-chest none of us had

ever seen open.

He was only once crossed, and that was towards the end, when my poor

father was far gone in a decline that took him off. Dr. Livesey came

late one afternoon to see the patient, took a bit of dinner from my

mother, and went into the parlour to smoke a pipe until his horse should

come down from the hamlet, for we had no stabling at the old Benbow. I

followed him in, and I remember observing the contrast the neat, bright

doctor, with his powder as white as snow and his bright, black eyes and

pleasant manners, made with the coltish country folk, and above all,

with that filthy, heavy, bleared scarecrow of a pirate of ours, sitting,

far gone in rum, with his arms on the table. Suddenly he--the captain,

that is--began to pipe up his eternal song:

“Fifteen men on the dead man's chest--

Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!

Drink and the devil had done for the rest--

Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!”

At first I had supposed “the dead man's chest” to be that identical big

box of his upstairs in the front room, and the thought had been mingled

in my nightmares with that of the one-legged seafaring man. But by this

time we had all long ceased to pay any particular notice to the song; it

was new, that night, to nobody but Dr. Livesey, and on him I observed it

did not produce an agreeable effect, for he looked up for a moment quite

angrily before he went on with his talk to old Taylor, the gardener, on

a new cure for the rheumatics. In the meantime, the captain gradually

brightened up at his own music, and at last flapped his hand upon

the table before him in a way we all knew to mean silence. The voices

stopped at once, all but Dr. Livesey's; he went on as before speaking

clear and kind and drawing briskly at his pipe between every word or

two. The captain glared at him for a while, flapped his hand again,

glared still harder, and at last broke out with a villainous, low oath,

“Silence, there, between decks!”

“Were you addressing me, sir?” says the doctor; and when the ruffian had

told him, with another oath, that this was so, “I have only one thing to

say to you, sir,” replies the doctor, “that if you keep on drinking rum,

the world will soon be quit of a very dirty scoundrel!”

The old fellow's fury was awful. He sprang to his feet, drew and opened

a sailor's clasp-knife, and balancing it open on the palm of his hand,

threatened to pin the doctor to the wall.

The doctor never so much as moved. He spoke to him as before, over his

shoulder and in the same tone of voice, rather high, so that all the

room might hear, but perfectly calm and steady: “If you do not put that

knife this instant in your pocket, I promise, upon my honour, you shall

hang at the next assizes.”

Then followed a battle of looks between them, but the captain soon

knuckled under, put up his weapon, and resumed his seat, grumbling like

a beaten dog.

“And now, sir,” continued the doctor, “since I now know there's such a

fellow in my district, you may count I'll have an eye upon you day and

night. I'm not a doctor only; I'm a magistrate; and if I catch a breath

of complaint against you, if it's only for a piece of incivility like

tonight's, I'll take effectual means to have you hunted down and routed

out of this. Let that suffice.”

Soon after, Dr. Livesey's horse came to the door and he rode away, but

the captain held his peace that evening, and for many evenings to come.

2

Black Dog Appears and Disappears

IT was not very long after this that there occurred the first of the

mysterious events that rid us at last of the captain, though not, as you

will see, of his affairs. It was a bitter cold winter, with long, hard

frosts and heavy gales; and it was plain from the first that my poor

father was little likely to see the spring. He sank daily, and my mother

and I had all the inn upon our hands, and were kept busy enough without

paying much regard to our unpleasant guest.

It was one January morning, very early--a pinching, frosty morning--the

cove all grey with hoar-frost, the ripple lapping softly on the stones,

the sun still low and only touching the hilltops and shining far to

seaward. The captain had risen earlier than usual and set out down the

beach, his cutlass swinging under the broad skirts of the old blue coat,

his brass telescope under his arm, his hat tilted back upon his head. I

remember his breath hanging like smoke in his wake as he strode off, and

the last sound I heard of him as he turned the big rock was a loud snort

of indignation, as though his mind was still running upon Dr. Livesey.

Well, mother was upstairs with father and I was laying the

breakfast-table against the captain's return when the parlour door

opened and a man stepped in on whom I had never set my eyes before. He

was a pale, tallowy creature, wanting two fingers of the left hand, and

though he wore a cutlass, he did not look much like a fighter. I

had always my eye open for seafaring men, with one leg or two, and I

remember this one puzzled me. He was not sailorly, and yet he had a

smack of the sea about him too.

I asked him what was for his service, and he said he would take rum; but

as I was going out of the room to fetch it, he sat down upon a table

and motioned me to draw near. I paused where I was, with my napkin in my

hand.

“Come here, sonny,” says he. “Come nearer here.”

I took a step nearer.

“Is this here table for my mate Bill?” he asked with a kind of leer.

I told him I did not know his mate Bill, and this was for a person who

stayed in our house whom we called the captain.

“Well,” said he, “my mate Bill would be called the captain, as like

as not. He has a cut on one cheek and a mighty pleasant way with him,

particularly in drink, has my mate Bill. We'll put it, for argument

like, that your captain has a cut on one cheek--and we'll put it, if you

like, that that cheek's the right one. Ah, well! I told you. Now, is my

mate Bill in this here house?”

I told him he was out walking.

“Which way, sonny? Which way is he gone?”

And when I had pointed out the rock and told him how the captain was

likely to return, and how soon, and answered a few other questions,

“Ah,” said he, “this'll be as good as drink to my mate Bill.”

The expression of his face as he said these words was not at all

pleasant, and I had my own reasons for thinking that the stranger was

mistaken, even supposing he meant what he said. But it was no affair of

mine, I thought; and besides, it was difficult to know what to do. The

stranger kept hanging about just inside the inn door, peering round the

corner like a cat waiting for a mouse. Once I stepped out myself into

the road, but he immediately called me back, and as I did not obey quick

enough for his fancy, a most horrible change came over his tallowy face,

and he ordered me in with an oath that made me jump. As soon as I

was back again he returned to his former manner, half fawning, half

sneering, patted me on the shoulder, told me I was a good boy and he had

taken quite a fancy to me. “I have a son of my own,” said he, “as like

you as two blocks, and he's all the pride of my 'art. But the great

thing for boys is discipline, sonny--discipline. Now, if you had sailed

along of Bill, you wouldn't have stood there to be spoke to twice--not

you. That was never Bill's way, nor the way of sich as sailed with him.

And here, sure enough, is my mate Bill, with a spy-glass under his arm,

bless his old 'art, to be sure. You and me'll just go back into the

parlour, sonny, and get behind the door, and we'll give Bill a little

surprise--bless his 'art, I say again.”

So saying, the stranger backed along with me into the parlour and put me

behind him in the corner so that we were both hidden by the open door. I

was very uneasy and alarmed, as you may fancy, and it rather added to my

fears to observe that the stranger was certainly frightened himself. He

cleared the hilt of his cutlass and loosened the blade in the sheath;

and all the time we were waiting there he kept swallowing as if he felt

what we used to call a lump in the throat.

At last in strode the captain, slammed the door behind him, without

looking to the right or left, and marched straight across the room to

where his breakfast awaited him.

“Bill,” said the stranger in a voice that I thought he had tried to make

bold and big.

The captain spun round on his heel and fronted us; all the brown had

gone out of his face, and even his nose was blue; he had the look of a

man who sees a ghost, or the evil one, or something worse, if anything

can be; and upon my word, I felt sorry to see him all in a moment turn

so old and sick.

“Come, Bill, you know me; you know an old shipmate, Bill, surely,” said

the stranger.

The captain made a sort of gasp.

“Black Dog!” said he.

“And who else?” returned the other, getting more at his ease. “Black

Dog as ever was, come for to see his old shipmate Billy, at the Admiral

Benbow inn. Ah, Bill, Bill, we have seen a sight of times, us two, since

I lost them two talons,” holding up his mutilated hand.

“Now, look here,” said the captain; “you've run me down; here I am;

well, then, speak up; what is it?”

“That's you, Bill,” returned Black Dog, “you're in the right of it,

Billy. I'll have a glass of rum from this dear child here, as I've took

such a liking to; and we'll sit down, if you please, and talk square,

like old shipmates.”

When I returned with the rum, they were already seated on either side

of the captain's breakfast-table--Black Dog next to the door and

sitting sideways so as to have one eye on his old shipmate and one, as I

thought, on his retreat.

He bade me go and leave the door wide open. “None of your keyholes for

me, sonny,” he said; and I left them together and retired into the bar.

For a long time, though I certainly did my best to listen, I could hear

nothing but a low gattling; but at last the voices began to grow higher,

and I could pick up a word or two, mostly oaths, from the captain.

“No, no, no, no; and an end of it!” he cried once. And again, “If it

comes to swinging, swing all, say I.”

Then all of a sudden there was a tremendous explosion of oaths and

other noises--the chair and table went over in a lump, a clash of steel

followed, and then a cry of pain, and the next instant I saw Black

Dog in full flight, and the captain hotly pursuing, both with drawn

cutlasses, and the former streaming blood from the left shoulder. Just

at the door the captain aimed at the fugitive one last tremendous

cut, which would certainly have split him to the chine had it not been

intercepted by our big signboard of Admiral Benbow. You may see the

notch on the lower side of the frame to this day.

That blow was the last of the battle. Once out upon the road, Black

Dog, in spite of his wound, showed a wonderful clean pair of heels and

disappeared over the edge of the hill in half a minute. The captain, for

his part, stood staring at the signboard like a bewildered man. Then he

passed his hand over his eyes several times and at last turned back into

the house.

“Jim,” says he, “rum”; and as he spoke, he reeled a little, and caught

himself with one hand against the wall.

“Are you hurt?” cried I.

“Rum,” he repeated. “I must get away from here. Rum! Rum!”

I ran to fetch it, but I was quite unsteadied by all that had fallen

out, and I broke one glass and fouled the tap, and while I was still

getting in my own way, I heard a loud fall in the parlour, and running

in, beheld the captain lying full length upon the floor. At the same

instant my mother, alarmed by the cries and fighting, came running

downstairs to help me. Between us we raised his head. He was breathing

very loud and hard, but his eyes were closed and his face a horrible

colour.

“Dear, deary me,” cried my mother, “what a disgrace upon the house! And

your poor father sick!”

In the meantime, we had no idea what to do to help the captain, nor any

other thought but that he had got his death-hurt in the scuffle with

the stranger. I got the rum, to be sure, and tried to put it down his

throat, but his teeth were tightly shut and his jaws as strong as iron.

It was a happy relief for us when the door opened and Doctor Livesey

came in, on his visit to my father.

“Oh, doctor,” we cried, “what shall we do? Where is he wounded?”

“Wounded? A fiddle-stick's end!” said the doctor. “No more wounded than

you or I. The man has had a stroke, as I warned him. Now, Mrs. Hawkins,

just you run upstairs to your husband and tell him, if possible, nothing

about it. For my part, I must do my best to save this fellow's trebly

worthless life; Jim, you get me a basin.”

When I got back with the basin, the doctor had already ripped up the

captain's sleeve and exposed his great sinewy arm. It was tattooed

in several places. “Here's luck,” “A fair wind,” and “Billy Bones his

fancy,” were very neatly and clearly executed on the forearm; and up

near the shoulder there was a sketch of a gallows and a man hanging from

it--done, as I thought, with great spirit.

“Prophetic,” said the doctor, touching this picture with his finger.

“And now, Master Billy Bones, if that be your name, we'll have a look at

the colour of your blood. Jim,” he said, “are you afraid of blood?”

“No, sir,” said I.

“Well, then,” said he, “you hold the basin”; and with that he took his

lancet and opened a vein.

A great deal of blood was taken before the captain opened his eyes

and looked mistily about him. First he recognized the doctor with

an unmistakable frown; then his glance fell upon me, and he looked

relieved. But suddenly his colour changed, and he tried to raise

himself, crying, “Where's Black Dog?”

“There is no Black Dog here,” said the doctor, “except what you have

on your own back. You have been drinking rum; you have had a stroke,

precisely as I told you; and I have just, very much against my own will,

dragged you headforemost out of the grave. Now, Mr. Bones--”

“That's not my name,” he interrupted.

“Much I care,” returned the doctor. “It's the name of a buccaneer of my

acquaintance; and I call you by it for the sake of shortness, and what I

have to say to you is this; one glass of rum won't kill you, but if

you take one you'll take another and another, and I stake my wig if you

don't break off short, you'll die--do you understand that?--die, and go

to your own place, like the man in the Bible. Come, now, make an effort.

I'll help you to your bed for once.”

Between us, with much trouble, we managed to hoist him upstairs, and

laid him on his bed, where his head fell back on the pillow as if he

were almost fainting.

“Now, mind you,” said the doctor, “I clear my conscience--the name of

rum for you is death.”

And with that he went off to see my father, taking me with him by the

arm.

“This is nothing,” he said as soon as he had closed the door. “I have

drawn blood enough to keep him quiet awhile; he should lie for a week

where he is--that is the best thing for him and you; but another stroke

would settle him.”

3

The Black Spot

ABOUT noon I stopped at the captain's door with some cooling drinks

and medicines. He was lying very much as we had left him, only a little

higher, and he seemed both weak and excited.

“Jim,” he said, “you're the only one here that's worth anything, and you

know I've been always good to you. Never a month but I've given you a

silver fourpenny for yourself. And now you see, mate, I'm pretty low,

and deserted by all; and Jim, you'll bring me one noggin of rum, now,

won't you, matey?”

“The doctor--” I began.

But he broke in cursing the doctor, in a feeble voice but heartily.

“Doctors is all swabs,” he said; “and that doctor there, why, what do

he know about seafaring men? I been in places hot as pitch, and mates

dropping round with Yellow Jack, and the blessed land a-heaving like the

sea with earthquakes--what to the doctor know of lands like that?--and I

lived on rum, I tell you. It's been meat and drink, and man and wife,

to me; and if I'm not to have my rum now I'm a poor old hulk on a lee

shore, my blood'll be on you, Jim, and that doctor swab”; and he ran on

again for a while with curses. “Look, Jim, how my fingers fidges,”

he continued in the pleading tone. “I can't keep 'em still, not I. I

haven't had a drop this blessed day. That doctor's a fool, I tell you.

If I don't have a drain o' rum, Jim, I'll have the horrors; I seen some

on 'em already. I seen old Flint in the corner there, behind you; as

plain as print, I seen him; and if I get the horrors, I'm a man that

has lived rough, and I'll raise Cain. Your doctor hisself said one glass

wouldn't hurt me. I'll give you a golden guinea for a noggin, Jim.”

He was growing more and more excited, and this alarmed me for my father,

who was very low that day and needed quiet; besides, I was reassured by

the doctor's words, now quoted to me, and rather offended by the offer

of a bribe.

“I want none of your money,” said I, “but what you owe my father. I'll

get you one glass, and no more.”

When I brought it to him, he seized it greedily and drank it out.

“Aye, aye,” said he, “that's some better, sure enough. And now, matey,

did that doctor say how long I was to lie here in this old berth?”

“A week at least,” said I.

“Thunder!” he cried. “A week! I can't do that; they'd have the black

spot on me by then. The lubbers is going about to get the wind of me

this blessed moment; lubbers as couldn't keep what they got, and want to

nail what is another's. Is that seamanly behaviour, now, I want to know?

But I'm a saving soul. I never wasted good money of mine, nor lost it

neither; and I'll trick 'em again. I'm not afraid on 'em. I'll shake out

another reef, matey, and daddle 'em again.”

As he was thus speaking, he had risen from bed with great difficulty,

holding to my shoulder with a grip that almost made me cry out, and

moving his legs like so much dead weight. His words, spirited as they

were in meaning, contrasted sadly with the weakness of the voice in

which they were uttered. He paused when he had got into a sitting

position on the edge.

“That doctor's done me,” he murmured. “My ears is singing. Lay me back.”

Before I could do much to help him he had fallen back again to his

former place, where he lay for a while silent.

“Jim,” he said at length, “you saw that seafaring man today?”

“Black Dog?” I asked.

“Ah! Black Dog,” says he. “HE'S a bad un; but there's worse that put him

on. Now, if I can't get away nohow, and they tip me the black spot, mind

you, it's my old sea-chest they're after; you get on a horse--you can,

can't you? Well, then, you get on a horse, and go to--well, yes,

I will!--to that eternal doctor swab, and tell him to pipe all

hands--magistrates and sich--and he'll lay 'em aboard at the Admiral

Benbow--all old Flint's crew, man and boy, all on 'em that's left. I was

first mate, I was, old Flint's first mate, and I'm the on'y one as knows

the place. He gave it me at Savannah, when he lay a-dying, like as if I

was to now, you see. But you won't peach unless they get the black spot

on me, or unless you see that Black Dog again or a seafaring man with

one leg, Jim--him above all.”

“But what is the black spot, captain?” I asked.

“That's a summons, mate. I'll tell you if they get that. But you keep

your weather-eye open, Jim, and I'll share with you equals, upon my

honour.”

He wandered a little longer, his voice growing weaker; but soon after I

had given him his medicine, which he took like a child, with the remark,

“If ever a seaman wanted drugs, it's me,” he fell at last into a heavy,

swoon-like sleep, in which I left him. What I should have done had all

gone well I do not know. Probably I should have told the whole story to

the doctor, for I was in mortal fear lest the captain should repent of

his confessions and make an end of me. But as things fell out, my poor

father died quite suddenly that evening, which put all other matters

on one side. Our natural distress, the visits of the neighbours, the

arranging of the funeral, and all the work of the inn to be carried on

in the meanwhile kept me so busy that I had scarcely time to think of

the captain, far less to be afraid of him.

He got downstairs next morning, to be sure, and had his meals as usual,

though he ate little and had more, I am afraid, than his usual supply of

rum, for he helped himself out of the bar, scowling and blowing through

his nose, and no one dared to cross him. On the night before the funeral

he was as drunk as ever; and it was shocking, in that house of mourning,

to hear him singing away at his ugly old sea-song; but weak as he was,

we were all in the fear of death for him, and the doctor was suddenly

taken up with a case many miles away and was never near the house after

my father's death. I have said the captain was weak, and indeed he

seemed rather to grow weaker than regain his strength. He clambered up

and down stairs, and went from the parlour to the bar and back again,

and sometimes put his nose out of doors to smell the sea, holding on to

the walls as he went for support and breathing hard and fast like a man

on a steep mountain. He never particularly addressed me, and it is my

belief he had as good as forgotten his confidences; but his temper was

more flighty, and allowing for his bodily weakness, more violent than

ever. He had an alarming way now when he was drunk of drawing his

cutlass and laying it bare before him on the table. But with all that,

he minded people less and seemed shut up in his own thoughts and rather

wandering. Once, for instance, to our extreme wonder, he piped up to a

different air, a kind of country love-song that he must have learned in

his youth before he had begun to follow the sea.

So things passed until, the day after the funeral, and about three

o'clock of a bitter, foggy, frosty afternoon, I was standing at the door

for a moment, full of sad thoughts about my father, when I saw someone

drawing slowly near along the road. He was plainly blind, for he tapped

before him with a stick and wore a great green shade over his eyes and

nose; and he was hunched, as if with age or weakness, and wore a huge

old tattered sea-cloak with a hood that made him appear positively

deformed. I never saw in my life a more dreadful-looking figure.

He stopped a little from the inn, and raising his voice in an odd

sing-song, addressed the air in front of him, “Will any kind friend

inform a poor blind man, who has lost the precious sight of his eyes in

the gracious defence of his native country, England--and God bless King

George!--where or in what part of this country he may now be?”

“You are at the Admiral Benbow, Black Hill Cove, my good man,” said I.

“I hear a voice,” said he, “a young voice. Will you give me your hand,

my kind young friend, and lead me in?”

I held out my hand, and the horrible, soft-spoken, eyeless creature

gripped it in a moment like a vise. I was so much startled that I

struggled to withdraw, but the blind man pulled me close up to him with

a single action of his arm.

“Now, boy,” he said, “take me in to the captain.”

“Sir,” said I, “upon my word I dare not.”

“Oh,” he sneered, “that's it! Take me in straight or I'll break your

arm.”

And he gave it, as he spoke, a wrench that made me cry out.

“Sir,” said I, “it is for yourself I mean. The captain is not what he

used to be. He sits with a drawn cutlass. Another gentleman--”

“Come, now, march,” interrupted he; and I never heard a voice so cruel,

and cold, and ugly as that blind man's. It cowed me more than the pain,

and I began to obey him at once, walking straight in at the door and

towards the parlour, where our sick old buccaneer was sitting, dazed

with rum. The blind man clung close to me, holding me in one iron fist

and leaning almost more of his weight on me than I could carry. “Lead me

straight up to him, and when I'm in view, cry out, 'Here's a friend

for you, Bill.' If you don't, I'll do this,” and with that he gave me a

twitch that I thought would have made me faint. Between this and that, I

was so utterly terrified of the blind beggar that I forgot my terror of

the captain, and as I opened the parlour door, cried out the words he

had ordered in a trembling voice.

The poor captain raised his eyes, and at one look the rum went out of

him and left him staring sober. The expression of his face was not so

much of terror as of mortal sickness. He made a movement to rise, but I

do not believe he had enough force left in his body.

“Now, Bill, sit where you are,” said the beggar. “If I can't see, I can

hear a finger stirring. Business is business. Hold out your left hand.

Boy, take his left hand by the wrist and bring it near to my right.”

We both obeyed him to the letter, and I saw him pass something from the

hollow of the hand that held his stick into the palm of the captain's,

which closed upon it instantly.

“And now that's done,” said the blind man; and at the words he suddenly

left hold of me, and with incredible accuracy and nimbleness,

skipped out of the parlour and into the road, where, as I still stood

motionless, I could hear his stick go tap-tap-tapping into the distance.

It was some time before either I or the captain seemed to gather our

senses, but at length, and about at the same moment, I released his

wrist, which I was still holding, and he drew in his hand and looked

sharply into the palm.

“Ten o'clock!” he cried. “Six hours. We'll do them yet,” and he sprang

to his feet.

Even as he did so, he reeled, put his hand to his throat, stood swaying

for a moment, and then, with a peculiar sound, fell from his whole

height face foremost to the floor.

I ran to him at once, calling to my mother. But haste was all in vain.

The captain had been struck dead by thundering apoplexy. It is a curious

thing to understand, for I had certainly never liked the man, though of

late I had begun to pity him, but as soon as I saw that he was dead, I

burst into a flood of tears. It was the second death I had known, and

the sorrow of the first was still fresh in my heart.

4

The Sea-chest

I LOST no time, of course, in telling my mother all that I knew, and

perhaps should have told her long before, and we saw ourselves at once

in a difficult and dangerous position. Some of the man's money--if

he had any--was certainly due to us, but it was not likely that our

captain's shipmates, above all the two specimens seen by me, Black

Dog and the blind beggar, would be inclined to give up their booty in

payment of the dead man's debts. The captain's order to mount at

once and ride for Doctor Livesey would have left my mother alone

and unprotected, which was not to be thought of. Indeed, it seemed

impossible for either of us to remain much longer in the house; the fall

of coals in the kitchen grate, the very ticking of the clock, filled

us with alarms. The neighbourhood, to our ears, seemed haunted by

approaching footsteps; and what between the dead body of the captain

on the parlour floor and the thought of that detestable blind beggar

hovering near at hand and ready to return, there were moments when, as

the saying goes, I jumped in my skin for terror. Something must speedily

be resolved upon, and it occurred to us at last to go forth together

and seek help in the neighbouring hamlet. No sooner said than done.

Bare-headed as we were, we ran out at once in the gathering evening and

the frosty fog.

The hamlet lay not many hundred yards away, though out of view, on the

other side of the next cove; and what greatly encouraged me, it was

in an opposite direction from that whence the blind man had made his

appearance and whither he had presumably returned. We were not many

minutes on the road, though we sometimes stopped to lay hold of each

other and hearken. But there was no unusual sound--nothing but the low

wash of the ripple and the croaking of the inmates of the wood.

It was already candle-light when we reached the hamlet, and I shall

never forget how much I was cheered to see the yellow shine in doors and

windows; but that, as it proved, was the best of the help we were likely

to get in that quarter. For--you would have thought men would have been

ashamed of themselves--no soul would consent to return with us to the

Admiral Benbow. The more we told of our troubles, the more--man, woman,

and child--they clung to the shelter of their houses. The name of

Captain Flint, though it was strange to me, was well enough known to

some there and carried a great weight of terror. Some of the men who

had been to field-work on the far side of the Admiral Benbow remembered,

besides, to have seen several strangers on the road, and taking them to

be smugglers, to have bolted away; and one at least had seen a little

lugger in what we called Kitt's Hole. For that matter, anyone who was a

comrade of the captain's was enough to frighten them to death. And the

short and the long of the matter was, that while we could get several

who were willing enough to ride to Dr. Livesey's, which lay in another

direction, not one would help us to defend the inn.

They say cowardice is infectious; but then argument is, on the other

hand, a great emboldener; and so when each had said his say, my mother

made them a speech. She would not, she declared, lose money that

belonged to her fatherless boy; “If none of the rest of you dare,”

she said, “Jim and I dare. Back we will go, the way we came, and small

thanks to you big, hulking, chicken-hearted men. We'll have that chest

open, if we die for it. And I'll thank you for that bag, Mrs. Crossley,

to bring back our lawful money in.”

Of course I said I would go with my mother, and of course they all cried

out at our foolhardiness, but even then not a man would go along with

us. All they would do was to give me a loaded pistol lest we were

attacked, and to promise to have horses ready saddled in case we were

pursued on our return, while one lad was to ride forward to the doctor's

in search of armed assistance.

My heart was beating finely when we two set forth in the cold night upon

this dangerous venture. A full moon was beginning to rise and peered

redly through the upper edges of the fog, and this increased our haste,

for it was plain, before we came forth again, that all would be as

bright as day, and our departure exposed to the eyes of any watchers.

We slipped along the hedges, noiseless and swift, nor did we see or hear

anything to increase our terrors, till, to our relief, the door of the

Admiral Benbow had closed behind us.

I slipped the bolt at once, and we stood and panted for a moment in the

dark, alone in the house with the dead captain's body. Then my mother

got a candle in the bar, and holding each other's hands, we advanced

into the parlour. He lay as we had left him, on his back, with his eyes

open and one arm stretched out.

“Draw down the blind, Jim,” whispered my mother; “they might come and

watch outside. And now,” said she when I had done so, “we have to get

the key off THAT; and who's to touch it, I should like to know!” and she

gave a kind of sob as she said the words.

I went down on my knees at once. On the floor close to his hand there

was a little round of paper, blackened on the one side. I could not

doubt that this was the BLACK SPOT; and taking it up, I found written

on the other side, in a very good, clear hand, this short message: “You

have till ten tonight.”

“He had till ten, Mother,” said I; and just as I said it, our old clock

began striking. This sudden noise startled us shockingly; but the news

was good, for it was only six.

“Now, Jim,” she said, “that key.”

I felt in his pockets, one after another. A few small coins, a thimble,

and some thread and big needles, a piece of pigtail tobacco bitten away

at the end, his gully with the crooked handle, a pocket compass, and a

tinder box were all that they contained, and I began to despair.

“Perhaps it's round his neck,” suggested my mother.

Overcoming a strong repugnance, I tore open his shirt at the neck, and

there, sure enough, hanging to a bit of tarry string, which I cut with

his own gully, we found the key. At this triumph we were filled with

hope and hurried upstairs without delay to the little room where he had

slept so long and where his box had stood since the day of his arrival.

It was like any other seaman's chest on the outside, the initial “B”

burned on the top of it with a hot iron, and the corners somewhat

smashed and broken as by long, rough usage.

“Give me the key,” said my mother; and though the lock was very stiff,

she had turned it and thrown back the lid in a twinkling.

A strong smell of tobacco and tar rose from the interior, but nothing

was to be seen on the top except a suit of very good clothes, carefully

brushed and folded. They had never been worn, my mother said. Under

that, the miscellany began--a quadrant, a tin canikin, several sticks of

tobacco, two brace of very handsome pistols, a piece of bar silver, an

old Spanish watch and some other trinkets of little value and mostly of

foreign make, a pair of compasses mounted with brass, and five or six

curious West Indian shells. I have often wondered since why he should

have carried about these shells with him in his wandering, guilty, and

hunted life.

In the meantime, we had found nothing of any value but the silver and

the trinkets, and neither of these were in our way. Underneath there

was an old boat-cloak, whitened with sea-salt on many a harbour-bar. My

mother pulled it up with impatience, and there lay before us, the last

things in the chest, a bundle tied up in oilcloth, and looking like

papers, and a canvas bag that gave forth, at a touch, the jingle of

gold.

“I'll show these rogues that I'm an honest woman,” said my mother. “I'll

have my dues, and not a farthing over. Hold Mrs. Crossley's bag.” And

she began to count over the amount of the captain's score from the

sailor's bag into the one that I was holding.

It was a long, difficult business, for the coins were of all countries

and sizes--doubloons, and louis d'ors, and guineas, and pieces of eight,

and I know not what besides, all shaken together at random. The guineas,

too, were about the scarcest, and it was with these only that my mother

knew how to make her count.

When we were about half-way through, I suddenly put my hand upon her

arm, for I had heard in the silent frosty air a sound that brought my

heart into my mouth--the tap-tapping of the blind man's stick upon the

frozen road. It drew nearer and nearer, while we sat holding our breath.

Then it struck sharp on the inn door, and then we could hear the handle

being turned and the bolt rattling as the wretched being tried to enter;

and then there was a long time of silence both within and without.

At last the tapping recommenced, and, to our indescribable joy and

gratitude, died slowly away again until it ceased to be heard.

“Mother,” said I, “take the whole and let's be going,” for I was sure

the bolted door must have seemed suspicious and would bring the whole

hornet's nest about our ears, though how thankful I was that I had

bolted it, none could tell who had never met that terrible blind man.

But my mother, frightened as she was, would not consent to take a

fraction more than was due to her and was obstinately unwilling to be

content with less. It was not yet seven, she said, by a long way; she

knew her rights and she would have them; and she was still arguing with

me when a little low whistle sounded a good way off upon the hill. That

was enough, and more than enough, for both of us.

“I'll take what I have,” she said, jumping to her feet.

“And I'll take this to square the count,” said I, picking up the oilskin

packet.

Next moment we were both groping downstairs, leaving the candle by

the empty chest; and the next we had opened the door and were in full

retreat. We had not started a moment too soon. The fog was rapidly

dispersing; already the moon shone quite clear on the high ground on

either side; and it was only in the exact bottom of the dell and round

the tavern door that a thin veil still hung unbroken to conceal the

first steps of our escape. Far less than half-way to the hamlet, very

little beyond the bottom of the hill, we must come forth into the

moonlight. Nor was this all, for the sound of several footsteps running

came already to our ears, and as we looked back in their direction, a

light tossing to and fro and still rapidly advancing showed that one of

the newcomers carried a lantern.

“My dear,” said my mother suddenly, “take the money and run on. I am

going to faint.”

This was certainly the end for both of us, I thought. How I cursed the

cowardice of the neighbours; how I blamed my poor mother for her honesty

and her greed, for her past foolhardiness and present weakness! We were

just at the little bridge, by good fortune; and I helped her, tottering

as she was, to the edge of the bank, where, sure enough, she gave a sigh

and fell on my shoulder. I do not know how I found the strength to do it

at all, and I am afraid it was roughly done, but I managed to drag her

down the bank and a little way under the arch. Farther I could not move

her, for the bridge was too low to let me do more than crawl below it.

So there we had to stay--my mother almost entirely exposed and both of

us within earshot of the inn.

5

The Last of the Blind Man

MY curiosity, in a sense, was stronger than my fear, for I could not

remain where I was, but crept back to the bank again, whence, sheltering

my head behind a bush of broom, I might command the road before our

door. I was scarcely in position ere my enemies began to arrive, seven

or eight of them, running hard, their feet beating out of time along

the road and the man with the lantern some paces in front. Three men ran

together, hand in hand; and I made out, even through the mist, that the

middle man of this trio was the blind beggar. The next moment his voice

showed me that I was right.

“Down with the door!” he cried.

“Aye, aye, sir!” answered two or three; and a rush was made upon the

Admiral Benbow, the lantern-bearer following; and then I could see

them pause, and hear speeches passed in a lower key, as if they were

surprised to find the door open. But the pause was brief, for the blind

man again issued his commands. His voice sounded louder and higher, as

if he were afire with eagerness and rage.

“In, in, in!” he shouted, and cursed them for their delay.

Four or five of them obeyed at once, two remaining on the road with the

formidable beggar. There was a pause, then a cry of surprise, and then a

voice shouting from the house, “Bill's dead.”

But the blind man swore at them again for their delay.

“Search him, some of you shirking lubbers, and the rest of you aloft and

get the chest,” he cried.

I could hear their feet rattling up our old stairs, so that the

house must have shook with it. Promptly afterwards, fresh sounds of

astonishment arose; the window of the captain's room was thrown open

with a slam and a jingle of broken glass, and a man leaned out into the

moonlight, head and shoulders, and addressed the blind beggar on the

road below him.

“Pew,” he cried, “they've been before us. Someone's turned the chest out

alow and aloft.”

“Is it there?” roared Pew.

“The money's there.”

The blind man cursed the money.

“Flint's fist, I mean,” he cried.

“We don't see it here nohow,” returned the man.

“Here, you below there, is it on Bill?” cried the blind man again.

At that another fellow, probably him who had remained below to search

the captain's body, came to the door of the inn. “Bill's been overhauled

a'ready,” said he; “nothin' left.”

“It's these people of the inn--it's that boy. I wish I had put his eyes

out!” cried the blind man, Pew. “There were no time ago--they had the

door bolted when I tried it. Scatter, lads, and find 'em.”

“Sure enough, they left their glim here,” said the fellow from the

window.

“Scatter and find 'em! Rout the house out!” reiterated Pew, striking

with his stick upon the road.

Then there followed a great to-do through all our old inn, heavy feet

pounding to and fro, furniture thrown over, doors kicked in, until the

very rocks re-echoed and the men came out again, one after another, on

the road and declared that we were nowhere to be found. And just

the same whistle that had alarmed my mother and myself over the dead

captain's money was once more clearly audible through the night,

but this time twice repeated. I had thought it to be the blind man's

trumpet, so to speak, summoning his crew to the assault, but I now found

that it was a signal from the hillside towards the hamlet, and from its

effect upon the buccaneers, a signal to warn them of approaching danger.

“There's Dirk again,” said one. “Twice! We'll have to budge, mates.”

“Budge, you skulk!” cried Pew. “Dirk was a fool and a coward from the

first--you wouldn't mind him. They must be close by; they can't be far;

you have your hands on it. Scatter and look for them, dogs! Oh, shiver

my soul,” he cried, “if I had eyes!”

This appeal seemed to produce some effect, for two of the fellows began

to look here and there among the lumber, but half-heartedly, I thought,

and with half an eye to their own danger all the time, while the rest

stood irresolute on the road.

“You have your hands on thousands, you fools, and you hang a leg! You'd

be as rich as kings if you could find it, and you know it's here, and

you stand there skulking. There wasn't one of you dared face Bill, and

I did it--a blind man! And I'm to lose my chance for you! I'm to be a

poor, crawling beggar, sponging for rum, when I might be rolling in a

coach! If you had the pluck of a weevil in a biscuit you would catch

them still.”

“Hang it, Pew, we've got the doubloons!” grumbled one.

“They might have hid the blessed thing,” said another. “Take the

Georges, Pew, and don't stand here squalling.”

Squalling was the word for it; Pew's anger rose so high at these

objections till at last, his passion completely taking the upper hand,

he struck at them right and left in his blindness and his stick sounded

heavily on more than one.

These, in their turn, cursed back at the blind miscreant, threatened him

in horrid terms, and tried in vain to catch the stick and wrest it from

his grasp.

This quarrel was the saving of us, for while it was still raging,

another sound came from the top of the hill on the side of the

hamlet--the tramp of horses galloping. Almost at the same time a

pistol-shot, flash and report, came from the hedge side. And that was

plainly the last signal of danger, for the buccaneers turned at once

and ran, separating in every direction, one seaward along the cove, one

slant across the hill, and so on, so that in half a minute not a sign of

them remained but Pew. Him they had deserted, whether in sheer panic

or out of revenge for his ill words and blows I know not; but there he

remained behind, tapping up and down the road in a frenzy, and groping

and calling for his comrades. Finally he took a wrong turn and ran a few

steps past me, towards the hamlet, crying, “Johnny, Black Dog, Dirk,”

and other names, “you won't leave old Pew, mates--not old Pew!”

Just then the noise of horses topped the rise, and four or five riders

came in sight in the moonlight and swept at full gallop down the slope.

At this Pew saw his error, turned with a scream, and ran straight for

the ditch, into which he rolled. But he was on his feet again in a

second and made another dash, now utterly bewildered, right under the

nearest of the coming horses.

The rider tried to save him, but in vain. Down went Pew with a cry that

rang high into the night; and the four hoofs trampled and spurned him

and passed by. He fell on his side, then gently collapsed upon his face

and moved no more.

I leaped to my feet and hailed the riders. They were pulling up, at any

rate, horrified at the accident; and I soon saw what they were. One,

tailing out behind the rest, was a lad that had gone from the hamlet to

Dr. Livesey's; the rest were revenue officers, whom he had met by the

way, and with whom he had had the intelligence to return at once. Some

news of the lugger in Kitt's Hole had found its way to Supervisor Dance

and set him forth that night in our direction, and to that circumstance

my mother and I owed our preservation from death.

Pew was dead, stone dead. As for my mother, when we had carried her up

to the hamlet, a little cold water and salts and that soon brought her

back again, and she was none the worse for her terror, though she still

continued to deplore the balance of the money. In the meantime the

supervisor rode on, as fast as he could, to Kitt's Hole; but his men

had to dismount and grope down the dingle, leading, and sometimes

supporting, their horses, and in continual fear of ambushes; so it was

no great matter for surprise that when they got down to the Hole the

lugger was already under way, though still close in. He hailed her. A

voice replied, telling him to keep out of the moonlight or he would get

some lead in him, and at the same time a bullet whistled close by his

arm. Soon after, the lugger doubled the point and disappeared. Mr. Dance

stood there, as he said, “like a fish out of water,” and all he could do

was to dispatch a man to B---- to warn the cutter. “And that,” said he,

“is just about as good as nothing. They've got off clean, and there's

an end. Only,” he added, “I'm glad I trod on Master Pew's corns,” for by

this time he had heard my story.

I went back with him to the Admiral Benbow, and you cannot imagine a

house in such a state of smash; the very clock had been thrown down

by these fellows in their furious hunt after my mother and myself;

and though nothing had actually been taken away except the captain's

money-bag and a little silver from the till, I could see at once that we

were ruined. Mr. Dance could make nothing of the scene.

“They got the money, you say? Well, then, Hawkins, what in fortune were

they after? More money, I suppose?”

“No, sir; not money, I think,” replied I. “In fact, sir, I believe I

have the thing in my breast pocket; and to tell you the truth, I should

like to get it put in safety.”

“To be sure, boy; quite right,” said he. “I'll take it, if you like.”

“I thought perhaps Dr. Livesey--” I began.

“Perfectly right,” he interrupted very cheerily, “perfectly right--a

gentleman and a magistrate. And, now I come to think of it, I might as

well ride round there myself and report to him or squire. Master Pew's

dead, when all's done; not that I regret it, but he's dead, you see, and

people will make it out against an officer of his Majesty's revenue,

if make it out they can. Now, I'll tell you, Hawkins, if you like, I'll

take you along.”

I thanked him heartily for the offer, and we walked back to the hamlet

where the horses were. By the time I had told mother of my purpose they

were all in the saddle.

“Dogger,” said Mr. Dance, “you have a good horse; take up this lad

behind you.”

As soon as I was mounted, holding on to Dogger's belt, the supervisor

gave the word, and the party struck out at a bouncing trot on the road

to Dr. Livesey's house.

6

The Captain's Papers

WE rode hard all the way till we drew up before Dr. Livesey's door. The

house was all dark to the front.

Mr. Dance told me to jump down and knock, and Dogger gave me a stirrup

to descend by. The door was opened almost at once by the maid.

“Is Dr. Livesey in?” I asked.

No, she said, he had come home in the afternoon but had gone up to the

hall to dine and pass the evening with the squire.

“So there we go, boys,” said Mr. Dance.

This time, as the distance was short, I did not mount, but ran with

Dogger's stirrup-leather to the lodge gates and up the long, leafless,

moonlit avenue to where the white line of the hall buildings looked on

either hand on great old gardens. Here Mr. Dance dismounted, and taking

me along with him, was admitted at a word into the house.

The servant led us down a matted passage and showed us at the end into a

great library, all lined with bookcases and busts upon the top of them,

where the squire and Dr. Livesey sat, pipe in hand, on either side of a

bright fire.

I had never seen the squire so near at hand. He was a tall man, over six

feet high, and broad in proportion, and he had a bluff, rough-and-ready

face, all roughened and reddened and lined in his long travels. His

eyebrows were very black, and moved readily, and this gave him a look of

some temper, not bad, you would say, but quick and high.

“Come in, Mr. Dance,” says he, very stately and condescending.

“Good evening, Dance,” says the doctor with a nod. “And good evening to

you, friend Jim. What good wind brings you here?”

The supervisor stood up straight and stiff and told his story like a

lesson; and you should have seen how the two gentlemen leaned forward

and looked at each other, and forgot to smoke in their surprise and

interest. When they heard how my mother went back to the inn, Dr.

Livesey fairly slapped his thigh, and the squire cried “Bravo!” and

broke his long pipe against the grate. Long before it was done, Mr.

Trelawney (that, you will remember, was the squire's name) had got up

from his seat and was striding about the room, and the doctor, as if to

hear the better, had taken off his powdered wig and sat there looking

very strange indeed with his own close-cropped black poll.

At last Mr. Dance finished the story.

“Mr. Dance,” said the squire, “you are a very noble fellow. And as for

riding down that black, atrocious miscreant, I regard it as an act of

virtue, sir, like stamping on a cockroach. This lad Hawkins is a trump,

I perceive. Hawkins, will you ring that bell? Mr. Dance must have some

ale.”

“And so, Jim,” said the doctor, “you have the thing that they were

after, have you?”

“Here it is, sir,” said I, and gave him the oilskin packet.

The doctor looked it all over, as if his fingers were itching to open

it; but instead of doing that, he put it quietly in the pocket of his

coat.

“Squire,” said he, “when Dance has had his ale he must, of course, be

off on his Majesty's service; but I mean to keep Jim Hawkins here to

sleep at my house, and with your permission, I propose we should have up

the cold pie and let him sup.”

“As you will, Livesey,” said the squire; “Hawkins has earned better than

cold pie.”

So a big pigeon pie was brought in and put on a sidetable, and I made

a hearty supper, for I was as hungry as a hawk, while Mr. Dance was

further complimented and at last dismissed.

“And now, squire,” said the doctor.

“And now, Livesey,” said the squire in the same breath.

“One at a time, one at a time,” laughed Dr. Livesey. “You have heard of

this Flint, I suppose?”

“Heard of him!” cried the squire. “Heard of him, you say! He was the

bloodthirstiest buccaneer that sailed. Blackbeard was a child to Flint.

The Spaniards were so prodigiously afraid of him that, I tell you, sir,

I was sometimes proud he was an Englishman. I've seen his top-sails with

these eyes, off Trinidad, and the cowardly son of a rum-puncheon that I

sailed with put back--put back, sir, into Port of Spain.”

“Well, I've heard of him myself, in England,” said the doctor. “But the

point is, had he money?”

“Money!” cried the squire. “Have you heard the story? What were these

villains after but money? What do they care for but money? For what

would they risk their rascal carcasses but money?”

“That we shall soon know,” replied the doctor. “But you are so

confoundedly hot-headed and exclamatory that I cannot get a word in.

What I want to know is this: Supposing that I have here in my pocket

some clue to where Flint buried his treasure, will that treasure amount

to much?”

“Amount, sir!” cried the squire. “It will amount to this: If we have the

clue you talk about, I fit out a ship in Bristol dock, and take you and

Hawkins here along, and I'll have that treasure if I search a year.”

“Very well,” said the doctor. “Now, then, if Jim is agreeable, we'll

open the packet”; and he laid it before him on the table.

The bundle was sewn together, and the doctor had to get out his

instrument case and cut the stitches with his medical scissors. It

contained two things--a book and a sealed paper.

“First of all we'll try the book,” observed the doctor.

The squire and I were both peering over his shoulder as he opened

it, for Dr. Livesey had kindly motioned me to come round from the

side-table, where I had been eating, to enjoy the sport of the search.

On the first page there were only some scraps of writing, such as a man

with a pen in his hand might make for idleness or practice. One was the

same as the tattoo mark, “Billy Bones his fancy”; then there was “Mr. W.

Bones, mate,” “No more rum,” “Off Palm Key he got itt,” and some other

snatches, mostly single words and unintelligible. I could not help

wondering who it was that had “got itt,” and what “itt” was that he got.

A knife in his back as like as not.

“Not much instruction there,” said Dr. Livesey as he passed on.

The next ten or twelve pages were filled with a curious series of

entries. There was a date at one end of the line and at the other a

sum of money, as in common account-books, but instead of explanatory

writing, only a varying number of crosses between the two. On the 12th

of June, 1745, for instance, a sum of seventy pounds had plainly become

due to someone, and there was nothing but six crosses to explain the

cause. In a few cases, to be sure, the name of a place would be added,

as “Offe Caraccas,” or a mere entry of latitude and longitude, as “62o

17' 20”, 19o 2' 40”.”

The record lasted over nearly twenty years, the amount of the separate

entries growing larger as time went on, and at the end a grand total

had been made out after five or six wrong additions, and these words

appended, “Bones, his pile.”

“I can't make head or tail of this,” said Dr. Livesey.

“The thing is as clear as noonday,” cried the squire. “This is the

black-hearted hound's account-book. These crosses stand for the names of

ships or towns that they sank or plundered. The sums are the scoundrel's

share, and where he feared an ambiguity, you see he added something

clearer. 'Offe Caraccas,' now; you see, here was some unhappy vessel

boarded off that coast. God help the poor souls that manned her--coral

long ago.”

“Right!” said the doctor. “See what it is to be a traveller. Right! And

the amounts increase, you see, as he rose in rank.”

There was little else in the volume but a few bearings of places noted

in the blank leaves towards the end and a table for reducing French,

English, and Spanish moneys to a common value.

“Thrifty man!” cried the doctor. “He wasn't the one to be cheated.”

“And now,” said the squire, “for the other.”

The paper had been sealed in several places with a thimble by way of

seal; the very thimble, perhaps, that I had found in the captain's

pocket. The doctor opened the seals with great care, and there fell out

the map of an island, with latitude and longitude, soundings, names of

hills and bays and inlets, and every particular that would be needed

to bring a ship to a safe anchorage upon its shores. It was about nine

miles long and five across, shaped, you might say, like a fat dragon

standing up, and had two fine land-locked harbours, and a hill in the

centre part marked “The Spy-glass.” There were several additions of a

later date, but above all, three crosses of red ink--two on the north

part of the island, one in the southwest--and beside this last, in

the same red ink, and in a small, neat hand, very different from the

captain's tottery characters, these words: “Bulk of treasure here.”

Over on the back the same hand had written this further information:

Tall tree, Spy-glass shoulder, bearing a point to

the N. of N.N.E.

Skeleton Island E.S.E. and by E.

Ten feet.

The bar silver is in the north cache; you can find

it by the trend of the east hummock, ten fathoms

south of the black crag with the face on it.

The arms are easy found, in the sand-hill, N.

point of north inlet cape, bearing E. and a

quarter N.

J.F.

That was all; but brief as it was, and to me incomprehensible, it filled

the squire and Dr. Livesey with delight.

“Livesey,” said the squire, “you will give up this wretched practice

at once. Tomorrow I start for Bristol. In three weeks' time--three

weeks!--two weeks--ten days--we'll have the best ship, sir, and the

choicest crew in England. Hawkins shall come as cabin-boy. You'll make

a famous cabin-boy, Hawkins. You, Livesey, are ship's doctor; I am

admiral. We'll take Redruth, Joyce, and Hunter. We'll have favourable

winds, a quick passage, and not the least difficulty in finding the

spot, and money to eat, to roll in, to play duck and drake with ever

after.”

“Trelawney,” said the doctor, “I'll go with you; and I'll go bail for

it, so will Jim, and be a credit to the undertaking. There's only one

man I'm afraid of.”

“And who's that?” cried the squire. “Name the dog, sir!”

“You,” replied the doctor; “for you cannot hold your tongue. We are not

the only men who know of this paper. These fellows who attacked the

inn tonight--bold, desperate blades, for sure--and the rest who stayed

aboard that lugger, and more, I dare say, not far off, are, one and all,

through thick and thin, bound that they'll get that money. We must none

of us go alone till we get to sea. Jim and I shall stick together in the

meanwhile; you'll take Joyce and Hunter when you ride to Bristol, and

from first to last, not one of us must breathe a word of what we've

found.”

“Livesey,” returned the squire, “you are always in the right of it. I'll

be as silent as the grave.”

PART TWO--The Sea-cook

7

I Go to Bristol

IT was longer than the squire imagined ere we were ready for the sea,

and none of our first plans--not even Dr. Livesey's, of keeping me

beside him--could be carried out as we intended. The doctor had to go

to London for a physician to take charge of his practice; the squire was

hard at work at Bristol; and I lived on at the hall under the charge of

old Redruth, the gamekeeper, almost a prisoner, but full of sea-dreams

and the most charming anticipations of strange islands and adventures.

I brooded by the hour together over the map, all the details of which

I well remembered. Sitting by the fire in the housekeeper's room, I

approached that island in my fancy from every possible direction; I

explored every acre of its surface; I climbed a thousand times to that

tall hill they call the Spy-glass, and from the top enjoyed the most

wonderful and changing prospects. Sometimes the isle was thick with

savages, with whom we fought, sometimes full of dangerous animals that

hunted us, but in all my fancies nothing occurred to me so strange and

tragic as our actual adventures.

So the weeks passed on, till one fine day there came a letter addressed

to Dr. Livesey, with this addition, “To be opened, in the case of his

absence, by Tom Redruth or young Hawkins.” Obeying this order, we

found, or rather I found--for the gamekeeper was a poor hand at reading

anything but print--the following important news:

Old Anchor Inn, Bristol, March 1, 17--

Dear Livesey--As I do not know whether you

are at the hall or still in London, I send this in

double to both places.

The ship is bought and fitted. She lies at

anchor, ready for sea. You never imagined a

sweeter schooner--a child might sail her--two

hundred tons; name, HISPANIOLA.

I got her through my old friend, Blandly, who

has proved himself throughout the most surprising

trump. The admirable fellow literally slaved in

my interest, and so, I may say, did everyone in

Bristol, as soon as they got wind of the port we

sailed for--treasure, I mean.

“Redruth,” said I, interrupting the letter, “Dr. Livesey will not like

that. The squire has been talking, after all.”

“Well, who's a better right?” growled the gamekeeper. “A pretty rum go

if squire ain't to talk for Dr. Livesey, I should think.”

At that I gave up all attempts at commentary and read straight on:

Blandly himself found the HISPANIOLA, and

by the most admirable management got her for the

merest trifle. There is a class of men in Bristol

monstrously prejudiced against Blandly. They go

the length of declaring that this honest creature

would do anything for money, that the HISPANIOLA

belonged to him, and that he sold it me absurdly

high--the most transparent calumnies. None of them

dare, however, to deny the merits of the ship.

So far there was not a hitch. The

workpeople, to be sure--riggers and what not--were

most annoyingly slow; but time cured that. It was

the crew that troubled me.

I wished a round score of men--in case of

natives, buccaneers, or the odious French--and I

had the worry of the deuce itself to find so much

as half a dozen, till the most remarkable stroke

of fortune brought me the very man that I

required.

I was standing on the dock, when, by the

merest accident, I fell in talk with him. I found

he was an old sailor, kept a public-house, knew

all the seafaring men in Bristol, had lost his

health ashore, and wanted a good berth as cook to

get to sea again. He had hobbled down there that

morning, he said, to get a smell of the salt.

I was monstrously touched--so would you have

been--and, out of pure pity, I engaged him on the

spot to be ship's cook. Long John Silver, he is

called, and has lost a leg; but that I regarded as

a recommendation, since he lost it in his

country's service, under the immortal Hawke. He

has no pension, Livesey. Imagine the abominable

age we live in!

Well, sir, I thought I had only found a cook,

but it was a crew I had discovered. Between

Silver and myself we got together in a few days a

company of the toughest old salts imaginable--not

pretty to look at, but fellows, by their faces, of

the most indomitable spirit. I declare we could

fight a frigate.

Long John even got rid of two out of the six

or seven I had already engaged. He showed me in a

moment that they were just the sort of fresh-water

swabs we had to fear in an adventure of

importance.

I am in the most magnificent health and

spirits, eating like a bull, sleeping like a tree,

yet I shall not enjoy a moment till I hear my old

tarpaulins tramping round the capstan. Seaward,

ho! Hang the treasure! It's the glory of the sea

that has turned my head. So now, Livesey, come

post; do not lose an hour, if you respect me.

Let young Hawkins go at once to see his

mother, with Redruth for a guard; and then both

come full speed to Bristol.

John Trelawney

Postscript--I did not tell you that Blandly,

who, by the way, is to send a consort after us if

we don't turn up by the end of August, had found

an admirable fellow for sailing master--a stiff

man, which I regret, but in all other respects a

treasure. Long John Silver unearthed a very

competent man for a mate, a man named Arrow. I

have a boatswain who pipes, Livesey; so things

shall go man-o'-war fashion on board the good ship

HISPANIOLA.

I forgot to tell you that Silver is a man of

substance; I know of my own knowledge that he has

a banker's account, which has never been

overdrawn. He leaves his wife to manage the inn;

and as she is a woman of colour, a pair of old

bachelors like you and I may be excused for

guessing that it is the wife, quite as much as the

health, that sends him back to roving.

J. T.

P.P.S.--Hawkins may stay one night with his

mother.

J. T.

You can fancy the excitement into which that letter put me. I was half

beside myself with glee; and if ever I despised a man, it was old

Tom Redruth, who could do nothing but grumble and lament. Any of the

under-gamekeepers would gladly have changed places with him; but such

was not the squire's pleasure, and the squire's pleasure was like law

among them all. Nobody but old Redruth would have dared so much as even

to grumble.

The next morning he and I set out on foot for the Admiral Benbow, and

there I found my mother in good health and spirits. The captain, who had

so long been a cause of so much discomfort, was gone where the wicked

cease from troubling. The squire had had everything repaired, and the

public rooms and the sign repainted, and had added some furniture--above

all a beautiful armchair for mother in the bar. He had found her a boy

as an apprentice also so that she should not want help while I was gone.

It was on seeing that boy that I understood, for the first time, my

situation. I had thought up to that moment of the adventures before me,

not at all of the home that I was leaving; and now, at sight of this

clumsy stranger, who was to stay here in my place beside my mother, I

had my first attack of tears. I am afraid I led that boy a dog's life,

for as he was new to the work, I had a hundred opportunities of setting

him right and putting him down, and I was not slow to profit by them.

The night passed, and the next day, after dinner, Redruth and I were

afoot again and on the road. I said good-bye to Mother and the

cove where I had lived since I was born, and the dear old Admiral

Benbow--since he was repainted, no longer quite so dear. One of my last

thoughts was of the captain, who had so often strode along the beach

with his cocked hat, his sabre-cut cheek, and his old brass telescope.

Next moment we had turned the corner and my home was out of sight.

The mail picked us up about dusk at the Royal George on the heath. I was

wedged in between Redruth and a stout old gentleman, and in spite of the

swift motion and the cold night air, I must have dozed a great deal from

the very first, and then slept like a log up hill and down dale through

stage after stage, for when I was awakened at last it was by a punch

in the ribs, and I opened my eyes to find that we were standing still

before a large building in a city street and that the day had already

broken a long time.

“Where are we?” I asked.

“Bristol,” said Tom. “Get down.”

Mr. Trelawney had taken up his residence at an inn far down the docks to

superintend the work upon the schooner. Thither we had now to walk, and

our way, to my great delight, lay along the quays and beside the great

multitude of ships of all sizes and rigs and nations. In one, sailors

were singing at their work, in another there were men aloft, high over

my head, hanging to threads that seemed no thicker than a spider's.

Though I had lived by the shore all my life, I seemed never to have been

near the sea till then. The smell of tar and salt was something new.

I saw the most wonderful figureheads, that had all been far over the

ocean. I saw, besides, many old sailors, with rings in their ears, and

whiskers curled in ringlets, and tarry pigtails, and their swaggering,

clumsy sea-walk; and if I had seen as many kings or archbishops I could

not have been more delighted.

And I was going to sea myself, to sea in a schooner, with a piping

boatswain and pig-tailed singing seamen, to sea, bound for an unknown

island, and to seek for buried treasure!

While I was still in this delightful dream, we came suddenly in front

of a large inn and met Squire Trelawney, all dressed out like a

sea-officer, in stout blue cloth, coming out of the door with a smile on

his face and a capital imitation of a sailor's walk.

“Here you are,” he cried, “and the doctor came last night from London.

Bravo! The ship's company complete!”

“Oh, sir,” cried I, “when do we sail?”

“Sail!” says he. “We sail tomorrow!”

8

At the Sign of the Spy-glass

WHEN I had done breakfasting the squire gave me a note addressed to John

Silver, at the sign of the Spy-glass, and told me I should easily

find the place by following the line of the docks and keeping a bright

lookout for a little tavern with a large brass telescope for sign. I

set off, overjoyed at this opportunity to see some more of the ships and

seamen, and picked my way among a great crowd of people and carts and

bales, for the dock was now at its busiest, until I found the tavern in

question.

It was a bright enough little place of entertainment. The sign was

newly painted; the windows had neat red curtains; the floor was cleanly

sanded. There was a street on each side and an open door on both, which

made the large, low room pretty clear to see in, in spite of clouds of

tobacco smoke.

The customers were mostly seafaring men, and they talked so loudly that

I hung at the door, almost afraid to enter.

As I was waiting, a man came out of a side room, and at a glance I was

sure he must be Long John. His left leg was cut off close by the hip,

and under the left shoulder he carried a crutch, which he managed with

wonderful dexterity, hopping about upon it like a bird. He was very tall

and strong, with a face as big as a ham--plain and pale, but intelligent

and smiling. Indeed, he seemed in the most cheerful spirits, whistling

as he moved about among the tables, with a merry word or a slap on the

shoulder for the more favoured of his guests.

Now, to tell you the truth, from the very first mention of Long John in

Squire Trelawney's letter I had taken a fear in my mind that he might

prove to be the very one-legged sailor whom I had watched for so long at

the old Benbow. But one look at the man before me was enough. I had seen

the captain, and Black Dog, and the blind man, Pew, and I thought I knew

what a buccaneer was like--a very different creature, according to me,

from this clean and pleasant-tempered landlord.

I plucked up courage at once, crossed the threshold, and walked right up

to the man where he stood, propped on his crutch, talking to a customer.

“Mr. Silver, sir?” I asked, holding out the note.

“Yes, my lad,” said he; “such is my name, to be sure. And who may you

be?” And then as he saw the squire's letter, he seemed to me to give

something almost like a start.

“Oh!” said he, quite loud, and offering his hand. “I see. You are our

new cabin-boy; pleased I am to see you.”

And he took my hand in his large firm grasp.

Just then one of the customers at the far side rose suddenly and made

for the door. It was close by him, and he was out in the street in a

moment. But his hurry had attracted my notice, and I recognized him at

glance. It was the tallow-faced man, wanting two fingers, who had come

first to the Admiral Benbow.

“Oh,” I cried, “stop him! It's Black Dog!”

“I don't care two coppers who he is,” cried Silver. “But he hasn't paid

his score. Harry, run and catch him.”

One of the others who was nearest the door leaped up and started in

pursuit.

“If he were Admiral Hawke he shall pay his score,” cried Silver; and

then, relinquishing my hand, “Who did you say he was?” he asked. “Black

what?”

“Dog, sir,” said I. “Has Mr. Trelawney not told you of the buccaneers?

He was one of them.”

“So?” cried Silver. “In my house! Ben, run and help Harry. One of those

swabs, was he? Was that you drinking with him, Morgan? Step up here.”

The man whom he called Morgan--an old, grey-haired, mahogany-faced

sailor--came forward pretty sheepishly, rolling his quid.

“Now, Morgan,” said Long John very sternly, “you never clapped your eyes

on that Black--Black Dog before, did you, now?”

“Not I, sir,” said Morgan with a salute.

“You didn't know his name, did you?”

“No, sir.”

“By the powers, Tom Morgan, it's as good for you!” exclaimed the

landlord. “If you had been mixed up with the like of that, you would

never have put another foot in my house, you may lay to that. And what

was he saying to you?”

“I don't rightly know, sir,” answered Morgan.

“Do you call that a head on your shoulders, or a blessed dead-eye?”

cried Long John. “Don't rightly know, don't you! Perhaps you don't

happen to rightly know who you was speaking to, perhaps? Come, now, what

was he jawing--v'yages, cap'ns, ships? Pipe up! What was it?”

“We was a-talkin' of keel-hauling,” answered Morgan.

“Keel-hauling, was you? And a mighty suitable thing, too, and you may

lay to that. Get back to your place for a lubber, Tom.”

And then, as Morgan rolled back to his seat, Silver added to me in a

confidential whisper that was very flattering, as I thought, “He's

quite an honest man, Tom Morgan, on'y stupid. And now,” he ran on again,

aloud, “let's see--Black Dog? No, I don't know the name, not I. Yet I

kind of think I've--yes, I've seen the swab. He used to come here with a

blind beggar, he used.”

“That he did, you may be sure,” said I. “I knew that blind man too. His

name was Pew.”

“It was!” cried Silver, now quite excited. “Pew! That were his name for

certain. Ah, he looked a shark, he did! If we run down this Black Dog,

now, there'll be news for Cap'n Trelawney! Ben's a good runner; few

seamen run better than Ben. He should run him down, hand over hand, by

the powers! He talked o' keel-hauling, did he? I'LL keel-haul him!”

All the time he was jerking out these phrases he was stumping up and

down the tavern on his crutch, slapping tables with his hand, and giving

such a show of excitement as would have convinced an Old Bailey judge

or a Bow Street runner. My suspicions had been thoroughly reawakened on

finding Black Dog at the Spy-glass, and I watched the cook narrowly. But

he was too deep, and too ready, and too clever for me, and by the time

the two men had come back out of breath and confessed that they had lost

the track in a crowd, and been scolded like thieves, I would have gone

bail for the innocence of Long John Silver.

“See here, now, Hawkins,” said he, “here's a blessed hard thing on a

man like me, now, ain't it? There's Cap'n Trelawney--what's he to think?

Here I have this confounded son of a Dutchman sitting in my own house

drinking of my own rum! Here you comes and tells me of it plain; and

here I let him give us all the slip before my blessed deadlights! Now,

Hawkins, you do me justice with the cap'n. You're a lad, you are, but

you're as smart as paint. I see that when you first come in. Now, here

it is: What could I do, with this old timber I hobble on? When I was an

A B master mariner I'd have come up alongside of him, hand over hand,

and broached him to in a brace of old shakes, I would; but now--”

And then, all of a sudden, he stopped, and his jaw dropped as though he

had remembered something.

“The score!” he burst out. “Three goes o' rum! Why, shiver my timbers,

if I hadn't forgotten my score!”

And falling on a bench, he laughed until the tears ran down his cheeks.

I could not help joining, and we laughed together, peal after peal,

until the tavern rang again.

“Why, what a precious old sea-calf I am!” he said at last, wiping his

cheeks. “You and me should get on well, Hawkins, for I'll take my davy

I should be rated ship's boy. But come now, stand by to go about. This

won't do. Dooty is dooty, messmates. I'll put on my old cockerel hat,

and step along of you to Cap'n Trelawney, and report this here affair.

For mind you, it's serious, young Hawkins; and neither you nor me's come

out of it with what I should make so bold as to call credit. Nor you

neither, says you; not smart--none of the pair of us smart. But dash my

buttons! That was a good un about my score.”

And he began to laugh again, and that so heartily, that though I did not

see the joke as he did, I was again obliged to join him in his mirth.

On our little walk along the quays, he made himself the most interesting

companion, telling me about the different ships that we passed by,

their rig, tonnage, and nationality, explaining the work that was going

forward--how one was discharging, another taking in cargo, and a third

making ready for sea--and every now and then telling me some little

anecdote of ships or seamen or repeating a nautical phrase till I had

learned it perfectly. I began to see that here was one of the best of

possible shipmates.

When we got to the inn, the squire and Dr. Livesey were seated together,

finishing a quart of ale with a toast in it, before they should go

aboard the schooner on a visit of inspection.

Long John told the story from first to last, with a great deal of spirit

and the most perfect truth. “That was how it were, now, weren't it,

Hawkins?” he would say, now and again, and I could always bear him

entirely out.

The two gentlemen regretted that Black Dog had got away, but we all

agreed there was nothing to be done, and after he had been complimented,

Long John took up his crutch and departed.

“All hands aboard by four this afternoon,” shouted the squire after him.

“Aye, aye, sir,” cried the cook, in the passage.

“Well, squire,” said Dr. Livesey, “I don't put much faith in your

discoveries, as a general thing; but I will say this, John Silver suits

me.”

“The man's a perfect trump,” declared the squire.

“And now,” added the doctor, “Jim may come on board with us, may he

not?”

“To be sure he may,” says squire. “Take your hat, Hawkins, and we'll see

the ship.”

9

Powder and Arms

THE HISPANIOLA lay some way out, and we went under the figureheads and

round the sterns of many other ships, and their cables sometimes grated

underneath our keel, and sometimes swung above us. At last, however,

we got alongside, and were met and saluted as we stepped aboard by the

mate, Mr. Arrow, a brown old sailor with earrings in his ears and a

squint. He and the squire were very thick and friendly, but I soon

observed that things were not the same between Mr. Trelawney and the

captain.

This last was a sharp-looking man who seemed angry with everything on

board and was soon to tell us why, for we had hardly got down into the

cabin when a sailor followed us.

“Captain Smollett, sir, axing to speak with you,” said he.

“I am always at the captain's orders. Show him in,” said the squire.

The captain, who was close behind his messenger, entered at once and

shut the door behind him.

“Well, Captain Smollett, what have you to say? All well, I hope; all

shipshape and seaworthy?”

“Well, sir,” said the captain, “better speak plain, I believe, even at

the risk of offence. I don't like this cruise; I don't like the men; and

I don't like my officer. That's short and sweet.”

“Perhaps, sir, you don't like the ship?” inquired the squire, very

angry, as I could see.

“I can't speak as to that, sir, not having seen her tried,” said the

captain. “She seems a clever craft; more I can't say.”

“Possibly, sir, you may not like your employer, either?” says the

squire.

But here Dr. Livesey cut in.

“Stay a bit,” said he, “stay a bit. No use of such questions as that but

to produce ill feeling. The captain has said too much or he has said too

little, and I'm bound to say that I require an explanation of his words.

You don't, you say, like this cruise. Now, why?”

“I was engaged, sir, on what we call sealed orders, to sail this ship

for that gentleman where he should bid me,” said the captain. “So far

so good. But now I find that every man before the mast knows more than I

do. I don't call that fair, now, do you?”

“No,” said Dr. Livesey, “I don't.”

“Next,” said the captain, “I learn we are going after treasure--hear

it from my own hands, mind you. Now, treasure is ticklish work; I don't

like treasure voyages on any account, and I don't like them, above all,

when they are secret and when (begging your pardon, Mr. Trelawney) the

secret has been told to the parrot.”

“Silver's parrot?” asked the squire.

“It's a way of speaking,” said the captain. “Blabbed, I mean. It's my

belief neither of you gentlemen know what you are about, but I'll tell

you my way of it--life or death, and a close run.”

“That is all clear, and, I dare say, true enough,” replied Dr. Livesey.

“We take the risk, but we are not so ignorant as you believe us. Next,

you say you don't like the crew. Are they not good seamen?”

“I don't like them, sir,” returned Captain Smollett. “And I think I

should have had the choosing of my own hands, if you go to that.”

“Perhaps you should,” replied the doctor. “My friend should, perhaps,

have taken you along with him; but the slight, if there be one, was

unintentional. And you don't like Mr. Arrow?”

“I don't, sir. I believe he's a good seaman, but he's too free with

the crew to be a good officer. A mate should keep himself to

himself--shouldn't drink with the men before the mast!”

“Do you mean he drinks?” cried the squire.

“No, sir,” replied the captain, “only that he's too familiar.”

“Well, now, and the short and long of it, captain?” asked the doctor.

“Tell us what you want.”

“Well, gentlemen, are you determined to go on this cruise?”

“Like iron,” answered the squire.

“Very good,” said the captain. “Then, as you've heard me very patiently,

saying things that I could not prove, hear me a few words more. They are

putting the powder and the arms in the fore hold. Now, you have a good

place under the cabin; why not put them there?--first point. Then, you

are bringing four of your own people with you, and they tell me some of

them are to be berthed forward. Why not give them the berths here beside

the cabin?--second point.”

“Any more?” asked Mr. Trelawney.

“One more,” said the captain. “There's been too much blabbing already.”

“Far too much,” agreed the doctor.

“I'll tell you what I've heard myself,” continued Captain Smollett:

“that you have a map of an island, that there's crosses on the map to

show where treasure is, and that the island lies--” And then he named

the latitude and longitude exactly.

“I never told that,” cried the squire, “to a soul!”

“The hands know it, sir,” returned the captain.

“Livesey, that must have been you or Hawkins,” cried the squire.

“It doesn't much matter who it was,” replied the doctor. And I could

see that neither he nor the captain paid much regard to Mr. Trelawney's

protestations. Neither did I, to be sure, he was so loose a talker; yet

in this case I believe he was really right and that nobody had told the

situation of the island.

“Well, gentlemen,” continued the captain, “I don't know who has this

map; but I make it a point, it shall be kept secret even from me and Mr.

Arrow. Otherwise I would ask you to let me resign.”

“I see,” said the doctor. “You wish us to keep this matter dark and to

make a garrison of the stern part of the ship, manned with my friend's

own people, and provided with all the arms and powder on board. In other

words, you fear a mutiny.”

“Sir,” said Captain Smollett, “with no intention to take offence, I

deny your right to put words into my mouth. No captain, sir, would be

justified in going to sea at all if he had ground enough to say that. As

for Mr. Arrow, I believe him thoroughly honest; some of the men are the

same; all may be for what I know. But I am responsible for the ship's

safety and the life of every man Jack aboard of her. I see things going,

as I think, not quite right. And I ask you to take certain precautions

or let me resign my berth. And that's all.”

“Captain Smollett,” began the doctor with a smile, “did ever you hear

the fable of the mountain and the mouse? You'll excuse me, I dare say,

but you remind me of that fable. When you came in here, I'll stake my

wig, you meant more than this.”

“Doctor,” said the captain, “you are smart. When I came in here I meant

to get discharged. I had no thought that Mr. Trelawney would hear a

word.”

“No more I would,” cried the squire. “Had Livesey not been here I should

have seen you to the deuce. As it is, I have heard you. I will do as you

desire, but I think the worse of you.”

“That's as you please, sir,” said the captain. “You'll find I do my

duty.”

And with that he took his leave.

“Trelawney,” said the doctor, “contrary to all my notions, I believed

you have managed to get two honest men on board with you--that man and

John Silver.”

“Silver, if you like,” cried the squire; “but as for that intolerable

humbug, I declare I think his conduct unmanly, unsailorly, and downright

un-English.”

“Well,” says the doctor, “we shall see.”

When we came on deck, the men had begun already to take out the arms and

powder, yo-ho-ing at their work, while the captain and Mr. Arrow stood

by superintending.

The new arrangement was quite to my liking. The whole schooner had been

overhauled; six berths had been made astern out of what had been the

after-part of the main hold; and this set of cabins was only joined to

the galley and forecastle by a sparred passage on the port side. It had

been originally meant that the captain, Mr. Arrow, Hunter, Joyce, the

doctor, and the squire were to occupy these six berths. Now Redruth and

I were to get two of them and Mr. Arrow and the captain were to sleep

on deck in the companion, which had been enlarged on each side till you

might almost have called it a round-house. Very low it was still, of

course; but there was room to swing two hammocks, and even the mate

seemed pleased with the arrangement. Even he, perhaps, had been doubtful

as to the crew, but that is only guess, for as you shall hear, we had

not long the benefit of his opinion.

We were all hard at work, changing the powder and the berths, when

the last man or two, and Long John along with them, came off in a

shore-boat.

The cook came up the side like a monkey for cleverness, and as soon as

he saw what was doing, “So ho, mates!” says he. “What's this?”

“We're a-changing of the powder, Jack,” answers one.

“Why, by the powers,” cried Long John, “if we do, we'll miss the morning

tide!”

“My orders!” said the captain shortly. “You may go below, my man. Hands

will want supper.”

“Aye, aye, sir,” answered the cook, and touching his forelock, he

disappeared at once in the direction of his galley.

“That's a good man, captain,” said the doctor.

“Very likely, sir,” replied Captain Smollett. “Easy with that,

men--easy,” he ran on, to the fellows who were shifting the powder; and

then suddenly observing me examining the swivel we carried amidships,

a long brass nine, “Here you, ship's boy,” he cried, “out o' that! Off

with you to the cook and get some work.”

And then as I was hurrying off I heard him say, quite loudly, to the

doctor, “I'll have no favourites on my ship.”

I assure you I was quite of the squire's way of thinking, and hated the

captain deeply.

10

The Voyage

ALL that night we were in a great bustle getting things stowed in their

place, and boatfuls of the squire's friends, Mr. Blandly and the like,

coming off to wish him a good voyage and a safe return. We never had

a night at the Admiral Benbow when I had half the work; and I was

dog-tired when, a little before dawn, the boatswain sounded his pipe

and the crew began to man the capstan-bars. I might have been twice

as weary, yet I would not have left the deck, all was so new and

interesting to me--the brief commands, the shrill note of the whistle,

the men bustling to their places in the glimmer of the ship's lanterns.

“Now, Barbecue, tip us a stave,” cried one voice.

“The old one,” cried another.

“Aye, aye, mates,” said Long John, who was standing by, with his crutch

under his arm, and at once broke out in the air and words I knew so

well:

“Fifteen men on the dead man's chest--”

And then the whole crew bore chorus:--

“Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!”

And at the third “Ho!” drove the bars before them with a will.

Even at that exciting moment it carried me back to the old Admiral

Benbow in a second, and I seemed to hear the voice of the captain piping

in the chorus. But soon the anchor was short up; soon it was hanging

dripping at the bows; soon the sails began to draw, and the land and

shipping to flit by on either side; and before I could lie down to

snatch an hour of slumber the HISPANIOLA had begun her voyage to the

Isle of Treasure.

I am not going to relate that voyage in detail. It was fairly

prosperous. The ship proved to be a good ship, the crew were capable

seamen, and the captain thoroughly understood his business. But before

we came the length of Treasure Island, two or three things had happened

which require to be known.

Mr. Arrow, first of all, turned out even worse than the captain had

feared. He had no command among the men, and people did what they

pleased with him. But that was by no means the worst of it, for after a

day or two at sea he began to appear on deck with hazy eye, red cheeks,

stuttering tongue, and other marks of drunkenness. Time after time

he was ordered below in disgrace. Sometimes he fell and cut himself;

sometimes he lay all day long in his little bunk at one side of the

companion; sometimes for a day or two he would be almost sober and

attend to his work at least passably.

In the meantime, we could never make out where he got the drink. That

was the ship's mystery. Watch him as we pleased, we could do nothing to

solve it; and when we asked him to his face, he would only laugh if

he were drunk, and if he were sober deny solemnly that he ever tasted

anything but water.

He was not only useless as an officer and a bad influence amongst

the men, but it was plain that at this rate he must soon kill himself

outright, so nobody was much surprised, nor very sorry, when one dark

night, with a head sea, he disappeared entirely and was seen no more.

“Overboard!” said the captain. “Well, gentlemen, that saves the trouble

of putting him in irons.”

But there we were, without a mate; and it was necessary, of course, to

advance one of the men. The boatswain, Job Anderson, was the likeliest

man aboard, and though he kept his old title, he served in a way as

mate. Mr. Trelawney had followed the sea, and his knowledge made him

very useful, for he often took a watch himself in easy weather. And the

coxswain, Israel Hands, was a careful, wily, old, experienced seaman who

could be trusted at a pinch with almost anything.

He was a great confidant of Long John Silver, and so the mention of

his name leads me on to speak of our ship's cook, Barbecue, as the men

called him.

Aboard ship he carried his crutch by a lanyard round his neck, to have

both hands as free as possible. It was something to see him wedge the

foot of the crutch against a bulkhead, and propped against it, yielding

to every movement of the ship, get on with his cooking like someone safe

ashore. Still more strange was it to see him in the heaviest of weather

cross the deck. He had a line or two rigged up to help him across the

widest spaces--Long John's earrings, they were called; and he would hand

himself from one place to another, now using the crutch, now trailing it

alongside by the lanyard, as quickly as another man could walk. Yet some

of the men who had sailed with him before expressed their pity to see

him so reduced.

“He's no common man, Barbecue,” said the coxswain to me. “He had good

schooling in his young days and can speak like a book when so minded;

and brave--a lion's nothing alongside of Long John! I seen him grapple

four and knock their heads together--him unarmed.”

All the crew respected and even obeyed him. He had a way of talking

to each and doing everybody some particular service. To me he was

unweariedly kind, and always glad to see me in the galley, which he kept

as clean as a new pin, the dishes hanging up burnished and his parrot in

a cage in one corner.

“Come away, Hawkins,” he would say; “come and have a yarn with John.

Nobody more welcome than yourself, my son. Sit you down and hear the

news. Here's Cap'n Flint--I calls my parrot Cap'n Flint, after the

famous buccaneer--here's Cap'n Flint predicting success to our v'yage.

Wasn't you, cap'n?”

And the parrot would say, with great rapidity, “Pieces of eight! Pieces

of eight! Pieces of eight!” till you wondered that it was not out of

breath, or till John threw his handkerchief over the cage.

“Now, that bird,” he would say, “is, maybe, two hundred years

old, Hawkins--they live forever mostly; and if anybody's seen more

wickedness, it must be the devil himself. She's sailed with England,

the great Cap'n England, the pirate. She's been at Madagascar, and at

Malabar, and Surinam, and Providence, and Portobello. She was at the

fishing up of the wrecked plate ships. It's there she learned 'Pieces

of eight,' and little wonder; three hundred and fifty thousand of 'em,

Hawkins! She was at the boarding of the viceroy of the Indies out of

Goa, she was; and to look at her you would think she was a babby. But

you smelt powder--didn't you, cap'n?”

“Stand by to go about,” the parrot would scream.

“Ah, she's a handsome craft, she is,” the cook would say, and give her

sugar from his pocket, and then the bird would peck at the bars and

swear straight on, passing belief for wickedness. “There,” John would

add, “you can't touch pitch and not be mucked, lad. Here's this poor old

innocent bird o' mine swearing blue fire, and none the wiser, you may

lay to that. She would swear the same, in a manner of speaking, before

chaplain.” And John would touch his forelock with a solemn way he had

that made me think he was the best of men.

In the meantime, the squire and Captain Smollett were still on pretty

distant terms with one another. The squire made no bones about the

matter; he despised the captain. The captain, on his part, never spoke

but when he was spoken to, and then sharp and short and dry, and not a

word wasted. He owned, when driven into a corner, that he seemed to have

been wrong about the crew, that some of them were as brisk as he wanted

to see and all had behaved fairly well. As for the ship, he had taken a

downright fancy to her. “She'll lie a point nearer the wind than a man

has a right to expect of his own married wife, sir. But,” he would add,

“all I say is, we're not home again, and I don't like the cruise.”

The squire, at this, would turn away and march up and down the deck,

chin in air.

“A trifle more of that man,” he would say, “and I shall explode.”

We had some heavy weather, which only proved the qualities of the

HISPANIOLA. Every man on board seemed well content, and they must have

been hard to please if they had been otherwise, for it is my belief

there was never a ship's company so spoiled since Noah put to sea.

Double grog was going on the least excuse; there was duff on odd days,

as, for instance, if the squire heard it was any man's birthday, and

always a barrel of apples standing broached in the waist for anyone to

help himself that had a fancy.

“Never knew good come of it yet,” the captain said to Dr. Livesey.

“Spoil forecastle hands, make devils. That's my belief.”

But good did come of the apple barrel, as you shall hear, for if it had

not been for that, we should have had no note of warning and might all

have perished by the hand of treachery.

This was how it came about.

We had run up the trades to get the wind of the island we were after--I

am not allowed to be more plain--and now we were running down for it

with a bright lookout day and night. It was about the last day of our

outward voyage by the largest computation; some time that night, or at

latest before noon of the morrow, we should sight the Treasure Island.

We were heading S.S.W. and had a steady breeze abeam and a quiet sea.

The HISPANIOLA rolled steadily, dipping her bowsprit now and then with

a whiff of spray. All was drawing alow and aloft; everyone was in the

bravest spirits because we were now so near an end of the first part of

our adventure.

Now, just after sundown, when all my work was over and I was on my way

to my berth, it occurred to me that I should like an apple. I ran on

deck. The watch was all forward looking out for the island. The man at

the helm was watching the luff of the sail and whistling away gently

to himself, and that was the only sound excepting the swish of the sea

against the bows and around the sides of the ship.

In I got bodily into the apple barrel, and found there was scarce an

apple left; but sitting down there in the dark, what with the sound of

the waters and the rocking movement of the ship, I had either fallen

asleep or was on the point of doing so when a heavy man sat down with

rather a clash close by. The barrel shook as he leaned his shoulders

against it, and I was just about to jump up when the man began to speak.

It was Silver's voice, and before I had heard a dozen words, I would

not have shown myself for all the world, but lay there, trembling and

listening, in the extreme of fear and curiosity, for from these dozen

words I understood that the lives of all the honest men aboard depended

upon me alone.

11

What I Heard in the Apple Barrel

“NO, not I,” said Silver. “Flint was cap'n; I was quartermaster, along

of my timber leg. The same broadside I lost my leg, old Pew lost his

deadlights. It was a master surgeon, him that ampytated me--out of

college and all--Latin by the bucket, and what not; but he was hanged

like a dog, and sun-dried like the rest, at Corso Castle. That

was Roberts' men, that was, and comed of changing names to their

ships--ROYAL FORTUNE and so on. Now, what a ship was christened, so let

her stay, I says. So it was with the CASSANDRA, as brought us all safe

home from Malabar, after England took the viceroy of the Indies; so it

was with the old WALRUS, Flint's old ship, as I've seen amuck with the

red blood and fit to sink with gold.”

“Ah!” cried another voice, that of the youngest hand on board, and

evidently full of admiration. “He was the flower of the flock, was

Flint!”

“Davis was a man too, by all accounts,” said Silver. “I never sailed

along of him; first with England, then with Flint, that's my story;

and now here on my own account, in a manner of speaking. I laid by nine

hundred safe, from England, and two thousand after Flint. That ain't bad

for a man before the mast--all safe in bank. 'Tain't earning now, it's

saving does it, you may lay to that. Where's all England's men now? I

dunno. Where's Flint's? Why, most on 'em aboard here, and glad to get

the duff--been begging before that, some on 'em. Old Pew, as had lost

his sight, and might have thought shame, spends twelve hundred pound in

a year, like a lord in Parliament. Where is he now? Well, he's dead now

and under hatches; but for two year before that, shiver my timbers,

the man was starving! He begged, and he stole, and he cut throats, and

starved at that, by the powers!”

“Well, it ain't much use, after all,” said the young seaman.

“'Tain't much use for fools, you may lay to it--that, nor nothing,”

cried Silver. “But now, you look here: you're young, you are, but you're

as smart as paint. I see that when I set my eyes on you, and I'll talk

to you like a man.”

You may imagine how I felt when I heard this abominable old rogue

addressing another in the very same words of flattery as he had used

to myself. I think, if I had been able, that I would have killed

him through the barrel. Meantime, he ran on, little supposing he was

overheard.

“Here it is about gentlemen of fortune. They lives rough, and they risk

swinging, but they eat and drink like fighting-cocks, and when a cruise

is done, why, it's hundreds of pounds instead of hundreds of farthings

in their pockets. Now, the most goes for rum and a good fling, and to

sea again in their shirts. But that's not the course I lay. I puts it

all away, some here, some there, and none too much anywheres, by reason

of suspicion. I'm fifty, mark you; once back from this cruise, I set up

gentleman in earnest. Time enough too, says you. Ah, but I've lived easy

in the meantime, never denied myself o' nothing heart desires, and slep'

soft and ate dainty all my days but when at sea. And how did I begin?

Before the mast, like you!”

“Well,” said the other, “but all the other money's gone now, ain't it?

You daren't show face in Bristol after this.”

“Why, where might you suppose it was?” asked Silver derisively.

“At Bristol, in banks and places,” answered his companion.

“It were,” said the cook; “it were when we weighed anchor. But my old

missis has it all by now. And the Spy-glass is sold, lease and goodwill

and rigging; and the old girl's off to meet me. I would tell you where,

for I trust you, but it'd make jealousy among the mates.”

“And can you trust your missis?” asked the other.

“Gentlemen of fortune,” returned the cook, “usually trusts little among

themselves, and right they are, you may lay to it. But I have a way with

me, I have. When a mate brings a slip on his cable--one as knows me, I

mean--it won't be in the same world with old John. There was some that

was feared of Pew, and some that was feared of Flint; but Flint his own

self was feared of me. Feared he was, and proud. They was the roughest

crew afloat, was Flint's; the devil himself would have been feared to go

to sea with them. Well now, I tell you, I'm not a boasting man, and you

seen yourself how easy I keep company, but when I was quartermaster,

LAMBS wasn't the word for Flint's old buccaneers. Ah, you may be sure of

yourself in old John's ship.”

“Well, I tell you now,” replied the lad, “I didn't half a quarter like

the job till I had this talk with you, John; but there's my hand on it

now.”

“And a brave lad you were, and smart too,” answered Silver, shaking

hands so heartily that all the barrel shook, “and a finer figurehead for

a gentleman of fortune I never clapped my eyes on.”

By this time I had begun to understand the meaning of their terms. By a

“gentleman of fortune” they plainly meant neither more nor less than a

common pirate, and the little scene that I had overheard was the last

act in the corruption of one of the honest hands--perhaps of the last

one left aboard. But on this point I was soon to be relieved, for Silver

giving a little whistle, a third man strolled up and sat down by the

party.

“Dick's square,” said Silver.

“Oh, I know'd Dick was square,” returned the voice of the coxswain,

Israel Hands. “He's no fool, is Dick.” And he turned his quid and spat.

“But look here,” he went on, “here's what I want to know, Barbecue: how

long are we a-going to stand off and on like a blessed bumboat? I've had

a'most enough o' Cap'n Smollett; he's hazed me long enough, by thunder!

I want to go into that cabin, I do. I want their pickles and wines, and

that.”

“Israel,” said Silver, “your head ain't much account, nor ever was. But

you're able to hear, I reckon; leastways, your ears is big enough.

Now, here's what I say: you'll berth forward, and you'll live hard, and

you'll speak soft, and you'll keep sober till I give the word; and you

may lay to that, my son.”

“Well, I don't say no, do I?” growled the coxswain. “What I say is,

when? That's what I say.”

“When! By the powers!” cried Silver. “Well now, if you want to know,

I'll tell you when. The last moment I can manage, and that's when.

Here's a first-rate seaman, Cap'n Smollett, sails the blessed ship for

us. Here's this squire and doctor with a map and such--I don't know

where it is, do I? No more do you, says you. Well then, I mean this

squire and doctor shall find the stuff, and help us to get it aboard,

by the powers. Then we'll see. If I was sure of you all, sons of double

Dutchmen, I'd have Cap'n Smollett navigate us half-way back again before

I struck.”

“Why, we're all seamen aboard here, I should think,” said the lad Dick.

“We're all forecastle hands, you mean,” snapped Silver. “We can steer

a course, but who's to set one? That's what all you gentlemen split on,

first and last. If I had my way, I'd have Cap'n Smollett work us back

into the trades at least; then we'd have no blessed miscalculations and

a spoonful of water a day. But I know the sort you are. I'll finish with

'em at the island, as soon's the blunt's on board, and a pity it is. But

you're never happy till you're drunk. Split my sides, I've a sick heart

to sail with the likes of you!”

“Easy all, Long John,” cried Israel. “Who's a-crossin' of you?”

“Why, how many tall ships, think ye, now, have I seen laid aboard? And

how many brisk lads drying in the sun at Execution Dock?” cried Silver.

“And all for this same hurry and hurry and hurry. You hear me? I seen

a thing or two at sea, I have. If you would on'y lay your course, and a

p'int to windward, you would ride in carriages, you would. But not you!

I know you. You'll have your mouthful of rum tomorrow, and go hang.”

“Everybody knowed you was a kind of a chapling, John; but there's others

as could hand and steer as well as you,” said Israel. “They liked a bit

o' fun, they did. They wasn't so high and dry, nohow, but took their

fling, like jolly companions every one.”

“So?” says Silver. “Well, and where are they now? Pew was that sort,

and he died a beggar-man. Flint was, and he died of rum at Savannah. Ah,

they was a sweet crew, they was! On'y, where are they?”

“But,” asked Dick, “when we do lay 'em athwart, what are we to do with

'em, anyhow?”

“There's the man for me!” cried the cook admiringly. “That's what I call

business. Well, what would you think? Put 'em ashore like maroons? That

would have been England's way. Or cut 'em down like that much pork? That

would have been Flint's, or Billy Bones's.”

“Billy was the man for that,” said Israel. “'Dead men don't bite,' says

he. Well, he's dead now hisself; he knows the long and short on it now;

and if ever a rough hand come to port, it was Billy.”

“Right you are,” said Silver; “rough and ready. But mark you here,

I'm an easy man--I'm quite the gentleman, says you; but this time it's

serious. Dooty is dooty, mates. I give my vote--death. When I'm in

Parlyment and riding in my coach, I don't want none of these sea-lawyers

in the cabin a-coming home, unlooked for, like the devil at prayers.

Wait is what I say; but when the time comes, why, let her rip!”

“John,” cries the coxswain, “you're a man!”

“You'll say so, Israel when you see,” said Silver. “Only one thing I

claim--I claim Trelawney. I'll wring his calf's head off his body with

these hands, Dick!” he added, breaking off. “You just jump up, like a

sweet lad, and get me an apple, to wet my pipe like.”

You may fancy the terror I was in! I should have leaped out and run for

it if I had found the strength, but my limbs and heart alike misgave me.

I heard Dick begin to rise, and then someone seemingly stopped him, and

the voice of Hands exclaimed, “Oh, stow that! Don't you get sucking of

that bilge, John. Let's have a go of the rum.”

“Dick,” said Silver, “I trust you. I've a gauge on the keg, mind.

There's the key; you fill a pannikin and bring it up.”

Terrified as I was, I could not help thinking to myself that this must

have been how Mr. Arrow got the strong waters that destroyed him.

Dick was gone but a little while, and during his absence Israel spoke

straight on in the cook's ear. It was but a word or two that I could

catch, and yet I gathered some important news, for besides other scraps

that tended to the same purpose, this whole clause was audible: “Not

another man of them'll jine.” Hence there were still faithful men on

board.

When Dick returned, one after another of the trio took the pannikin and

drank--one “To luck,” another with a “Here's to old Flint,” and Silver

himself saying, in a kind of song, “Here's to ourselves, and hold your

luff, plenty of prizes and plenty of duff.”

Just then a sort of brightness fell upon me in the barrel, and looking

up, I found the moon had risen and was silvering the mizzen-top and

shining white on the luff of the fore-sail; and almost at the same time

the voice of the lookout shouted, “Land ho!”

12

Council of War

THERE was a great rush of feet across the deck. I could hear people

tumbling up from the cabin and the forecastle, and slipping in an

instant outside my barrel, I dived behind the fore-sail, made a double

towards the stern, and came out upon the open deck in time to join

Hunter and Dr. Livesey in the rush for the weather bow.

There all hands were already congregated. A belt of fog had lifted

almost simultaneously with the appearance of the moon. Away to the

south-west of us we saw two low hills, about a couple of miles apart,

and rising behind one of them a third and higher hill, whose peak was

still buried in the fog. All three seemed sharp and conical in figure.

So much I saw, almost in a dream, for I had not yet recovered from my

horrid fear of a minute or two before. And then I heard the voice of

Captain Smollett issuing orders. The HISPANIOLA was laid a couple of

points nearer the wind and now sailed a course that would just clear the

island on the east.

“And now, men,” said the captain, when all was sheeted home, “has any

one of you ever seen that land ahead?”

“I have, sir,” said Silver. “I've watered there with a trader I was cook

in.”

“The anchorage is on the south, behind an islet, I fancy?” asked the

captain.

“Yes, sir; Skeleton Island they calls it. It were a main place for

pirates once, and a hand we had on board knowed all their names for it.

That hill to the nor'ard they calls the Fore-mast Hill; there are three

hills in a row running south'ard--fore, main, and mizzen, sir. But the

main--that's the big un, with the cloud on it--they usually calls

the Spy-glass, by reason of a lookout they kept when they was in the

anchorage cleaning, for it's there they cleaned their ships, sir, asking

your pardon.”

“I have a chart here,” says Captain Smollett. “See if that's the place.”

Long John's eyes burned in his head as he took the chart, but by the

fresh look of the paper I knew he was doomed to disappointment. This

was not the map we found in Billy Bones's chest, but an accurate copy,

complete in all things--names and heights and soundings--with the single

exception of the red crosses and the written notes. Sharp as must have

been his annoyance, Silver had the strength of mind to hide it.

“Yes, sir,” said he, “this is the spot, to be sure, and very prettily

drawed out. Who might have done that, I wonder? The pirates were too

ignorant, I reckon. Aye, here it is: 'Capt. Kidd's Anchorage'--just

the name my shipmate called it. There's a strong current runs along the

south, and then away nor'ard up the west coast. Right you was, sir,”

says he, “to haul your wind and keep the weather of the island.

Leastways, if such was your intention as to enter and careen, and there

ain't no better place for that in these waters.”

“Thank you, my man,” says Captain Smollett. “I'll ask you later on to

give us a help. You may go.”

I was surprised at the coolness with which John avowed his knowledge

of the island, and I own I was half-frightened when I saw him drawing

nearer to myself. He did not know, to be sure, that I had overheard his

council from the apple barrel, and yet I had by this time taken such a

horror of his cruelty, duplicity, and power that I could scarce conceal

a shudder when he laid his hand upon my arm.

“Ah,” says he, “this here is a sweet spot, this island--a sweet spot for

a lad to get ashore on. You'll bathe, and you'll climb trees, and you'll

hunt goats, you will; and you'll get aloft on them hills like a goat

yourself. Why, it makes me young again. I was going to forget my timber

leg, I was. It's a pleasant thing to be young and have ten toes, and you

may lay to that. When you want to go a bit of exploring, you just ask

old John, and he'll put up a snack for you to take along.”

And clapping me in the friendliest way upon the shoulder, he hobbled off

forward and went below.

Captain Smollett, the squire, and Dr. Livesey were talking together on

the quarter-deck, and anxious as I was to tell them my story, I durst

not interrupt them openly. While I was still casting about in my

thoughts to find some probable excuse, Dr. Livesey called me to his

side. He had left his pipe below, and being a slave to tobacco, had

meant that I should fetch it; but as soon as I was near enough to speak

and not to be overheard, I broke immediately, “Doctor, let me speak. Get

the captain and squire down to the cabin, and then make some pretence to

send for me. I have terrible news.”

The doctor changed countenance a little, but next moment he was master

of himself.

“Thank you, Jim,” said he quite loudly, “that was all I wanted to know,”

as if he had asked me a question.

And with that he turned on his heel and rejoined the other two. They

spoke together for a little, and though none of them started, or raised

his voice, or so much as whistled, it was plain enough that Dr. Livesey

had communicated my request, for the next thing that I heard was the

captain giving an order to Job Anderson, and all hands were piped on

deck.

“My lads,” said Captain Smollett, “I've a word to say to you. This

land that we have sighted is the place we have been sailing for. Mr.

Trelawney, being a very open-handed gentleman, as we all know, has just

asked me a word or two, and as I was able to tell him that every man on

board had done his duty, alow and aloft, as I never ask to see it done

better, why, he and I and the doctor are going below to the cabin to

drink YOUR health and luck, and you'll have grog served out for you to

drink OUR health and luck. I'll tell you what I think of this: I think

it handsome. And if you think as I do, you'll give a good sea-cheer for

the gentleman that does it.”

The cheer followed--that was a matter of course; but it rang out so full

and hearty that I confess I could hardly believe these same men were

plotting for our blood.

“One more cheer for Cap'n Smollett,” cried Long John when the first had

subsided.

And this also was given with a will.

On the top of that the three gentlemen went below, and not long after,

word was sent forward that Jim Hawkins was wanted in the cabin.

I found them all three seated round the table, a bottle of Spanish wine

and some raisins before them, and the doctor smoking away, with his wig

on his lap, and that, I knew, was a sign that he was agitated. The stern

window was open, for it was a warm night, and you could see the moon

shining behind on the ship's wake.

“Now, Hawkins,” said the squire, “you have something to say. Speak up.”

I did as I was bid, and as short as I could make it, told the whole

details of Silver's conversation. Nobody interrupted me till I was done,

nor did any one of the three of them make so much as a movement, but

they kept their eyes upon my face from first to last.

“Jim,” said Dr. Livesey, “take a seat.”

And they made me sit down at table beside them, poured me out a glass of

wine, filled my hands with raisins, and all three, one after the other,

and each with a bow, drank my good health, and their service to me, for

my luck and courage.

“Now, captain,” said the squire, “you were right, and I was wrong. I own

myself an ass, and I await your orders.”

“No more an ass than I, sir,” returned the captain. “I never heard of a

crew that meant to mutiny but what showed signs before, for any man that

had an eye in his head to see the mischief and take steps according. But

this crew,” he added, “beats me.”

“Captain,” said the doctor, “with your permission, that's Silver. A very

remarkable man.”

“He'd look remarkably well from a yard-arm, sir,” returned the captain.

“But this is talk; this don't lead to anything. I see three or four

points, and with Mr. Trelawney's permission, I'll name them.”

“You, sir, are the captain. It is for you to speak,” says Mr. Trelawney

grandly.

“First point,” began Mr. Smollett. “We must go on, because we can't turn

back. If I gave the word to go about, they would rise at once. Second

point, we have time before us--at least until this treasure's found.

Third point, there are faithful hands. Now, sir, it's got to come

to blows sooner or later, and what I propose is to take time by the

forelock, as the saying is, and come to blows some fine day when they

least expect it. We can count, I take it, on your own home servants, Mr.

Trelawney?”

“As upon myself,” declared the squire.

“Three,” reckoned the captain; “ourselves make seven, counting Hawkins

here. Now, about the honest hands?”

“Most likely Trelawney's own men,” said the doctor; “those he had picked

up for himself before he lit on Silver.”

“Nay,” replied the squire. “Hands was one of mine.”

“I did think I could have trusted Hands,” added the captain.

“And to think that they're all Englishmen!” broke out the squire. “Sir,

I could find it in my heart to blow the ship up.”

“Well, gentlemen,” said the captain, “the best that I can say is not

much. We must lay to, if you please, and keep a bright lookout. It's

trying on a man, I know. It would be pleasanter to come to blows. But

there's no help for it till we know our men. Lay to, and whistle for a

wind, that's my view.”

“Jim here,” said the doctor, “can help us more than anyone. The men are

not shy with him, and Jim is a noticing lad.”

“Hawkins, I put prodigious faith in you,” added the squire.

I began to feel pretty desperate at this, for I felt altogether

helpless; and yet, by an odd train of circumstances, it was indeed

through me that safety came. In the meantime, talk as we pleased, there

were only seven out of the twenty-six on whom we knew we could rely; and

out of these seven one was a boy, so that the grown men on our side were

six to their nineteen.

PART THREE--My Shore Adventure

13

How My Shore Adventure Began

THE appearance of the island when I came on deck next morning was

altogether changed. Although the breeze had now utterly ceased, we had

made a great deal of way during the night and were now lying becalmed

about half a mile to the south-east of the low eastern coast.

Grey-coloured woods covered a large part of the surface. This even tint

was indeed broken up by streaks of yellow sand-break in the lower lands,

and by many tall trees of the pine family, out-topping the others--some

singly, some in clumps; but the general colouring was uniform and sad.

The hills ran up clear above the vegetation in spires of naked rock.

All were strangely shaped, and the Spy-glass, which was by three or four

hundred feet the tallest on the island, was likewise the strangest in

configuration, running up sheer from almost every side and then suddenly

cut off at the top like a pedestal to put a statue on.

The HISPANIOLA was rolling scuppers under in the ocean swell. The booms

were tearing at the blocks, the rudder was banging to and fro, and the

whole ship creaking, groaning, and jumping like a manufactory. I had

to cling tight to the backstay, and the world turned giddily before my

eyes, for though I was a good enough sailor when there was way on, this

standing still and being rolled about like a bottle was a thing I never

learned to stand without a qualm or so, above all in the morning, on an

empty stomach.

Perhaps it was this--perhaps it was the look of the island, with its

grey, melancholy woods, and wild stone spires, and the surf that we

could both see and hear foaming and thundering on the steep beach--at

least, although the sun shone bright and hot, and the shore birds were

fishing and crying all around us, and you would have thought anyone

would have been glad to get to land after being so long at sea, my heart

sank, as the saying is, into my boots; and from the first look onward, I

hated the very thought of Treasure Island.

We had a dreary morning's work before us, for there was no sign of any

wind, and the boats had to be got out and manned, and the ship warped

three or four miles round the corner of the island and up the narrow

passage to the haven behind Skeleton Island. I volunteered for one of

the boats, where I had, of course, no business. The heat was sweltering,

and the men grumbled fiercely over their work. Anderson was in command

of my boat, and instead of keeping the crew in order, he grumbled as

loud as the worst.

“Well,” he said with an oath, “it's not forever.”

I thought this was a very bad sign, for up to that day the men had gone

briskly and willingly about their business; but the very sight of the

island had relaxed the cords of discipline.

All the way in, Long John stood by the steersman and conned the ship.

He knew the passage like the palm of his hand, and though the man in the

chains got everywhere more water than was down in the chart, John never

hesitated once.

“There's a strong scour with the ebb,” he said, “and this here passage

has been dug out, in a manner of speaking, with a spade.”

We brought up just where the anchor was in the chart, about a third of

a mile from each shore, the mainland on one side and Skeleton Island on

the other. The bottom was clean sand. The plunge of our anchor sent up

clouds of birds wheeling and crying over the woods, but in less than a

minute they were down again and all was once more silent.

The place was entirely land-locked, buried in woods, the trees coming

right down to high-water mark, the shores mostly flat, and the hilltops

standing round at a distance in a sort of amphitheatre, one here, one

there. Two little rivers, or rather two swamps, emptied out into this

pond, as you might call it; and the foliage round that part of the shore

had a kind of poisonous brightness. From the ship we could see nothing

of the house or stockade, for they were quite buried among trees; and if

it had not been for the chart on the companion, we might have been the

first that had ever anchored there since the island arose out of the

seas.

There was not a breath of air moving, nor a sound but that of the

surf booming half a mile away along the beaches and against the rocks

outside. A peculiar stagnant smell hung over the anchorage--a smell of

sodden leaves and rotting tree trunks. I observed the doctor sniffing

and sniffing, like someone tasting a bad egg.

“I don't know about treasure,” he said, “but I'll stake my wig there's

fever here.”

If the conduct of the men had been alarming in the boat, it became truly

threatening when they had come aboard. They lay about the deck growling

together in talk. The slightest order was received with a black look and

grudgingly and carelessly obeyed. Even the honest hands must have caught

the infection, for there was not one man aboard to mend another. Mutiny,

it was plain, hung over us like a thunder-cloud.

And it was not only we of the cabin party who perceived the danger. Long

John was hard at work going from group to group, spending himself in

good advice, and as for example no man could have shown a better. He

fairly outstripped himself in willingness and civility; he was all

smiles to everyone. If an order were given, John would be on his crutch

in an instant, with the cheeriest “Aye, aye, sir!” in the world; and

when there was nothing else to do, he kept up one song after another, as

if to conceal the discontent of the rest.

Of all the gloomy features of that gloomy afternoon, this obvious

anxiety on the part of Long John appeared the worst.

We held a council in the cabin.

“Sir,” said the captain, “if I risk another order, the whole ship'll

come about our ears by the run. You see, sir, here it is. I get a rough

answer, do I not? Well, if I speak back, pikes will be going in two

shakes; if I don't, Silver will see there's something under that, and

the game's up. Now, we've only one man to rely on.”

“And who is that?” asked the squire.

“Silver, sir,” returned the captain; “he's as anxious as you and I to

smother things up. This is a tiff; he'd soon talk 'em out of it if he

had the chance, and what I propose to do is to give him the chance.

Let's allow the men an afternoon ashore. If they all go, why we'll fight

the ship. If they none of them go, well then, we hold the cabin, and God

defend the right. If some go, you mark my words, sir, Silver'll bring

'em aboard again as mild as lambs.”

It was so decided; loaded pistols were served out to all the sure men;

Hunter, Joyce, and Redruth were taken into our confidence and received

the news with less surprise and a better spirit than we had looked for,

and then the captain went on deck and addressed the crew.

“My lads,” said he, “we've had a hot day and are all tired and out of

sorts. A turn ashore'll hurt nobody--the boats are still in the water;

you can take the gigs, and as many as please may go ashore for the

afternoon. I'll fire a gun half an hour before sundown.”

I believe the silly fellows must have thought they would break their

shins over treasure as soon as they were landed, for they all came out

of their sulks in a moment and gave a cheer that started the echo in a

faraway hill and sent the birds once more flying and squalling round the

anchorage.

The captain was too bright to be in the way. He whipped out of sight

in a moment, leaving Silver to arrange the party, and I fancy it was as

well he did so. Had he been on deck, he could no longer so much as

have pretended not to understand the situation. It was as plain as day.

Silver was the captain, and a mighty rebellious crew he had of it. The

honest hands--and I was soon to see it proved that there were such on

board--must have been very stupid fellows. Or rather, I suppose the

truth was this, that all hands were disaffected by the example of the

ringleaders--only some more, some less; and a few, being good fellows in

the main, could neither be led nor driven any further. It is one thing

to be idle and skulk and quite another to take a ship and murder a

number of innocent men.

At last, however, the party was made up. Six fellows were to stay on

board, and the remaining thirteen, including Silver, began to embark.

Then it was that there came into my head the first of the mad notions

that contributed so much to save our lives. If six men were left by

Silver, it was plain our party could not take and fight the ship; and

since only six were left, it was equally plain that the cabin party

had no present need of my assistance. It occurred to me at once to go

ashore. In a jiffy I had slipped over the side and curled up in the

fore-sheets of the nearest boat, and almost at the same moment she

shoved off.

No one took notice of me, only the bow oar saying, “Is that you, Jim?

Keep your head down.” But Silver, from the other boat, looked sharply

over and called out to know if that were me; and from that moment I

began to regret what I had done.

The crews raced for the beach, but the boat I was in, having some start

and being at once the lighter and the better manned, shot far ahead of

her consort, and the bow had struck among the shore-side trees and I

had caught a branch and swung myself out and plunged into the nearest

thicket while Silver and the rest were still a hundred yards behind.

“Jim, Jim!” I heard him shouting.

But you may suppose I paid no heed; jumping, ducking, and breaking

through, I ran straight before my nose till I could run no longer.

14

The First Blow

I WAS so pleased at having given the slip to Long John that I began to

enjoy myself and look around me with some interest on the strange land

that I was in.

I had crossed a marshy tract full of willows, bulrushes, and odd,

outlandish, swampy trees; and I had now come out upon the skirts of an

open piece of undulating, sandy country, about a mile long, dotted with

a few pines and a great number of contorted trees, not unlike the oak

in growth, but pale in the foliage, like willows. On the far side of

the open stood one of the hills, with two quaint, craggy peaks shining

vividly in the sun.

I now felt for the first time the joy of exploration. The isle was

uninhabited; my shipmates I had left behind, and nothing lived in front

of me but dumb brutes and fowls. I turned hither and thither among the

trees. Here and there were flowering plants, unknown to me; here and

there I saw snakes, and one raised his head from a ledge of rock and

hissed at me with a noise not unlike the spinning of a top. Little did

I suppose that he was a deadly enemy and that the noise was the famous

rattle.

Then I came to a long thicket of these oaklike trees--live, or

evergreen, oaks, I heard afterwards they should be called--which grew

low along the sand like brambles, the boughs curiously twisted, the

foliage compact, like thatch. The thicket stretched down from the top of

one of the sandy knolls, spreading and growing taller as it went, until

it reached the margin of the broad, reedy fen, through which the nearest

of the little rivers soaked its way into the anchorage. The marsh was

steaming in the strong sun, and the outline of the Spy-glass trembled

through the haze.

All at once there began to go a sort of bustle among the bulrushes;

a wild duck flew up with a quack, another followed, and soon over the

whole surface of the marsh a great cloud of birds hung screaming and

circling in the air. I judged at once that some of my shipmates must be

drawing near along the borders of the fen. Nor was I deceived, for soon

I heard the very distant and low tones of a human voice, which, as I

continued to give ear, grew steadily louder and nearer.

This put me in a great fear, and I crawled under cover of the nearest

live-oak and squatted there, hearkening, as silent as a mouse.

Another voice answered, and then the first voice, which I now recognized

to be Silver's, once more took up the story and ran on for a long while

in a stream, only now and again interrupted by the other. By the sound

they must have been talking earnestly, and almost fiercely; but no

distinct word came to my hearing.

At last the speakers seemed to have paused and perhaps to have sat down,

for not only did they cease to draw any nearer, but the birds themselves

began to grow more quiet and to settle again to their places in the

swamp.

And now I began to feel that I was neglecting my business, that since

I had been so foolhardy as to come ashore with these desperadoes, the

least I could do was to overhear them at their councils, and that my

plain and obvious duty was to draw as close as I could manage, under the

favourable ambush of the crouching trees.

I could tell the direction of the speakers pretty exactly, not only by

the sound of their voices but by the behaviour of the few birds that

still hung in alarm above the heads of the intruders.

Crawling on all fours, I made steadily but slowly towards them, till at

last, raising my head to an aperture among the leaves, I could see clear

down into a little green dell beside the marsh, and closely set about

with trees, where Long John Silver and another of the crew stood face to

face in conversation.

The sun beat full upon them. Silver had thrown his hat beside him on the

ground, and his great, smooth, blond face, all shining with heat, was

lifted to the other man's in a kind of appeal.

“Mate,” he was saying, “it's because I thinks gold dust of you--gold

dust, and you may lay to that! If I hadn't took to you like pitch, do

you think I'd have been here a-warning of you? All's up--you can't make

nor mend; it's to save your neck that I'm a-speaking, and if one of the

wild uns knew it, where'd I be, Tom--now, tell me, where'd I be?”

“Silver,” said the other man--and I observed he was not only red in the

face, but spoke as hoarse as a crow, and his voice shook too, like a

taut rope--“Silver,” says he, “you're old, and you're honest, or has the

name for it; and you've money too, which lots of poor sailors hasn't;

and you're brave, or I'm mistook. And will you tell me you'll let

yourself be led away with that kind of a mess of swabs? Not you! As sure

as God sees me, I'd sooner lose my hand. If I turn agin my dooty--”

And then all of a sudden he was interrupted by a noise. I had found

one of the honest hands--well, here, at that same moment, came news of

another. Far away out in the marsh there arose, all of a sudden, a sound

like the cry of anger, then another on the back of it; and then one

horrid, long-drawn scream. The rocks of the Spy-glass re-echoed it a

score of times; the whole troop of marsh-birds rose again, darkening

heaven, with a simultaneous whirr; and long after that death yell was

still ringing in my brain, silence had re-established its empire, and

only the rustle of the redescending birds and the boom of the distant

surges disturbed the languor of the afternoon.

Tom had leaped at the sound, like a horse at the spur, but Silver had

not winked an eye. He stood where he was, resting lightly on his crutch,

watching his companion like a snake about to spring.

“John!” said the sailor, stretching out his hand.

“Hands off!” cried Silver, leaping back a yard, as it seemed to me, with

the speed and security of a trained gymnast.

“Hands off, if you like, John Silver,” said the other. “It's a black

conscience that can make you feared of me. But in heaven's name, tell

me, what was that?”

“That?” returned Silver, smiling away, but warier than ever, his eye

a mere pin-point in his big face, but gleaming like a crumb of glass.

“That? Oh, I reckon that'll be Alan.”

And at this point Tom flashed out like a hero.

“Alan!” he cried. “Then rest his soul for a true seaman! And as for you,

John Silver, long you've been a mate of mine, but you're mate of mine

no more. If I die like a dog, I'll die in my dooty. You've killed Alan,

have you? Kill me too, if you can. But I defies you.”

And with that, this brave fellow turned his back directly on the cook

and set off walking for the beach. But he was not destined to go far.

With a cry John seized the branch of a tree, whipped the crutch out of

his armpit, and sent that uncouth missile hurtling through the air.

It struck poor Tom, point foremost, and with stunning violence, right

between the shoulders in the middle of his back. His hands flew up, he

gave a sort of gasp, and fell.

Whether he were injured much or little, none could ever tell. Like

enough, to judge from the sound, his back was broken on the spot. But he

had no time given him to recover. Silver, agile as a monkey even without

leg or crutch, was on the top of him next moment and had twice buried

his knife up to the hilt in that defenceless body. From my place of

ambush, I could hear him pant aloud as he struck the blows.

I do not know what it rightly is to faint, but I do know that for the

next little while the whole world swam away from before me in a whirling

mist; Silver and the birds, and the tall Spy-glass hilltop, going

round and round and topsy-turvy before my eyes, and all manner of bells

ringing and distant voices shouting in my ear.

When I came again to myself the monster had pulled himself together,

his crutch under his arm, his hat upon his head. Just before him Tom

lay motionless upon the sward; but the murderer minded him not a whit,

cleansing his blood-stained knife the while upon a wisp of grass.

Everything else was unchanged, the sun still shining mercilessly on the

steaming marsh and the tall pinnacle of the mountain, and I could scarce

persuade myself that murder had been actually done and a human life

cruelly cut short a moment since before my eyes.

But now John put his hand into his pocket, brought out a whistle, and

blew upon it several modulated blasts that rang far across the heated

air. I could not tell, of course, the meaning of the signal, but

it instantly awoke my fears. More men would be coming. I might be

discovered. They had already slain two of the honest people; after Tom

and Alan, might not I come next?

Instantly I began to extricate myself and crawl back again, with what

speed and silence I could manage, to the more open portion of the

wood. As I did so, I could hear hails coming and going between the old

buccaneer and his comrades, and this sound of danger lent me wings. As

soon as I was clear of the thicket, I ran as I never ran before, scarce

minding the direction of my flight, so long as it led me from the

murderers; and as I ran, fear grew and grew upon me until it turned into

a kind of frenzy.

Indeed, could anyone be more entirely lost than I? When the gun fired,

how should I dare to go down to the boats among those fiends, still

smoking from their crime? Would not the first of them who saw me wring

my neck like a snipe's? Would not my absence itself be an evidence to

them of my alarm, and therefore of my fatal knowledge? It was all over,

I thought. Good-bye to the HISPANIOLA; good-bye to the squire, the

doctor, and the captain! There was nothing left for me but death by

starvation or death by the hands of the mutineers.

All this while, as I say, I was still running, and without taking any

notice, I had drawn near to the foot of the little hill with the two

peaks and had got into a part of the island where the live-oaks grew

more widely apart and seemed more like forest trees in their bearing and

dimensions. Mingled with these were a few scattered pines, some fifty,

some nearer seventy, feet high. The air too smelt more freshly than down

beside the marsh.

And here a fresh alarm brought me to a standstill with a thumping heart.

15

The Man of the Island

FROM the side of the hill, which was here steep and stony, a spout of

gravel was dislodged and fell rattling and bounding through the trees.

My eyes turned instinctively in that direction, and I saw a figure leap

with great rapidity behind the trunk of a pine. What it was, whether

bear or man or monkey, I could in no wise tell. It seemed dark and

shaggy; more I knew not. But the terror of this new apparition brought

me to a stand.

I was now, it seemed, cut off upon both sides; behind me the murderers,

before me this lurking nondescript. And immediately I began to prefer

the dangers that I knew to those I knew not. Silver himself appeared

less terrible in contrast with this creature of the woods, and I turned

on my heel, and looking sharply behind me over my shoulder, began to

retrace my steps in the direction of the boats.

Instantly the figure reappeared, and making a wide circuit, began to

head me off. I was tired, at any rate; but had I been as fresh as when I

rose, I could see it was in vain for me to contend in speed with such an

adversary. From trunk to trunk the creature flitted like a deer, running

manlike on two legs, but unlike any man that I had ever seen, stooping

almost double as it ran. Yet a man it was, I could no longer be in doubt

about that.

I began to recall what I had heard of cannibals. I was within an ace of

calling for help. But the mere fact that he was a man, however wild,

had somewhat reassured me, and my fear of Silver began to revive in

proportion. I stood still, therefore, and cast about for some method of

escape; and as I was so thinking, the recollection of my pistol flashed

into my mind. As soon as I remembered I was not defenceless, courage

glowed again in my heart and I set my face resolutely for this man of

the island and walked briskly towards him.

He was concealed by this time behind another tree trunk; but he must

have been watching me closely, for as soon as I began to move in his

direction he reappeared and took a step to meet me. Then he hesitated,

drew back, came forward again, and at last, to my wonder and

confusion, threw himself on his knees and held out his clasped hands in

supplication.

At that I once more stopped.

“Who are you?” I asked.

“Ben Gunn,” he answered, and his voice sounded hoarse and awkward,

like a rusty lock. “I'm poor Ben Gunn, I am; and I haven't spoke with a

Christian these three years.”

I could now see that he was a white man like myself and that his

features were even pleasing. His skin, wherever it was exposed, was

burnt by the sun; even his lips were black, and his fair eyes looked

quite startling in so dark a face. Of all the beggar-men that I had seen

or fancied, he was the chief for raggedness. He was clothed with tatters

of old ship's canvas and old sea-cloth, and this extraordinary patchwork

was all held together by a system of the most various and incongruous

fastenings, brass buttons, bits of stick, and loops of tarry gaskin.

About his waist he wore an old brass-buckled leather belt, which was the

one thing solid in his whole accoutrement.

“Three years!” I cried. “Were you shipwrecked?”

“Nay, mate,” said he; “marooned.”

I had heard the word, and I knew it stood for a horrible kind of

punishment common enough among the buccaneers, in which the offender

is put ashore with a little powder and shot and left behind on some

desolate and distant island.

“Marooned three years agone,” he continued, “and lived on goats since

then, and berries, and oysters. Wherever a man is, says I, a man can

do for himself. But, mate, my heart is sore for Christian diet. You

mightn't happen to have a piece of cheese about you, now? No? Well,

many's the long night I've dreamed of cheese--toasted, mostly--and woke

up again, and here I were.”

“If ever I can get aboard again,” said I, “you shall have cheese by the

stone.”

All this time he had been feeling the stuff of my jacket, smoothing

my hands, looking at my boots, and generally, in the intervals of

his speech, showing a childish pleasure in the presence of a fellow

creature. But at my last words he perked up into a kind of startled

slyness.

“If ever you can get aboard again, says you?” he repeated. “Why, now,

who's to hinder you?”

“Not you, I know,” was my reply.

“And right you was,” he cried. “Now you--what do you call yourself,

mate?”

“Jim,” I told him.

“Jim, Jim,” says he, quite pleased apparently. “Well, now, Jim, I've

lived that rough as you'd be ashamed to hear of. Now, for instance, you

wouldn't think I had had a pious mother--to look at me?” he asked.

“Why, no, not in particular,” I answered.

“Ah, well,” said he, “but I had--remarkable pious. And I was a civil,

pious boy, and could rattle off my catechism that fast, as you couldn't

tell one word from another. And here's what it come to, Jim, and it

begun with chuck-farthen on the blessed grave-stones! That's what it

begun with, but it went further'n that; and so my mother told me, and

predicked the whole, she did, the pious woman! But it were Providence

that put me here. I've thought it all out in this here lonely island,

and I'm back on piety. You don't catch me tasting rum so much, but just

a thimbleful for luck, of course, the first chance I have. I'm bound

I'll be good, and I see the way to. And, Jim”--looking all round him and

lowering his voice to a whisper--“I'm rich.”

I now felt sure that the poor fellow had gone crazy in his solitude, and

I suppose I must have shown the feeling in my face, for he repeated the

statement hotly: “Rich! Rich! I says. And I'll tell you what: I'll make

a man of you, Jim. Ah, Jim, you'll bless your stars, you will, you was

the first that found me!”

And at this there came suddenly a lowering shadow over his face, and he

tightened his grasp upon my hand and raised a forefinger threateningly

before my eyes.

“Now, Jim, you tell me true: that ain't Flint's ship?” he asked.

At this I had a happy inspiration. I began to believe that I had found

an ally, and I answered him at once.

“It's not Flint's ship, and Flint is dead; but I'll tell you true, as

you ask me--there are some of Flint's hands aboard; worse luck for the

rest of us.”

“Not a man--with one--leg?” he gasped.

“Silver?” I asked.

“Ah, Silver!” says he. “That were his name.”

“He's the cook, and the ringleader too.”

He was still holding me by the wrist, and at that he give it quite a

wring.

“If you was sent by Long John,” he said, “I'm as good as pork, and I

know it. But where was you, do you suppose?”

I had made my mind up in a moment, and by way of answer told him

the whole story of our voyage and the predicament in which we found

ourselves. He heard me with the keenest interest, and when I had done he

patted me on the head.

“You're a good lad, Jim,” he said; “and you're all in a clove hitch,

ain't you? Well, you just put your trust in Ben Gunn--Ben Gunn's the man

to do it. Would you think it likely, now, that your squire would prove

a liberal-minded one in case of help--him being in a clove hitch, as you

remark?”

I told him the squire was the most liberal of men.

“Aye, but you see,” returned Ben Gunn, “I didn't mean giving me a gate

to keep, and a suit of livery clothes, and such; that's not my mark,

Jim. What I mean is, would he be likely to come down to the toon of, say

one thousand pounds out of money that's as good as a man's own already?”

“I am sure he would,” said I. “As it was, all hands were to share.”

“AND a passage home?” he added with a look of great shrewdness.

“Why,” I cried, “the squire's a gentleman. And besides, if we got rid of

the others, we should want you to help work the vessel home.”

“Ah,” said he, “so you would.” And he seemed very much relieved.

“Now, I'll tell you what,” he went on. “So much I'll tell you, and no

more. I were in Flint's ship when he buried the treasure; he and

six along--six strong seamen. They was ashore nigh on a week, and us

standing off and on in the old WALRUS. One fine day up went the signal,

and here come Flint by himself in a little boat, and his head done up in

a blue scarf. The sun was getting up, and mortal white he looked about

the cutwater. But, there he was, you mind, and the six all dead--dead

and buried. How he done it, not a man aboard us could make out. It was

battle, murder, and sudden death, leastways--him against six. Billy

Bones was the mate; Long John, he was quartermaster; and they asked him

where the treasure was. 'Ah,' says he, 'you can go ashore, if you like,

and stay,' he says; 'but as for the ship, she'll beat up for more, by

thunder!' That's what he said.

“Well, I was in another ship three years back, and we sighted this

island. 'Boys,' said I, 'here's Flint's treasure; let's land and find

it.' The cap'n was displeased at that, but my messmates were all of a

mind and landed. Twelve days they looked for it, and every day they had

the worse word for me, until one fine morning all hands went aboard. 'As

for you, Benjamin Gunn,' says they, 'here's a musket,' they says, 'and

a spade, and pick-axe. You can stay here and find Flint's money for

yourself,' they says.

“Well, Jim, three years have I been here, and not a bite of Christian

diet from that day to this. But now, you look here; look at me. Do I

look like a man before the mast? No, says you. Nor I weren't, neither, I

says.”

And with that he winked and pinched me hard.

“Just you mention them words to your squire, Jim,” he went on. “Nor he

weren't, neither--that's the words. Three years he were the man of this

island, light and dark, fair and rain; and sometimes he would maybe

think upon a prayer (says you), and sometimes he would maybe think of

his old mother, so be as she's alive (you'll say); but the most part

of Gunn's time (this is what you'll say)--the most part of his time was

took up with another matter. And then you'll give him a nip, like I do.”

And he pinched me again in the most confidential manner.

“Then,” he continued, “then you'll up, and you'll say this: Gunn is a

good man (you'll say), and he puts a precious sight more confidence--a

precious sight, mind that--in a gen'leman born than in these gen'leman

of fortune, having been one hisself.”

“Well,” I said, “I don't understand one word that you've been saying.

But that's neither here nor there; for how am I to get on board?”

“Ah,” said he, “that's the hitch, for sure. Well, there's my boat, that

I made with my two hands. I keep her under the white rock. If the worst

come to the worst, we might try that after dark. Hi!” he broke out.

“What's that?”

For just then, although the sun had still an hour or two to run, all the

echoes of the island awoke and bellowed to the thunder of a cannon.

“They have begun to fight!” I cried. “Follow me.”

And I began to run towards the anchorage, my terrors all forgotten,

while close at my side the marooned man in his goatskins trotted easily

and lightly.

“Left, left,” says he; “keep to your left hand, mate Jim! Under the

trees with you! Theer's where I killed my first goat. They don't come

down here now; they're all mastheaded on them mountings for the fear

of Benjamin Gunn. Ah! And there's the cetemery”--cemetery, he must have

meant. “You see the mounds? I come here and prayed, nows and thens, when

I thought maybe a Sunday would be about doo. It weren't quite a chapel,

but it seemed more solemn like; and then, says you, Ben Gunn was

short-handed--no chapling, nor so much as a Bible and a flag, you says.”

So he kept talking as I ran, neither expecting nor receiving any answer.

The cannon-shot was followed after a considerable interval by a volley

of small arms.

Another pause, and then, not a quarter of a mile in front of me, I

beheld the Union Jack flutter in the air above a wood.

PART FOUR--The Stockade

16

Narrative Continued by the Doctor: How the Ship Was Abandoned

IT was about half past one--three bells in the sea phrase--that the two

boats went ashore from the HISPANIOLA. The captain, the squire, and I

were talking matters over in the cabin. Had there been a breath of wind,

we should have fallen on the six mutineers who were left aboard with

us, slipped our cable, and away to sea. But the wind was wanting; and

to complete our helplessness, down came Hunter with the news that Jim

Hawkins had slipped into a boat and was gone ashore with the rest.

It never occurred to us to doubt Jim Hawkins, but we were alarmed for

his safety. With the men in the temper they were in, it seemed an even

chance if we should see the lad again. We ran on deck. The pitch was

bubbling in the seams; the nasty stench of the place turned me sick;

if ever a man smelt fever and dysentery, it was in that abominable

anchorage. The six scoundrels were sitting grumbling under a sail in the

forecastle; ashore we could see the gigs made fast and a man sitting

in each, hard by where the river runs in. One of them was whistling

“Lillibullero.”

Waiting was a strain, and it was decided that Hunter and I should go

ashore with the jolly-boat in quest of information.

The gigs had leaned to their right, but Hunter and I pulled straight in,

in the direction of the stockade upon the chart. The two who were

left guarding their boats seemed in a bustle at our appearance;

“Lillibullero” stopped off, and I could see the pair discussing what

they ought to do. Had they gone and told Silver, all might have turned

out differently; but they had their orders, I suppose, and decided to

sit quietly where they were and hark back again to “Lillibullero.”

There was a slight bend in the coast, and I steered so as to put it

between us; even before we landed we had thus lost sight of the gigs.

I jumped out and came as near running as I durst, with a big silk

handkerchief under my hat for coolness' sake and a brace of pistols

ready primed for safety.

I had not gone a hundred yards when I reached the stockade.

This was how it was: a spring of clear water rose almost at the top of a

knoll. Well, on the knoll, and enclosing the spring, they had clapped a

stout loghouse fit to hold two score of people on a pinch and loopholed

for musketry on either side. All round this they had cleared a wide

space, and then the thing was completed by a paling six feet high,

without door or opening, too strong to pull down without time and labour

and too open to shelter the besiegers. The people in the log-house had

them in every way; they stood quiet in shelter and shot the others like

partridges. All they wanted was a good watch and food; for, short of a

complete surprise, they might have held the place against a regiment.

What particularly took my fancy was the spring. For though we had a good

enough place of it in the cabin of the HISPANIOLA, with plenty of arms

and ammunition, and things to eat, and excellent wines, there had been

one thing overlooked--we had no water. I was thinking this over when

there came ringing over the island the cry of a man at the point of

death. I was not new to violent death--I have served his Royal Highness

the Duke of Cumberland, and got a wound myself at Fontenoy--but I know

my pulse went dot and carry one. “Jim Hawkins is gone,” was my first

thought.

It is something to have been an old soldier, but more still to have been

a doctor. There is no time to dilly-dally in our work. And so now I made

up my mind instantly, and with no time lost returned to the shore and

jumped on board the jolly-boat.

By good fortune Hunter pulled a good oar. We made the water fly, and the

boat was soon alongside and I aboard the schooner.

I found them all shaken, as was natural. The squire was sitting down, as

white as a sheet, thinking of the harm he had led us to, the good soul!

And one of the six forecastle hands was little better.

“There's a man,” says Captain Smollett, nodding towards him, “new to

this work. He came nigh-hand fainting, doctor, when he heard the cry.

Another touch of the rudder and that man would join us.”

I told my plan to the captain, and between us we settled on the details

of its accomplishment.

We put old Redruth in the gallery between the cabin and the forecastle,

with three or four loaded muskets and a mattress for protection. Hunter

brought the boat round under the stern-port, and Joyce and I set to work

loading her with powder tins, muskets, bags of biscuits, kegs of pork, a

cask of cognac, and my invaluable medicine chest.

In the meantime, the squire and the captain stayed on deck, and the

latter hailed the coxswain, who was the principal man aboard.

“Mr. Hands,” he said, “here are two of us with a brace of pistols each.

If any one of you six make a signal of any description, that man's

dead.”

They were a good deal taken aback, and after a little consultation one

and all tumbled down the fore companion, thinking no doubt to take us

on the rear. But when they saw Redruth waiting for them in the sparred

galley, they went about ship at once, and a head popped out again on

deck.

“Down, dog!” cries the captain.

And the head popped back again; and we heard no more, for the time, of

these six very faint-hearted seamen.

By this time, tumbling things in as they came, we had the jolly-boat

loaded as much as we dared. Joyce and I got out through the stern-port,

and we made for shore again as fast as oars could take us.

This second trip fairly aroused the watchers along shore. “Lillibullero”

was dropped again; and just before we lost sight of them behind the

little point, one of them whipped ashore and disappeared. I had half a

mind to change my plan and destroy their boats, but I feared that Silver

and the others might be close at hand, and all might very well be lost

by trying for too much.

We had soon touched land in the same place as before and set to

provision the block house. All three made the first journey, heavily

laden, and tossed our stores over the palisade. Then, leaving Joyce to

guard them--one man, to be sure, but with half a dozen muskets--Hunter

and I returned to the jolly-boat and loaded ourselves once more. So

we proceeded without pausing to take breath, till the whole cargo was

bestowed, when the two servants took up their position in the block

house, and I, with all my power, sculled back to the HISPANIOLA.

That we should have risked a second boat load seems more daring than it

really was. They had the advantage of numbers, of course, but we had the

advantage of arms. Not one of the men ashore had a musket, and before

they could get within range for pistol shooting, we flattered ourselves

we should be able to give a good account of a half-dozen at least.

The squire was waiting for me at the stern window, all his faintness

gone from him. He caught the painter and made it fast, and we fell to

loading the boat for our very lives. Pork, powder, and biscuit was the

cargo, with only a musket and a cutlass apiece for the squire and me

and Redruth and the captain. The rest of the arms and powder we dropped

overboard in two fathoms and a half of water, so that we could see

the bright steel shining far below us in the sun, on the clean, sandy

bottom.

By this time the tide was beginning to ebb, and the ship was swinging

round to her anchor. Voices were heard faintly halloaing in the

direction of the two gigs; and though this reassured us for Joyce and

Hunter, who were well to the eastward, it warned our party to be off.

Redruth retreated from his place in the gallery and dropped into the

boat, which we then brought round to the ship's counter, to be handier

for Captain Smollett.

“Now, men,” said he, “do you hear me?”

There was no answer from the forecastle.

“It's to you, Abraham Gray--it's to you I am speaking.”

Still no reply.

“Gray,” resumed Mr. Smollett, a little louder, “I am leaving this ship,

and I order you to follow your captain. I know you are a good man at

bottom, and I dare say not one of the lot of you's as bad as he makes

out. I have my watch here in my hand; I give you thirty seconds to join

me in.”

There was a pause.

“Come, my fine fellow,” continued the captain; “don't hang so long in

stays. I'm risking my life and the lives of these good gentlemen every

second.”

There was a sudden scuffle, a sound of blows, and out burst Abraham

Gray with a knife cut on the side of the cheek, and came running to the

captain like a dog to the whistle.

“I'm with you, sir,” said he.

And the next moment he and the captain had dropped aboard of us, and we

had shoved off and given way.

We were clear out of the ship, but not yet ashore in our stockade.

17

Narrative Continued by the Doctor: The Jolly-boat's Last Trip

THIS fifth trip was quite different from any of the others. In the

first place, the little gallipot of a boat that we were in was gravely

overloaded. Five grown men, and three of them--Trelawney, Redruth, and

the captain--over six feet high, was already more than she was meant

to carry. Add to that the powder, pork, and bread-bags. The gunwale was

lipping astern. Several times we shipped a little water, and my breeches

and the tails of my coat were all soaking wet before we had gone a

hundred yards.

The captain made us trim the boat, and we got her to lie a little more

evenly. All the same, we were afraid to breathe.

In the second place, the ebb was now making--a strong rippling current

running westward through the basin, and then south'ard and seaward down

the straits by which we had entered in the morning. Even the ripples

were a danger to our overloaded craft, but the worst of it was that we

were swept out of our true course and away from our proper landing-place

behind the point. If we let the current have its way we should come

ashore beside the gigs, where the pirates might appear at any moment.

“I cannot keep her head for the stockade, sir,” said I to the captain.

I was steering, while he and Redruth, two fresh men, were at the oars.

“The tide keeps washing her down. Could you pull a little stronger?”

“Not without swamping the boat,” said he. “You must bear up, sir, if you

please--bear up until you see you're gaining.”

I tried and found by experiment that the tide kept sweeping us westward

until I had laid her head due east, or just about right angles to the

way we ought to go.

“We'll never get ashore at this rate,” said I.

“If it's the only course that we can lie, sir, we must even lie it,”

returned the captain. “We must keep upstream. You see, sir,” he went on,

“if once we dropped to leeward of the landing-place, it's hard to say

where we should get ashore, besides the chance of being boarded by the

gigs; whereas, the way we go the current must slacken, and then we can

dodge back along the shore.”

“The current's less a'ready, sir,” said the man Gray, who was sitting in

the fore-sheets; “you can ease her off a bit.”

“Thank you, my man,” said I, quite as if nothing had happened, for we

had all quietly made up our minds to treat him like one of ourselves.

Suddenly the captain spoke up again, and I thought his voice was a

little changed.

“The gun!” said he.

“I have thought of that,” said I, for I made sure he was thinking of a

bombardment of the fort. “They could never get the gun ashore, and if

they did, they could never haul it through the woods.”

“Look astern, doctor,” replied the captain.

We had entirely forgotten the long nine; and there, to our horror, were

the five rogues busy about her, getting off her jacket, as they called

the stout tarpaulin cover under which she sailed. Not only that, but

it flashed into my mind at the same moment that the round-shot and the

powder for the gun had been left behind, and a stroke with an axe would

put it all into the possession of the evil ones abroad.

“Israel was Flint's gunner,” said Gray hoarsely.

At any risk, we put the boat's head direct for the landing-place. By

this time we had got so far out of the run of the current that we kept

steerage way even at our necessarily gentle rate of rowing, and I could

keep her steady for the goal. But the worst of it was that with the

course I now held we turned our broadside instead of our stern to the

HISPANIOLA and offered a target like a barn door.

I could hear as well as see that brandy-faced rascal Israel Hands

plumping down a round-shot on the deck.

“Who's the best shot?” asked the captain.

“Mr. Trelawney, out and away,” said I.

“Mr. Trelawney, will you please pick me off one of these men, sir?

Hands, if possible,” said the captain.

Trelawney was as cool as steel. He looked to the priming of his gun.

“Now,” cried the captain, “easy with that gun, sir, or you'll swamp the

boat. All hands stand by to trim her when he aims.”

The squire raised his gun, the rowing ceased, and we leaned over to the

other side to keep the balance, and all was so nicely contrived that we

did not ship a drop.

They had the gun, by this time, slewed round upon the swivel, and Hands,

who was at the muzzle with the rammer, was in consequence the most

exposed. However, we had no luck, for just as Trelawney fired, down he

stooped, the ball whistled over him, and it was one of the other four

who fell.

The cry he gave was echoed not only by his companions on board but by a

great number of voices from the shore, and looking in that direction

I saw the other pirates trooping out from among the trees and tumbling

into their places in the boats.

“Here come the gigs, sir,” said I.

“Give way, then,” cried the captain. “We mustn't mind if we swamp her

now. If we can't get ashore, all's up.”

“Only one of the gigs is being manned, sir,” I added; “the crew of the

other most likely going round by shore to cut us off.”

“They'll have a hot run, sir,” returned the captain. “Jack ashore, you

know. It's not them I mind; it's the round-shot. Carpet bowls! My lady's

maid couldn't miss. Tell us, squire, when you see the match, and we'll

hold water.”

In the meanwhile we had been making headway at a good pace for a boat so

overloaded, and we had shipped but little water in the process. We were

now close in; thirty or forty strokes and we should beach her, for the

ebb had already disclosed a narrow belt of sand below the clustering

trees. The gig was no longer to be feared; the little point had already

concealed it from our eyes. The ebb-tide, which had so cruelly delayed

us, was now making reparation and delaying our assailants. The one

source of danger was the gun.

“If I durst,” said the captain, “I'd stop and pick off another man.”

But it was plain that they meant nothing should delay their shot. They

had never so much as looked at their fallen comrade, though he was not

dead, and I could see him trying to crawl away.

“Ready!” cried the squire.

“Hold!” cried the captain, quick as an echo.

And he and Redruth backed with a great heave that sent her stern bodily

under water. The report fell in at the same instant of time. This was

the first that Jim heard, the sound of the squire's shot not having

reached him. Where the ball passed, not one of us precisely knew, but I

fancy it must have been over our heads and that the wind of it may have

contributed to our disaster.

At any rate, the boat sank by the stern, quite gently, in three feet of

water, leaving the captain and myself, facing each other, on our feet.

The other three took complete headers, and came up again drenched and

bubbling.

So far there was no great harm. No lives were lost, and we could wade

ashore in safety. But there were all our stores at the bottom, and to

make things worse, only two guns out of five remained in a state for

service. Mine I had snatched from my knees and held over my head, by

a sort of instinct. As for the captain, he had carried his over his

shoulder by a bandoleer, and like a wise man, lock uppermost. The other

three had gone down with the boat.

To add to our concern, we heard voices already drawing near us in the

woods along shore, and we had not only the danger of being cut off from

the stockade in our half-crippled state but the fear before us whether,

if Hunter and Joyce were attacked by half a dozen, they would have the

sense and conduct to stand firm. Hunter was steady, that we knew; Joyce

was a doubtful case--a pleasant, polite man for a valet and to brush

one's clothes, but not entirely fitted for a man of war.

With all this in our minds, we waded ashore as fast as we could, leaving

behind us the poor jolly-boat and a good half of all our powder and

provisions.

18

Narrative Continued by the Doctor: End of the First Day's Fighting

WE made our best speed across the strip of wood that now divided us from

the stockade, and at every step we took the voices of the buccaneers

rang nearer. Soon we could hear their footfalls as they ran and the

cracking of the branches as they breasted across a bit of thicket.

I began to see we should have a brush for it in earnest and looked to my

priming.

“Captain,” said I, “Trelawney is the dead shot. Give him your gun; his

own is useless.”

They exchanged guns, and Trelawney, silent and cool as he had been since

the beginning of the bustle, hung a moment on his heel to see that all

was fit for service. At the same time, observing Gray to be unarmed, I

handed him my cutlass. It did all our hearts good to see him spit in his

hand, knit his brows, and make the blade sing through the air. It was

plain from every line of his body that our new hand was worth his salt.

Forty paces farther we came to the edge of the wood and saw the stockade

in front of us. We struck the enclosure about the middle of the south

side, and almost at the same time, seven mutineers--Job Anderson, the

boatswain, at their head--appeared in full cry at the southwestern

corner.

They paused as if taken aback, and before they recovered, not only the

squire and I, but Hunter and Joyce from the block house, had time to

fire. The four shots came in rather a scattering volley, but they did

the business: one of the enemy actually fell, and the rest, without

hesitation, turned and plunged into the trees.

After reloading, we walked down the outside of the palisade to see to

the fallen enemy. He was stone dead--shot through the heart.

We began to rejoice over our good success when just at that moment a

pistol cracked in the bush, a ball whistled close past my ear, and poor

Tom Redruth stumbled and fell his length on the ground. Both the squire

and I returned the shot, but as we had nothing to aim at, it is probable

we only wasted powder. Then we reloaded and turned our attention to poor

Tom.

The captain and Gray were already examining him, and I saw with half an

eye that all was over.

I believe the readiness of our return volley had scattered the mutineers

once more, for we were suffered without further molestation to get the

poor old gamekeeper hoisted over the stockade and carried, groaning and

bleeding, into the log-house.

Poor old fellow, he had not uttered one word of surprise, complaint,

fear, or even acquiescence from the very beginning of our troubles till

now, when we had laid him down in the log-house to die. He had lain like

a Trojan behind his mattress in the gallery; he had followed every order

silently, doggedly, and well; he was the oldest of our party by a score

of years; and now, sullen, old, serviceable servant, it was he that was

to die.

The squire dropped down beside him on his knees and kissed his hand,

crying like a child.

“Be I going, doctor?” he asked.

“Tom, my man,” said I, “you're going home.”

“I wish I had had a lick at them with the gun first,” he replied.

“Tom,” said the squire, “say you forgive me, won't you?”

“Would that be respectful like, from me to you, squire?” was the answer.

“Howsoever, so be it, amen!”

After a little while of silence, he said he thought somebody might read

a prayer. “It's the custom, sir,” he added apologetically. And not long

after, without another word, he passed away.

In the meantime the captain, whom I had observed to be wonderfully

swollen about the chest and pockets, had turned out a great many various

stores--the British colours, a Bible, a coil of stoutish rope, pen, ink,

the log-book, and pounds of tobacco. He had found a longish fir-tree

lying felled and trimmed in the enclosure, and with the help of Hunter

he had set it up at the corner of the log-house where the trunks crossed

and made an angle. Then, climbing on the roof, he had with his own hand

bent and run up the colours.

This seemed mightily to relieve him. He re-entered the log-house and set

about counting up the stores as if nothing else existed. But he had an

eye on Tom's passage for all that, and as soon as all was over, came

forward with another flag and reverently spread it on the body.

“Don't you take on, sir,” he said, shaking the squire's hand. “All's

well with him; no fear for a hand that's been shot down in his duty to

captain and owner. It mayn't be good divinity, but it's a fact.”

Then he pulled me aside.

“Dr. Livesey,” he said, “in how many weeks do you and squire expect the

consort?”

I told him it was a question not of weeks but of months, that if we

were not back by the end of August Blandly was to send to find us, but

neither sooner nor later. “You can calculate for yourself,” I said.

“Why, yes,” returned the captain, scratching his head; “and making a

large allowance, sir, for all the gifts of Providence, I should say we

were pretty close hauled.”

“How do you mean?” I asked.

“It's a pity, sir, we lost that second load. That's what I mean,”

replied the captain. “As for powder and shot, we'll do. But the rations

are short, very short--so short, Dr. Livesey, that we're perhaps as well

without that extra mouth.”

And he pointed to the dead body under the flag.

Just then, with a roar and a whistle, a round-shot passed high above the

roof of the log-house and plumped far beyond us in the wood.

“Oho!” said the captain. “Blaze away! You've little enough powder

already, my lads.”

At the second trial, the aim was better, and the ball descended inside

the stockade, scattering a cloud of sand but doing no further damage.

“Captain,” said the squire, “the house is quite invisible from the ship.

It must be the flag they are aiming at. Would it not be wiser to take it

in?”

“Strike my colours!” cried the captain. “No, sir, not I”; and as soon

as he had said the words, I think we all agreed with him. For it was

not only a piece of stout, seamanly, good feeling; it was good policy

besides and showed our enemies that we despised their cannonade.

All through the evening they kept thundering away. Ball after ball flew

over or fell short or kicked up the sand in the enclosure, but they had

to fire so high that the shot fell dead and buried itself in the soft

sand. We had no ricochet to fear, and though one popped in through the

roof of the log-house and out again through the floor, we soon got used

to that sort of horse-play and minded it no more than cricket.

“There is one good thing about all this,” observed the captain; “the

wood in front of us is likely clear. The ebb has made a good while; our

stores should be uncovered. Volunteers to go and bring in pork.”

Gray and Hunter were the first to come forward. Well armed, they stole

out of the stockade, but it proved a useless mission. The mutineers were

bolder than we fancied or they put more trust in Israel's gunnery. For

four or five of them were busy carrying off our stores and wading out

with them to one of the gigs that lay close by, pulling an oar or so to

hold her steady against the current. Silver was in the stern-sheets in

command; and every man of them was now provided with a musket from some

secret magazine of their own.

The captain sat down to his log, and here is the beginning of the entry:

Alexander Smollett, master; David Livesey, ship's

doctor; Abraham Gray, carpenter's mate; John

Trelawney, owner; John Hunter and Richard Joyce,

owner's servants, landsmen--being all that is left

faithful of the ship's company--with stores for ten

days at short rations, came ashore this day and flew

British colours on the log-house in Treasure Island.

Thomas Redruth, owner's servant, landsman, shot by the

mutineers; James Hawkins, cabin-boy--

And at the same time, I was wondering over poor Jim Hawkins' fate.

A hail on the land side.

“Somebody hailing us,” said Hunter, who was on guard.

“Doctor! Squire! Captain! Hullo, Hunter, is that you?” came the cries.

And I ran to the door in time to see Jim Hawkins, safe and sound, come

climbing over the stockade.

19

Narrative Resumed by Jim Hawkins: The Garrison in the Stockade

AS soon as Ben Gunn saw the colours he came to a halt, stopped me by the

arm, and sat down.

“Now,” said he, “there's your friends, sure enough.”

“Far more likely it's the mutineers,” I answered.

“That!” he cried. “Why, in a place like this, where nobody puts in but

gen'lemen of fortune, Silver would fly the Jolly Roger, you don't make

no doubt of that. No, that's your friends. There's been blows too, and I

reckon your friends has had the best of it; and here they are ashore in

the old stockade, as was made years and years ago by Flint. Ah, he was

the man to have a headpiece, was Flint! Barring rum, his match were

never seen. He were afraid of none, not he; on'y Silver--Silver was that

genteel.”

“Well,” said I, “that may be so, and so be it; all the more reason that

I should hurry on and join my friends.”

“Nay, mate,” returned Ben, “not you. You're a good boy, or I'm mistook;

but you're on'y a boy, all told. Now, Ben Gunn is fly. Rum wouldn't

bring me there, where you're going--not rum wouldn't, till I see your

born gen'leman and gets it on his word of honour. And you won't forget

my words; 'A precious sight (that's what you'll say), a precious sight

more confidence'--and then nips him.”

And he pinched me the third time with the same air of cleverness.

“And when Ben Gunn is wanted, you know where to find him, Jim. Just

wheer you found him today. And him that comes is to have a white thing

in his hand, and he's to come alone. Oh! And you'll say this: 'Ben

Gunn,' says you, 'has reasons of his own.'”

“Well,” said I, “I believe I understand. You have something to propose,

and you wish to see the squire or the doctor, and you're to be found

where I found you. Is that all?”

“And when? says you,” he added. “Why, from about noon observation to

about six bells.”

“Good,” said I, “and now may I go?”

“You won't forget?” he inquired anxiously. “Precious sight, and reasons

of his own, says you. Reasons of his own; that's the mainstay; as

between man and man. Well, then”--still holding me--“I reckon you can

go, Jim. And, Jim, if you was to see Silver, you wouldn't go for to sell

Ben Gunn? Wild horses wouldn't draw it from you? No, says you. And if

them pirates camp ashore, Jim, what would you say but there'd be widders

in the morning?”

Here he was interrupted by a loud report, and a cannonball came tearing

through the trees and pitched in the sand not a hundred yards from where

we two were talking. The next moment each of us had taken to his heels

in a different direction.

For a good hour to come frequent reports shook the island, and

balls kept crashing through the woods. I moved from hiding-place to

hiding-place, always pursued, or so it seemed to me, by these terrifying

missiles. But towards the end of the bombardment, though still I durst

not venture in the direction of the stockade, where the balls fell

oftenest, I had begun, in a manner, to pluck up my heart again, and

after a long detour to the east, crept down among the shore-side trees.

The sun had just set, the sea breeze was rustling and tumbling in the

woods and ruffling the grey surface of the anchorage; the tide, too, was

far out, and great tracts of sand lay uncovered; the air, after the heat

of the day, chilled me through my jacket.

The HISPANIOLA still lay where she had anchored; but, sure enough, there

was the Jolly Roger--the black flag of piracy--flying from her peak.

Even as I looked, there came another red flash and another report that

sent the echoes clattering, and one more round-shot whistled through the

air. It was the last of the cannonade.

I lay for some time watching the bustle which succeeded the attack. Men

were demolishing something with axes on the beach near the stockade--the

poor jolly-boat, I afterwards discovered. Away, near the mouth of the

river, a great fire was glowing among the trees, and between that point

and the ship one of the gigs kept coming and going, the men, whom I

had seen so gloomy, shouting at the oars like children. But there was a

sound in their voices which suggested rum.

At length I thought I might return towards the stockade. I was pretty

far down on the low, sandy spit that encloses the anchorage to the east,

and is joined at half-water to Skeleton Island; and now, as I rose to my

feet, I saw, some distance further down the spit and rising from among

low bushes, an isolated rock, pretty high, and peculiarly white in

colour. It occurred to me that this might be the white rock of which Ben

Gunn had spoken and that some day or other a boat might be wanted and I

should know where to look for one.

Then I skirted among the woods until I had regained the rear, or

shoreward side, of the stockade, and was soon warmly welcomed by the

faithful party.

I had soon told my story and began to look about me. The log-house was

made of unsquared trunks of pine--roof, walls, and floor. The latter

stood in several places as much as a foot or a foot and a half above the

surface of the sand. There was a porch at the door, and under this porch

the little spring welled up into an artificial basin of a rather odd

kind--no other than a great ship's kettle of iron, with the bottom

knocked out, and sunk “to her bearings,” as the captain said, among the

sand.

Little had been left besides the framework of the house, but in one

corner there was a stone slab laid down by way of hearth and an old

rusty iron basket to contain the fire.

The slopes of the knoll and all the inside of the stockade had been

cleared of timber to build the house, and we could see by the stumps

what a fine and lofty grove had been destroyed. Most of the soil had

been washed away or buried in drift after the removal of the trees; only

where the streamlet ran down from the kettle a thick bed of moss and

some ferns and little creeping bushes were still green among the sand.

Very close around the stockade--too close for defence, they said--the

wood still flourished high and dense, all of fir on the land side, but

towards the sea with a large admixture of live-oaks.

The cold evening breeze, of which I have spoken, whistled through every

chink of the rude building and sprinkled the floor with a continual rain

of fine sand. There was sand in our eyes, sand in our teeth, sand in our

suppers, sand dancing in the spring at the bottom of the kettle, for all

the world like porridge beginning to boil. Our chimney was a square hole

in the roof; it was but a little part of the smoke that found its way

out, and the rest eddied about the house and kept us coughing and piping

the eye.

Add to this that Gray, the new man, had his face tied up in a bandage

for a cut he had got in breaking away from the mutineers and that poor

old Tom Redruth, still unburied, lay along the wall, stiff and stark,

under the Union Jack.

If we had been allowed to sit idle, we should all have fallen in the

blues, but Captain Smollett was never the man for that. All hands were

called up before him, and he divided us into watches. The doctor and

Gray and I for one; the squire, Hunter, and Joyce upon the other. Tired

though we all were, two were sent out for firewood; two more were set to

dig a grave for Redruth; the doctor was named cook; I was put sentry at

the door; and the captain himself went from one to another, keeping up

our spirits and lending a hand wherever it was wanted.

From time to time the doctor came to the door for a little air and to

rest his eyes, which were almost smoked out of his head, and whenever he

did so, he had a word for me.

“That man Smollett,” he said once, “is a better man than I am. And when

I say that it means a deal, Jim.”

Another time he came and was silent for a while. Then he put his head on

one side, and looked at me.

“Is this Ben Gunn a man?” he asked.

“I do not know, sir,” said I. “I am not very sure whether he's sane.”

“If there's any doubt about the matter, he is,” returned the doctor. “A

man who has been three years biting his nails on a desert island, Jim,

can't expect to appear as sane as you or me. It doesn't lie in human

nature. Was it cheese you said he had a fancy for?”

“Yes, sir, cheese,” I answered.

“Well, Jim,” says he, “just see the good that comes of being dainty in

your food. You've seen my snuff-box, haven't you? And you never saw me

take snuff, the reason being that in my snuff-box I carry a piece of

Parmesan cheese--a cheese made in Italy, very nutritious. Well, that's

for Ben Gunn!”

Before supper was eaten we buried old Tom in the sand and stood round

him for a while bare-headed in the breeze. A good deal of firewood had

been got in, but not enough for the captain's fancy, and he shook his

head over it and told us we “must get back to this tomorrow rather

livelier.” Then, when we had eaten our pork and each had a good stiff

glass of brandy grog, the three chiefs got together in a corner to

discuss our prospects.

It appears they were at their wits' end what to do, the stores being so

low that we must have been starved into surrender long before help came.

But our best hope, it was decided, was to kill off the buccaneers until

they either hauled down their flag or ran away with the HISPANIOLA. From

nineteen they were already reduced to fifteen, two others were wounded,

and one at least--the man shot beside the gun--severely wounded, if he

were not dead. Every time we had a crack at them, we were to take it,

saving our own lives, with the extremest care. And besides that, we had

two able allies--rum and the climate.

As for the first, though we were about half a mile away, we could hear

them roaring and singing late into the night; and as for the second,

the doctor staked his wig that, camped where they were in the marsh

and unprovided with remedies, the half of them would be on their backs

before a week.

“So,” he added, “if we are not all shot down first they'll be glad to

be packing in the schooner. It's always a ship, and they can get to

buccaneering again, I suppose.”

“First ship that ever I lost,” said Captain Smollett.

I was dead tired, as you may fancy; and when I got to sleep, which was

not till after a great deal of tossing, I slept like a log of wood.

The rest had long been up and had already breakfasted and increased the

pile of firewood by about half as much again when I was wakened by a

bustle and the sound of voices.

“Flag of truce!” I heard someone say; and then, immediately after, with

a cry of surprise, “Silver himself!”

And at that, up I jumped, and rubbing my eyes, ran to a loophole in the

wall.

20

Silver's Embassy

SURE enough, there were two men just outside the stockade, one of them

waving a white cloth, the other, no less a person than Silver himself,

standing placidly by.

It was still quite early, and the coldest morning that I think I ever

was abroad in--a chill that pierced into the marrow. The sky was bright

and cloudless overhead, and the tops of the trees shone rosily in

the sun. But where Silver stood with his lieutenant, all was still in

shadow, and they waded knee-deep in a low white vapour that had crawled

during the night out of the morass. The chill and the vapour taken

together told a poor tale of the island. It was plainly a damp,

feverish, unhealthy spot.

“Keep indoors, men,” said the captain. “Ten to one this is a trick.”

Then he hailed the buccaneer.

“Who goes? Stand, or we fire.”

“Flag of truce,” cried Silver.

The captain was in the porch, keeping himself carefully out of the way

of a treacherous shot, should any be intended. He turned and spoke to

us, “Doctor's watch on the lookout. Dr. Livesey take the north side,

if you please; Jim, the east; Gray, west. The watch below, all hands to

load muskets. Lively, men, and careful.”

And then he turned again to the mutineers.

“And what do you want with your flag of truce?” he cried.

This time it was the other man who replied.

“Cap'n Silver, sir, to come on board and make terms,” he shouted.

“Cap'n Silver! Don't know him. Who's he?” cried the captain. And we

could hear him adding to himself, “Cap'n, is it? My heart, and here's

promotion!”

Long John answered for himself. “Me, sir. These poor lads have chosen me

cap'n, after your desertion, sir”--laying a particular emphasis upon the

word “desertion.” “We're willing to submit, if we can come to terms,

and no bones about it. All I ask is your word, Cap'n Smollett, to let me

safe and sound out of this here stockade, and one minute to get out o'

shot before a gun is fired.”

“My man,” said Captain Smollett, “I have not the slightest desire to

talk to you. If you wish to talk to me, you can come, that's all. If

there's any treachery, it'll be on your side, and the Lord help you.”

“That's enough, cap'n,” shouted Long John cheerily. “A word from you's

enough. I know a gentleman, and you may lay to that.”

We could see the man who carried the flag of truce attempting to hold

Silver back. Nor was that wonderful, seeing how cavalier had been the

captain's answer. But Silver laughed at him aloud and slapped him on the

back as if the idea of alarm had been absurd. Then he advanced to the

stockade, threw over his crutch, got a leg up, and with great vigour

and skill succeeded in surmounting the fence and dropping safely to the

other side.

I will confess that I was far too much taken up with what was going on

to be of the slightest use as sentry; indeed, I had already deserted

my eastern loophole and crept up behind the captain, who had now seated

himself on the threshold, with his elbows on his knees, his head in his

hands, and his eyes fixed on the water as it bubbled out of the old iron

kettle in the sand. He was whistling “Come, Lasses and Lads.”

Silver had terrible hard work getting up the knoll. What with the

steepness of the incline, the thick tree stumps, and the soft sand, he

and his crutch were as helpless as a ship in stays. But he stuck to it

like a man in silence, and at last arrived before the captain, whom

he saluted in the handsomest style. He was tricked out in his best;

an immense blue coat, thick with brass buttons, hung as low as to his

knees, and a fine laced hat was set on the back of his head.

“Here you are, my man,” said the captain, raising his head. “You had

better sit down.”

“You ain't a-going to let me inside, cap'n?” complained Long John. “It's

a main cold morning, to be sure, sir, to sit outside upon the sand.”

“Why, Silver,” said the captain, “if you had pleased to be an honest

man, you might have been sitting in your galley. It's your own doing.

You're either my ship's cook--and then you were treated handsome--or

Cap'n Silver, a common mutineer and pirate, and then you can go hang!”

“Well, well, cap'n,” returned the sea-cook, sitting down as he was

bidden on the sand, “you'll have to give me a hand up again, that's all.

A sweet pretty place you have of it here. Ah, there's Jim! The top of

the morning to you, Jim. Doctor, here's my service. Why, there you all

are together like a happy family, in a manner of speaking.”

“If you have anything to say, my man, better say it,” said the captain.

“Right you were, Cap'n Smollett,” replied Silver. “Dooty is dooty, to be

sure. Well now, you look here, that was a good lay of yours last

night. I don't deny it was a good lay. Some of you pretty handy with a

handspike-end. And I'll not deny neither but what some of my people was

shook--maybe all was shook; maybe I was shook myself; maybe that's

why I'm here for terms. But you mark me, cap'n, it won't do twice, by

thunder! We'll have to do sentry-go and ease off a point or so on the

rum. Maybe you think we were all a sheet in the wind's eye. But I'll

tell you I was sober; I was on'y dog tired; and if I'd awoke a second

sooner, I'd 'a caught you at the act, I would. He wasn't dead when I got

round to him, not he.”

“Well?” says Captain Smollett as cool as can be.

All that Silver said was a riddle to him, but you would never have

guessed it from his tone. As for me, I began to have an inkling. Ben

Gunn's last words came back to my mind. I began to suppose that he had

paid the buccaneers a visit while they all lay drunk together round

their fire, and I reckoned up with glee that we had only fourteen

enemies to deal with.

“Well, here it is,” said Silver. “We want that treasure, and we'll have

it--that's our point! You would just as soon save your lives, I reckon;

and that's yours. You have a chart, haven't you?”

“That's as may be,” replied the captain.

“Oh, well, you have, I know that,” returned Long John. “You needn't be

so husky with a man; there ain't a particle of service in that, and you

may lay to it. What I mean is, we want your chart. Now, I never meant

you no harm, myself.”

“That won't do with me, my man,” interrupted the captain. “We know

exactly what you meant to do, and we don't care, for now, you see, you

can't do it.”

And the captain looked at him calmly and proceeded to fill a pipe.

“If Abe Gray--” Silver broke out.

“Avast there!” cried Mr. Smollett. “Gray told me nothing, and I asked

him nothing; and what's more, I would see you and him and this whole

island blown clean out of the water into blazes first. So there's my

mind for you, my man, on that.”

This little whiff of temper seemed to cool Silver down. He had been

growing nettled before, but now he pulled himself together.

“Like enough,” said he. “I would set no limits to what gentlemen might

consider shipshape, or might not, as the case were. And seein' as how

you are about to take a pipe, cap'n, I'll make so free as do likewise.”

And he filled a pipe and lighted it; and the two men sat silently

smoking for quite a while, now looking each other in the face, now

stopping their tobacco, now leaning forward to spit. It was as good as

the play to see them.

“Now,” resumed Silver, “here it is. You give us the chart to get the

treasure by, and drop shooting poor seamen and stoving of their heads in

while asleep. You do that, and we'll offer you a choice. Either you come

aboard along of us, once the treasure shipped, and then I'll give you my

affy-davy, upon my word of honour, to clap you somewhere safe ashore. Or

if that ain't to your fancy, some of my hands being rough and having

old scores on account of hazing, then you can stay here, you can. We'll

divide stores with you, man for man; and I'll give my affy-davy, as

before to speak the first ship I sight, and send 'em here to pick you

up. Now, you'll own that's talking. Handsomer you couldn't look to get,

now you. And I hope”--raising his voice--“that all hands in this here

block house will overhaul my words, for what is spoke to one is spoke to

all.”

Captain Smollett rose from his seat and knocked out the ashes of his

pipe in the palm of his left hand.

“Is that all?” he asked.

“Every last word, by thunder!” answered John. “Refuse that, and you've

seen the last of me but musket-balls.”

“Very good,” said the captain. “Now you'll hear me. If you'll come up

one by one, unarmed, I'll engage to clap you all in irons and take you

home to a fair trial in England. If you won't, my name is Alexander

Smollett, I've flown my sovereign's colours, and I'll see you all

to Davy Jones. You can't find the treasure. You can't sail the

ship--there's not a man among you fit to sail the ship. You can't fight

us--Gray, there, got away from five of you. Your ship's in irons, Master

Silver; you're on a lee shore, and so you'll find. I stand here and tell

you so; and they're the last good words you'll get from me, for in the

name of heaven, I'll put a bullet in your back when next I meet you.

Tramp, my lad. Bundle out of this, please, hand over hand, and double

quick.”

Silver's face was a picture; his eyes started in his head with wrath. He

shook the fire out of his pipe.

“Give me a hand up!” he cried.

“Not I,” returned the captain.

“Who'll give me a hand up?” he roared.

Not a man among us moved. Growling the foulest imprecations, he crawled

along the sand till he got hold of the porch and could hoist himself

again upon his crutch. Then he spat into the spring.

“There!” he cried. “That's what I think of ye. Before an hour's out,

I'll stove in your old block house like a rum puncheon. Laugh, by

thunder, laugh! Before an hour's out, ye'll laugh upon the other side.

Them that die'll be the lucky ones.”

And with a dreadful oath he stumbled off, ploughed down the sand, was

helped across the stockade, after four or five failures, by the man with

the flag of truce, and disappeared in an instant afterwards among the

trees.

21

The Attack

AS soon as Silver disappeared, the captain, who had been closely

watching him, turned towards the interior of the house and found not a

man of us at his post but Gray. It was the first time we had ever seen

him angry.

“Quarters!” he roared. And then, as we all slunk back to our places,

“Gray,” he said, “I'll put your name in the log; you've stood by your

duty like a seaman. Mr. Trelawney, I'm surprised at you, sir. Doctor,

I thought you had worn the king's coat! If that was how you served at

Fontenoy, sir, you'd have been better in your berth.”

The doctor's watch were all back at their loopholes, the rest were busy

loading the spare muskets, and everyone with a red face, you may be

certain, and a flea in his ear, as the saying is.

The captain looked on for a while in silence. Then he spoke.

“My lads,” said he, “I've given Silver a broadside. I pitched it in

red-hot on purpose; and before the hour's out, as he said, we shall be

boarded. We're outnumbered, I needn't tell you that, but we fight in

shelter; and a minute ago I should have said we fought with discipline.

I've no manner of doubt that we can drub them, if you choose.”

Then he went the rounds and saw, as he said, that all was clear.

On the two short sides of the house, east and west, there were only two

loopholes; on the south side where the porch was, two again; and on the

north side, five. There was a round score of muskets for the seven

of us; the firewood had been built into four piles--tables, you might

say--one about the middle of each side, and on each of these tables some

ammunition and four loaded muskets were laid ready to the hand of the

defenders. In the middle, the cutlasses lay ranged.

“Toss out the fire,” said the captain; “the chill is past, and we

mustn't have smoke in our eyes.”

The iron fire-basket was carried bodily out by Mr. Trelawney, and the

embers smothered among sand.

“Hawkins hasn't had his breakfast. Hawkins, help yourself, and back to

your post to eat it,” continued Captain Smollett. “Lively, now, my lad;

you'll want it before you've done. Hunter, serve out a round of brandy

to all hands.”

And while this was going on, the captain completed, in his own mind, the

plan of the defence.

“Doctor, you will take the door,” he resumed. “See, and don't expose

yourself; keep within, and fire through the porch. Hunter, take the east

side, there. Joyce, you stand by the west, my man. Mr. Trelawney, you

are the best shot--you and Gray will take this long north side, with the

five loopholes; it's there the danger is. If they can get up to it and

fire in upon us through our own ports, things would begin to look dirty.

Hawkins, neither you nor I are much account at the shooting; we'll stand

by to load and bear a hand.”

As the captain had said, the chill was past. As soon as the sun had

climbed above our girdle of trees, it fell with all its force upon the

clearing and drank up the vapours at a draught. Soon the sand was baking

and the resin melting in the logs of the block house. Jackets and coats

were flung aside, shirts thrown open at the neck and rolled up to the

shoulders; and we stood there, each at his post, in a fever of heat and

anxiety.

An hour passed away.

“Hang them!” said the captain. “This is as dull as the doldrums. Gray,

whistle for a wind.”

And just at that moment came the first news of the attack.

“If you please, sir,” said Joyce, “if I see anyone, am I to fire?”

“I told you so!” cried the captain.

“Thank you, sir,” returned Joyce with the same quiet civility.

Nothing followed for a time, but the remark had set us all on the alert,

straining ears and eyes--the musketeers with their pieces balanced in

their hands, the captain out in the middle of the block house with his

mouth very tight and a frown on his face.

So some seconds passed, till suddenly Joyce whipped up his musket

and fired. The report had scarcely died away ere it was repeated and

repeated from without in a scattering volley, shot behind shot, like

a string of geese, from every side of the enclosure. Several bullets

struck the log-house, but not one entered; and as the smoke cleared away

and vanished, the stockade and the woods around it looked as quiet and

empty as before. Not a bough waved, not the gleam of a musket-barrel

betrayed the presence of our foes.

“Did you hit your man?” asked the captain.

“No, sir,” replied Joyce. “I believe not, sir.”

“Next best thing to tell the truth,” muttered Captain Smollett. “Load

his gun, Hawkins. How many should say there were on your side, doctor?”

“I know precisely,” said Dr. Livesey. “Three shots were fired on this

side. I saw the three flashes--two close together--one farther to the

west.”

“Three!” repeated the captain. “And how many on yours, Mr. Trelawney?”

But this was not so easily answered. There had come many from the

north--seven by the squire's computation, eight or nine according to

Gray. From the east and west only a single shot had been fired. It was

plain, therefore, that the attack would be developed from the north and

that on the other three sides we were only to be annoyed by a show of

hostilities. But Captain Smollett made no change in his arrangements. If

the mutineers succeeded in crossing the stockade, he argued, they would

take possession of any unprotected loophole and shoot us down like rats

in our own stronghold.

Nor had we much time left to us for thought. Suddenly, with a loud

huzza, a little cloud of pirates leaped from the woods on the north side

and ran straight on the stockade. At the same moment, the fire was once

more opened from the woods, and a rifle ball sang through the doorway

and knocked the doctor's musket into bits.

The boarders swarmed over the fence like monkeys. Squire and Gray fired

again and yet again; three men fell, one forwards into the enclosure,

two back on the outside. But of these, one was evidently more frightened

than hurt, for he was on his feet again in a crack and instantly

disappeared among the trees.

Two had bit the dust, one had fled, four had made good their footing

inside our defences, while from the shelter of the woods seven or eight

men, each evidently supplied with several muskets, kept up a hot though

useless fire on the log-house.

The four who had boarded made straight before them for the building,

shouting as they ran, and the men among the trees shouted back to

encourage them. Several shots were fired, but such was the hurry of the

marksmen that not one appears to have taken effect. In a moment, the

four pirates had swarmed up the mound and were upon us.

The head of Job Anderson, the boatswain, appeared at the middle

loophole.

“At 'em, all hands--all hands!” he roared in a voice of thunder.

At the same moment, another pirate grasped Hunter's musket by the

muzzle, wrenched it from his hands, plucked it through the loophole,

and with one stunning blow, laid the poor fellow senseless on the floor.

Meanwhile a third, running unharmed all around the house, appeared

suddenly in the doorway and fell with his cutlass on the doctor.

Our position was utterly reversed. A moment since we were firing, under

cover, at an exposed enemy; now it was we who lay uncovered and could

not return a blow.

The log-house was full of smoke, to which we owed our comparative

safety. Cries and confusion, the flashes and reports of pistol-shots,

and one loud groan rang in my ears.

“Out, lads, out, and fight 'em in the open! Cutlasses!” cried the

captain.

I snatched a cutlass from the pile, and someone, at the same time

snatching another, gave me a cut across the knuckles which I hardly

felt. I dashed out of the door into the clear sunlight. Someone was

close behind, I knew not whom. Right in front, the doctor was pursuing

his assailant down the hill, and just as my eyes fell upon him, beat

down his guard and sent him sprawling on his back with a great slash

across the face.

“Round the house, lads! Round the house!” cried the captain; and even in

the hurly-burly, I perceived a change in his voice.

Mechanically, I obeyed, turned eastwards, and with my cutlass raised,

ran round the corner of the house. Next moment I was face to face

with Anderson. He roared aloud, and his hanger went up above his head,

flashing in the sunlight. I had not time to be afraid, but as the blow

still hung impending, leaped in a trice upon one side, and missing my

foot in the soft sand, rolled headlong down the slope.

When I had first sallied from the door, the other mutineers had been

already swarming up the palisade to make an end of us. One man, in a red

night-cap, with his cutlass in his mouth, had even got upon the top and

thrown a leg across. Well, so short had been the interval that when I

found my feet again all was in the same posture, the fellow with the red

night-cap still half-way over, another still just showing his head above

the top of the stockade. And yet, in this breath of time, the fight was

over and the victory was ours.

Gray, following close behind me, had cut down the big boatswain ere

he had time to recover from his last blow. Another had been shot at a

loophole in the very act of firing into the house and now lay in agony,

the pistol still smoking in his hand. A third, as I had seen, the doctor

had disposed of at a blow. Of the four who had scaled the palisade, one

only remained unaccounted for, and he, having left his cutlass on the

field, was now clambering out again with the fear of death upon him.

“Fire--fire from the house!” cried the doctor. “And you, lads, back into

cover.”

But his words were unheeded, no shot was fired, and the last boarder

made good his escape and disappeared with the rest into the wood. In

three seconds nothing remained of the attacking party but the five who

had fallen, four on the inside and one on the outside of the palisade.

The doctor and Gray and I ran full speed for shelter. The survivors

would soon be back where they had left their muskets, and at any moment

the fire might recommence.

The house was by this time somewhat cleared of smoke, and we saw at

a glance the price we had paid for victory. Hunter lay beside his

loophole, stunned; Joyce by his, shot through the head, never to move

again; while right in the centre, the squire was supporting the captain,

one as pale as the other.

“The captain's wounded,” said Mr. Trelawney.

“Have they run?” asked Mr. Smollett.

“All that could, you may be bound,” returned the doctor; “but there's

five of them will never run again.”

“Five!” cried the captain. “Come, that's better. Five against three

leaves us four to nine. That's better odds than we had at starting. We

were seven to nineteen then, or thought we were, and that's as bad to

bear.” \*

\*The mutineers were soon only eight in number, for the man shot by Mr.

Trelawney on board the schooner died that same evening of his wound. But

this was, of course, not known till after by the faithful party.

PART FIVE--My Sea Adventure

22

How My Sea Adventure Began

THERE was no return of the mutineers--not so much as another shot out of

the woods. They had “got their rations for that day,” as the captain put

it, and we had the place to ourselves and a quiet time to overhaul the

wounded and get dinner. Squire and I cooked outside in spite of the

danger, and even outside we could hardly tell what we were at, for

horror of the loud groans that reached us from the doctor's patients.

Out of the eight men who had fallen in the action, only three still

breathed--that one of the pirates who had been shot at the loophole,

Hunter, and Captain Smollett; and of these, the first two were as good

as dead; the mutineer indeed died under the doctor's knife, and Hunter,

do what we could, never recovered consciousness in this world. He

lingered all day, breathing loudly like the old buccaneer at home in his

apoplectic fit, but the bones of his chest had been crushed by the

blow and his skull fractured in falling, and some time in the following

night, without sign or sound, he went to his Maker.

As for the captain, his wounds were grievous indeed, but not dangerous.

No organ was fatally injured. Anderson's ball--for it was Job that

shot him first--had broken his shoulder-blade and touched the lung, not

badly; the second had only torn and displaced some muscles in the calf.

He was sure to recover, the doctor said, but in the meantime, and for

weeks to come, he must not walk nor move his arm, nor so much as speak

when he could help it.

My own accidental cut across the knuckles was a flea-bite. Doctor

Livesey patched it up with plaster and pulled my ears for me into the

bargain.

After dinner the squire and the doctor sat by the captain's side awhile

in consultation; and when they had talked to their hearts' content, it

being then a little past noon, the doctor took up his hat and pistols,

girt on a cutlass, put the chart in his pocket, and with a musket over

his shoulder crossed the palisade on the north side and set off briskly

through the trees.

Gray and I were sitting together at the far end of the block house, to

be out of earshot of our officers consulting; and Gray took his pipe out

of his mouth and fairly forgot to put it back again, so thunder-struck

he was at this occurrence.

“Why, in the name of Davy Jones,” said he, “is Dr. Livesey mad?”

“Why no,” says I. “He's about the last of this crew for that, I take

it.”

“Well, shipmate,” said Gray, “mad he may not be; but if HE'S not, you

mark my words, I am.”

“I take it,” replied I, “the doctor has his idea; and if I am right,

he's going now to see Ben Gunn.”

I was right, as appeared later; but in the meantime, the house being

stifling hot and the little patch of sand inside the palisade ablaze

with midday sun, I began to get another thought into my head, which was

not by any means so right. What I began to do was to envy the doctor

walking in the cool shadow of the woods with the birds about him and the

pleasant smell of the pines, while I sat grilling, with my clothes

stuck to the hot resin, and so much blood about me and so many poor

dead bodies lying all around that I took a disgust of the place that was

almost as strong as fear.

All the time I was washing out the block house, and then washing up

the things from dinner, this disgust and envy kept growing stronger

and stronger, till at last, being near a bread-bag, and no one then

observing me, I took the first step towards my escapade and filled both

pockets of my coat with biscuit.

I was a fool, if you like, and certainly I was going to do a foolish,

over-bold act; but I was determined to do it with all the precautions in

my power. These biscuits, should anything befall me, would keep me, at

least, from starving till far on in the next day.

The next thing I laid hold of was a brace of pistols, and as I already

had a powder-horn and bullets, I felt myself well supplied with arms.

As for the scheme I had in my head, it was not a bad one in itself. I

was to go down the sandy spit that divides the anchorage on the east

from the open sea, find the white rock I had observed last evening, and

ascertain whether it was there or not that Ben Gunn had hidden his boat,

a thing quite worth doing, as I still believe. But as I was certain I

should not be allowed to leave the enclosure, my only plan was to take

French leave and slip out when nobody was watching, and that was so bad

a way of doing it as made the thing itself wrong. But I was only a boy,

and I had made my mind up.

Well, as things at last fell out, I found an admirable opportunity. The

squire and Gray were busy helping the captain with his bandages, the

coast was clear, I made a bolt for it over the stockade and into the

thickest of the trees, and before my absence was observed I was out of

cry of my companions.

This was my second folly, far worse than the first, as I left but two

sound men to guard the house; but like the first, it was a help towards

saving all of us.

I took my way straight for the east coast of the island, for I was

determined to go down the sea side of the spit to avoid all chance of

observation from the anchorage. It was already late in the afternoon,

although still warm and sunny. As I continued to thread the tall woods,

I could hear from far before me not only the continuous thunder of the

surf, but a certain tossing of foliage and grinding of boughs which

showed me the sea breeze had set in higher than usual. Soon cool

draughts of air began to reach me, and a few steps farther I came forth

into the open borders of the grove, and saw the sea lying blue and sunny

to the horizon and the surf tumbling and tossing its foam along the

beach.

I have never seen the sea quiet round Treasure Island. The sun might

blaze overhead, the air be without a breath, the surface smooth and

blue, but still these great rollers would be running along all the

external coast, thundering and thundering by day and night; and I scarce

believe there is one spot in the island where a man would be out of

earshot of their noise.

I walked along beside the surf with great enjoyment, till, thinking

I was now got far enough to the south, I took the cover of some thick

bushes and crept warily up to the ridge of the spit.

Behind me was the sea, in front the anchorage. The sea breeze, as though

it had the sooner blown itself out by its unusual violence, was already

at an end; it had been succeeded by light, variable airs from the south

and south-east, carrying great banks of fog; and the anchorage, under

lee of Skeleton Island, lay still and leaden as when first we entered

it. The HISPANIOLA, in that unbroken mirror, was exactly portrayed from

the truck to the waterline, the Jolly Roger hanging from her peak.

Alongside lay one of the gigs, Silver in the stern-sheets--him I could

always recognize--while a couple of men were leaning over the stern

bulwarks, one of them with a red cap--the very rogue that I had seen

some hours before stride-legs upon the palisade. Apparently they were

talking and laughing, though at that distance--upwards of a mile--I

could, of course, hear no word of what was said. All at once there began

the most horrid, unearthly screaming, which at first startled me badly,

though I had soon remembered the voice of Captain Flint and even thought

I could make out the bird by her bright plumage as she sat perched upon

her master's wrist.

Soon after, the jolly-boat shoved off and pulled for shore, and the man

with the red cap and his comrade went below by the cabin companion.

Just about the same time, the sun had gone down behind the Spy-glass,

and as the fog was collecting rapidly, it began to grow dark in earnest.

I saw I must lose no time if I were to find the boat that evening.

The white rock, visible enough above the brush, was still some eighth of

a mile further down the spit, and it took me a goodish while to get up

with it, crawling, often on all fours, among the scrub. Night had almost

come when I laid my hand on its rough sides. Right below it there was

an exceedingly small hollow of green turf, hidden by banks and a thick

underwood about knee-deep, that grew there very plentifully; and in the

centre of the dell, sure enough, a little tent of goat-skins, like what

the gipsies carry about with them in England.

I dropped into the hollow, lifted the side of the tent, and there was

Ben Gunn's boat--home-made if ever anything was home-made; a rude,

lop-sided framework of tough wood, and stretched upon that a covering of

goat-skin, with the hair inside. The thing was extremely small, even

for me, and I can hardly imagine that it could have floated with a

full-sized man. There was one thwart set as low as possible, a kind of

stretcher in the bows, and a double paddle for propulsion.

I had not then seen a coracle, such as the ancient Britons made, but

I have seen one since, and I can give you no fairer idea of Ben Gunn's

boat than by saying it was like the first and the worst coracle ever

made by man. But the great advantage of the coracle it certainly

possessed, for it was exceedingly light and portable.

Well, now that I had found the boat, you would have thought I had had

enough of truantry for once, but in the meantime I had taken another

notion and become so obstinately fond of it that I would have carried

it out, I believe, in the teeth of Captain Smollett himself. This was

to slip out under cover of the night, cut the HISPANIOLA adrift, and let

her go ashore where she fancied. I had quite made up my mind that the

mutineers, after their repulse of the morning, had nothing nearer their

hearts than to up anchor and away to sea; this, I thought, it would be

a fine thing to prevent, and now that I had seen how they left their

watchmen unprovided with a boat, I thought it might be done with little

risk.

Down I sat to wait for darkness, and made a hearty meal of biscuit. It

was a night out of ten thousand for my purpose. The fog had now buried

all heaven. As the last rays of daylight dwindled and disappeared,

absolute blackness settled down on Treasure Island. And when, at last,

I shouldered the coracle and groped my way stumblingly out of the hollow

where I had supped, there were but two points visible on the whole

anchorage.

One was the great fire on shore, by which the defeated pirates lay

carousing in the swamp. The other, a mere blur of light upon the

darkness, indicated the position of the anchored ship. She had swung

round to the ebb--her bow was now towards me--the only lights on board

were in the cabin, and what I saw was merely a reflection on the fog of

the strong rays that flowed from the stern window.

The ebb had already run some time, and I had to wade through a long belt

of swampy sand, where I sank several times above the ankle, before I

came to the edge of the retreating water, and wading a little way in,

with some strength and dexterity, set my coracle, keel downwards, on the

surface.

23

The Ebb-tide Runs

THE coracle--as I had ample reason to know before I was done with

her--was a very safe boat for a person of my height and weight, both

buoyant and clever in a seaway; but she was the most cross-grained,

lop-sided craft to manage. Do as you pleased, she always made more

leeway than anything else, and turning round and round was the manoeuvre

she was best at. Even Ben Gunn himself has admitted that she was “queer

to handle till you knew her way.”

Certainly I did not know her way. She turned in every direction but the

one I was bound to go; the most part of the time we were broadside on,

and I am very sure I never should have made the ship at all but for the

tide. By good fortune, paddle as I pleased, the tide was still sweeping

me down; and there lay the HISPANIOLA right in the fairway, hardly to be

missed.

First she loomed before me like a blot of something yet blacker than

darkness, then her spars and hull began to take shape, and the next

moment, as it seemed (for, the farther I went, the brisker grew the

current of the ebb), I was alongside of her hawser and had laid hold.

The hawser was as taut as a bowstring, and the current so strong she

pulled upon her anchor. All round the hull, in the blackness, the

rippling current bubbled and chattered like a little mountain stream.

One cut with my sea-gully and the HISPANIOLA would go humming down the

tide.

So far so good, but it next occurred to my recollection that a taut

hawser, suddenly cut, is a thing as dangerous as a kicking horse. Ten to

one, if I were so foolhardy as to cut the HISPANIOLA from her anchor, I

and the coracle would be knocked clean out of the water.

This brought me to a full stop, and if fortune had not again

particularly favoured me, I should have had to abandon my design. But

the light airs which had begun blowing from the south-east and south

had hauled round after nightfall into the south-west. Just while I was

meditating, a puff came, caught the HISPANIOLA, and forced her up into

the current; and to my great joy, I felt the hawser slacken in my grasp,

and the hand by which I held it dip for a second under water.

With that I made my mind up, took out my gully, opened it with my teeth,

and cut one strand after another, till the vessel swung only by two.

Then I lay quiet, waiting to sever these last when the strain should be

once more lightened by a breath of wind.

All this time I had heard the sound of loud voices from the cabin, but

to say truth, my mind had been so entirely taken up with other thoughts

that I had scarcely given ear. Now, however, when I had nothing else to

do, I began to pay more heed.

One I recognized for the coxswain's, Israel Hands, that had been Flint's

gunner in former days. The other was, of course, my friend of the red

night-cap. Both men were plainly the worse of drink, and they were still

drinking, for even while I was listening, one of them, with a drunken

cry, opened the stern window and threw out something, which I divined to

be an empty bottle. But they were not only tipsy; it was plain that they

were furiously angry. Oaths flew like hailstones, and every now and

then there came forth such an explosion as I thought was sure to end

in blows. But each time the quarrel passed off and the voices grumbled

lower for a while, until the next crisis came and in its turn passed

away without result.

On shore, I could see the glow of the great camp-fire burning warmly

through the shore-side trees. Someone was singing, a dull, old, droning

sailor's song, with a droop and a quaver at the end of every verse,

and seemingly no end to it at all but the patience of the singer. I had

heard it on the voyage more than once and remembered these words:

“But one man of her crew alive,

What put to sea with seventy-five.”

And I thought it was a ditty rather too dolefully appropriate for a

company that had met such cruel losses in the morning. But, indeed, from

what I saw, all these buccaneers were as callous as the sea they sailed

on.

At last the breeze came; the schooner sidled and drew nearer in the

dark; I felt the hawser slacken once more, and with a good, tough

effort, cut the last fibres through.

The breeze had but little action on the coracle, and I was almost

instantly swept against the bows of the HISPANIOLA. At the same time,

the schooner began to turn upon her heel, spinning slowly, end for end,

across the current.

I wrought like a fiend, for I expected every moment to be swamped; and

since I found I could not push the coracle directly off, I now shoved

straight astern. At length I was clear of my dangerous neighbour, and

just as I gave the last impulsion, my hands came across a light cord

that was trailing overboard across the stern bulwarks. Instantly I

grasped it.

Why I should have done so I can hardly say. It was at first mere

instinct, but once I had it in my hands and found it fast, curiosity

began to get the upper hand, and I determined I should have one look

through the cabin window.

I pulled in hand over hand on the cord, and when I judged myself near

enough, rose at infinite risk to about half my height and thus commanded

the roof and a slice of the interior of the cabin.

By this time the schooner and her little consort were gliding pretty

swiftly through the water; indeed, we had already fetched up level with

the camp-fire. The ship was talking, as sailors say, loudly, treading

the innumerable ripples with an incessant weltering splash; and until I

got my eye above the window-sill I could not comprehend why the watchmen

had taken no alarm. One glance, however, was sufficient; and it was

only one glance that I durst take from that unsteady skiff. It showed me

Hands and his companion locked together in deadly wrestle, each with a

hand upon the other's throat.

I dropped upon the thwart again, none too soon, for I was near

overboard. I could see nothing for the moment but these two furious,

encrimsoned faces swaying together under the smoky lamp, and I shut my

eyes to let them grow once more familiar with the darkness.

The endless ballad had come to an end at last, and the whole diminished

company about the camp-fire had broken into the chorus I had heard so

often:

“Fifteen men on the dead man's chest--

Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!

Drink and the devil had done for the rest--

Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!”

I was just thinking how busy drink and the devil were at that very

moment in the cabin of the HISPANIOLA, when I was surprised by a sudden

lurch of the coracle. At the same moment, she yawed sharply and seemed

to change her course. The speed in the meantime had strangely increased.

I opened my eyes at once. All round me were little ripples, combing

over with a sharp, bristling sound and slightly phosphorescent. The

HISPANIOLA herself, a few yards in whose wake I was still being whirled

along, seemed to stagger in her course, and I saw her spars toss a

little against the blackness of the night; nay, as I looked longer, I

made sure she also was wheeling to the southward.

I glanced over my shoulder, and my heart jumped against my ribs. There,

right behind me, was the glow of the camp-fire. The current had turned

at right angles, sweeping round along with it the tall schooner and

the little dancing coracle; ever quickening, ever bubbling higher, ever

muttering louder, it went spinning through the narrows for the open sea.

Suddenly the schooner in front of me gave a violent yaw, turning,

perhaps, through twenty degrees; and almost at the same moment one

shout followed another from on board; I could hear feet pounding on

the companion ladder and I knew that the two drunkards had at last been

interrupted in their quarrel and awakened to a sense of their disaster.

I lay down flat in the bottom of that wretched skiff and devoutly

recommended my spirit to its Maker. At the end of the straits, I

made sure we must fall into some bar of raging breakers, where all my

troubles would be ended speedily; and though I could, perhaps, bear to

die, I could not bear to look upon my fate as it approached.

So I must have lain for hours, continually beaten to and fro upon the

billows, now and again wetted with flying sprays, and never ceasing to

expect death at the next plunge. Gradually weariness grew upon me; a

numbness, an occasional stupor, fell upon my mind even in the midst of

my terrors, until sleep at last supervened and in my sea-tossed coracle

I lay and dreamed of home and the old Admiral Benbow.

24

The Cruise of the Coracle

IT was broad day when I awoke and found myself tossing at the south-west

end of Treasure Island. The sun was up but was still hid from me behind

the great bulk of the Spy-glass, which on this side descended almost to

the sea in formidable cliffs.

Haulbowline Head and Mizzen-mast Hill were at my elbow, the hill bare

and dark, the head bound with cliffs forty or fifty feet high and

fringed with great masses of fallen rock. I was scarce a quarter of a

mile to seaward, and it was my first thought to paddle in and land.

That notion was soon given over. Among the fallen rocks the breakers

spouted and bellowed; loud reverberations, heavy sprays flying and

falling, succeeded one another from second to second; and I saw myself,

if I ventured nearer, dashed to death upon the rough shore or spending

my strength in vain to scale the beetling crags.

Nor was that all, for crawling together on flat tables of rock or

letting themselves drop into the sea with loud reports I beheld huge

slimy monsters--soft snails, as it were, of incredible bigness--two

or three score of them together, making the rocks to echo with their

barkings.

I have understood since that they were sea lions, and entirely harmless.

But the look of them, added to the difficulty of the shore and the

high running of the surf, was more than enough to disgust me of that

landing-place. I felt willing rather to starve at sea than to confront

such perils.

In the meantime I had a better chance, as I supposed, before me. North

of Haulbowline Head, the land runs in a long way, leaving at low tide

a long stretch of yellow sand. To the north of that, again, there comes

another cape--Cape of the Woods, as it was marked upon the chart--buried

in tall green pines, which descended to the margin of the sea.

I remembered what Silver had said about the current that sets northward

along the whole west coast of Treasure Island, and seeing from my

position that I was already under its influence, I preferred to leave

Haulbowline Head behind me and reserve my strength for an attempt to

land upon the kindlier-looking Cape of the Woods.

There was a great, smooth swell upon the sea. The wind blowing steady

and gentle from the south, there was no contrariety between that and the

current, and the billows rose and fell unbroken.

Had it been otherwise, I must long ago have perished; but as it was,

it is surprising how easily and securely my little and light boat could

ride. Often, as I still lay at the bottom and kept no more than an eye

above the gunwale, I would see a big blue summit heaving close above me;

yet the coracle would but bounce a little, dance as if on springs, and

subside on the other side into the trough as lightly as a bird.

I began after a little to grow very bold and sat up to try my skill at

paddling. But even a small change in the disposition of the weight will

produce violent changes in the behaviour of a coracle. And I had hardly

moved before the boat, giving up at once her gentle dancing movement,

ran straight down a slope of water so steep that it made me giddy, and

struck her nose, with a spout of spray, deep into the side of the next

wave.

I was drenched and terrified, and fell instantly back into my old

position, whereupon the coracle seemed to find her head again and led

me as softly as before among the billows. It was plain she was not to be

interfered with, and at that rate, since I could in no way influence her

course, what hope had I left of reaching land?

I began to be horribly frightened, but I kept my head, for all that.

First, moving with all care, I gradually baled out the coracle with my

sea-cap; then, getting my eye once more above the gunwale, I set myself

to study how it was she managed to slip so quietly through the rollers.

I found each wave, instead of the big, smooth glossy mountain it looks

from shore or from a vessel's deck, was for all the world like any range

of hills on dry land, full of peaks and smooth places and valleys. The

coracle, left to herself, turning from side to side, threaded, so to

speak, her way through these lower parts and avoided the steep slopes

and higher, toppling summits of the wave.

“Well, now,” thought I to myself, “it is plain I must lie where I am and

not disturb the balance; but it is plain also that I can put the paddle

over the side and from time to time, in smooth places, give her a shove

or two towards land.” No sooner thought upon than done. There I lay on

my elbows in the most trying attitude, and every now and again gave a

weak stroke or two to turn her head to shore.

It was very tiring and slow work, yet I did visibly gain ground; and as

we drew near the Cape of the Woods, though I saw I must infallibly

miss that point, I had still made some hundred yards of easting. I was,

indeed, close in. I could see the cool green tree-tops swaying together

in the breeze, and I felt sure I should make the next promontory without

fail.

It was high time, for I now began to be tortured with thirst. The glow

of the sun from above, its thousandfold reflection from the waves, the

sea-water that fell and dried upon me, caking my very lips with salt,

combined to make my throat burn and my brain ache. The sight of the

trees so near at hand had almost made me sick with longing, but the

current had soon carried me past the point, and as the next reach of sea

opened out, I beheld a sight that changed the nature of my thoughts.

Right in front of me, not half a mile away, I beheld the HISPANIOLA

under sail. I made sure, of course, that I should be taken; but I was

so distressed for want of water that I scarce knew whether to be glad

or sorry at the thought, and long before I had come to a conclusion,

surprise had taken entire possession of my mind and I could do nothing

but stare and wonder.

The HISPANIOLA was under her main-sail and two jibs, and the beautiful

white canvas shone in the sun like snow or silver. When I first

sighted her, all her sails were drawing; she was lying a course about

north-west, and I presumed the men on board were going round the island

on their way back to the anchorage. Presently she began to fetch more

and more to the westward, so that I thought they had sighted me and were

going about in chase. At last, however, she fell right into the wind's

eye, was taken dead aback, and stood there awhile helpless, with her

sails shivering.

“Clumsy fellows,” said I; “they must still be drunk as owls.” And I

thought how Captain Smollett would have set them skipping.

Meanwhile the schooner gradually fell off and filled again upon another

tack, sailed swiftly for a minute or so, and brought up once more dead

in the wind's eye. Again and again was this repeated. To and fro, up and

down, north, south, east, and west, the HISPANIOLA sailed by swoops

and dashes, and at each repetition ended as she had begun, with idly

flapping canvas. It became plain to me that nobody was steering. And if

so, where were the men? Either they were dead drunk or had deserted her,

I thought, and perhaps if I could get on board I might return the vessel

to her captain.

The current was bearing coracle and schooner southward at an equal rate.

As for the latter's sailing, it was so wild and intermittent, and she

hung each time so long in irons, that she certainly gained nothing, if

she did not even lose. If only I dared to sit up and paddle, I made

sure that I could overhaul her. The scheme had an air of adventure

that inspired me, and the thought of the water breaker beside the fore

companion doubled my growing courage.

Up I got, was welcomed almost instantly by another cloud of spray, but

this time stuck to my purpose and set myself, with all my strength and

caution, to paddle after the unsteered HISPANIOLA. Once I shipped a sea

so heavy that I had to stop and bail, with my heart fluttering like

a bird, but gradually I got into the way of the thing and guided my

coracle among the waves, with only now and then a blow upon her bows and

a dash of foam in my face.

I was now gaining rapidly on the schooner; I could see the brass glisten

on the tiller as it banged about, and still no soul appeared upon her

decks. I could not choose but suppose she was deserted. If not, the men

were lying drunk below, where I might batten them down, perhaps, and do

what I chose with the ship.

For some time she had been doing the worse thing possible for

me--standing still. She headed nearly due south, yawing, of course, all

the time. Each time she fell off, her sails partly filled, and these

brought her in a moment right to the wind again. I have said this was

the worst thing possible for me, for helpless as she looked in this

situation, with the canvas cracking like cannon and the blocks trundling

and banging on the deck, she still continued to run away from me, not

only with the speed of the current, but by the whole amount of her

leeway, which was naturally great.

But now, at last, I had my chance. The breeze fell for some seconds,

very low, and the current gradually turning her, the HISPANIOLA revolved

slowly round her centre and at last presented me her stern, with the

cabin window still gaping open and the lamp over the table still burning

on into the day. The main-sail hung drooped like a banner. She was

stock-still but for the current.

For the last little while I had even lost, but now redoubling my

efforts, I began once more to overhaul the chase.

I was not a hundred yards from her when the wind came again in a clap;

she filled on the port tack and was off again, stooping and skimming

like a swallow.

My first impulse was one of despair, but my second was towards joy.

Round she came, till she was broadside on to me--round still till she

had covered a half and then two thirds and then three quarters of the

distance that separated us. I could see the waves boiling white under

her forefoot. Immensely tall she looked to me from my low station in the

coracle.

And then, of a sudden, I began to comprehend. I had scarce time to

think--scarce time to act and save myself. I was on the summit of one

swell when the schooner came stooping over the next. The bowsprit was

over my head. I sprang to my feet and leaped, stamping the coracle under

water. With one hand I caught the jib-boom, while my foot was lodged

between the stay and the brace; and as I still clung there panting, a

dull blow told me that the schooner had charged down upon and struck the

coracle and that I was left without retreat on the HISPANIOLA.

25

I Strike the Jolly Roger

I HAD scarce gained a position on the bowsprit when the flying jib

flapped and filled upon the other tack, with a report like a gun. The

schooner trembled to her keel under the reverse, but next moment, the

other sails still drawing, the jib flapped back again and hung idle.

This had nearly tossed me off into the sea; and now I lost no time,

crawled back along the bowsprit, and tumbled head foremost on the deck.

I was on the lee side of the forecastle, and the mainsail, which was

still drawing, concealed from me a certain portion of the after-deck.

Not a soul was to be seen. The planks, which had not been swabbed since

the mutiny, bore the print of many feet, and an empty bottle, broken by

the neck, tumbled to and fro like a live thing in the scuppers.

Suddenly the HISPANIOLA came right into the wind. The jibs behind me

cracked aloud, the rudder slammed to, the whole ship gave a sickening

heave and shudder, and at the same moment the main-boom swung inboard,

the sheet groaning in the blocks, and showed me the lee after-deck.

There were the two watchmen, sure enough: red-cap on his back, as stiff

as a handspike, with his arms stretched out like those of a crucifix and

his teeth showing through his open lips; Israel Hands propped against

the bulwarks, his chin on his chest, his hands lying open before him on

the deck, his face as white, under its tan, as a tallow candle.

For a while the ship kept bucking and sidling like a vicious horse, the

sails filling, now on one tack, now on another, and the boom swinging to

and fro till the mast groaned aloud under the strain. Now and again too

there would come a cloud of light sprays over the bulwark and a heavy

blow of the ship's bows against the swell; so much heavier weather was

made of it by this great rigged ship than by my home-made, lop-sided

coracle, now gone to the bottom of the sea.

At every jump of the schooner, red-cap slipped to and fro, but--what was

ghastly to behold--neither his attitude nor his fixed teeth-disclosing

grin was anyway disturbed by this rough usage. At every jump too, Hands

appeared still more to sink into himself and settle down upon the

deck, his feet sliding ever the farther out, and the whole body canting

towards the stern, so that his face became, little by little, hid

from me; and at last I could see nothing beyond his ear and the frayed

ringlet of one whisker.

At the same time, I observed, around both of them, splashes of dark

blood upon the planks and began to feel sure that they had killed each

other in their drunken wrath.

While I was thus looking and wondering, in a calm moment, when the ship

was still, Israel Hands turned partly round and with a low moan writhed

himself back to the position in which I had seen him first. The moan,

which told of pain and deadly weakness, and the way in which his jaw

hung open went right to my heart. But when I remembered the talk I had

overheard from the apple barrel, all pity left me.

I walked aft until I reached the main-mast.

“Come aboard, Mr. Hands,” I said ironically.

He rolled his eyes round heavily, but he was too far gone to express

surprise. All he could do was to utter one word, “Brandy.”

It occurred to me there was no time to lose, and dodging the boom as it

once more lurched across the deck, I slipped aft and down the companion

stairs into the cabin.

It was such a scene of confusion as you can hardly fancy. All the

lockfast places had been broken open in quest of the chart. The floor

was thick with mud where ruffians had sat down to drink or consult after

wading in the marshes round their camp. The bulkheads, all painted in

clear white and beaded round with gilt, bore a pattern of dirty hands.

Dozens of empty bottles clinked together in corners to the rolling of

the ship. One of the doctor's medical books lay open on the table, half

of the leaves gutted out, I suppose, for pipelights. In the midst of all

this the lamp still cast a smoky glow, obscure and brown as umber.

I went into the cellar; all the barrels were gone, and of the bottles

a most surprising number had been drunk out and thrown away. Certainly,

since the mutiny began, not a man of them could ever have been sober.

Foraging about, I found a bottle with some brandy left, for Hands; and

for myself I routed out some biscuit, some pickled fruits, a great bunch

of raisins, and a piece of cheese. With these I came on deck, put down

my own stock behind the rudder head and well out of the coxswain's

reach, went forward to the water-breaker, and had a good deep drink of

water, and then, and not till then, gave Hands the brandy.

He must have drunk a gill before he took the bottle from his mouth.

“Aye,” said he, “by thunder, but I wanted some o' that!”

I had sat down already in my own corner and begun to eat.

“Much hurt?” I asked him.

He grunted, or rather, I might say, he barked.

“If that doctor was aboard,” he said, “I'd be right enough in a couple

of turns, but I don't have no manner of luck, you see, and that's what's

the matter with me. As for that swab, he's good and dead, he is,” he

added, indicating the man with the red cap. “He warn't no seaman anyhow.

And where mought you have come from?”

“Well,” said I, “I've come aboard to take possession of this ship,

Mr. Hands; and you'll please regard me as your captain until further

notice.”

He looked at me sourly enough but said nothing. Some of the colour had

come back into his cheeks, though he still looked very sick and still

continued to slip out and settle down as the ship banged about.

“By the by,” I continued, “I can't have these colours, Mr. Hands; and by

your leave, I'll strike 'em. Better none than these.”

And again dodging the boom, I ran to the colour lines, handed down their

cursed black flag, and chucked it overboard.

“God save the king!” said I, waving my cap. “And there's an end to

Captain Silver!”

He watched me keenly and slyly, his chin all the while on his breast.

“I reckon,” he said at last, “I reckon, Cap'n Hawkins, you'll kind of

want to get ashore now. S'pose we talks.”

“Why, yes,” says I, “with all my heart, Mr. Hands. Say on.” And I went

back to my meal with a good appetite.

“This man,” he began, nodding feebly at the corpse “--O'Brien were his

name, a rank Irelander--this man and me got the canvas on her, meaning

for to sail her back. Well, HE'S dead now, he is--as dead as bilge; and

who's to sail this ship, I don't see. Without I gives you a hint, you

ain't that man, as far's I can tell. Now, look here, you gives me food

and drink and a old scarf or ankecher to tie my wound up, you do, and

I'll tell you how to sail her, and that's about square all round, I take

it.”

“I'll tell you one thing,” says I: “I'm not going back to Captain Kidd's

anchorage. I mean to get into North Inlet and beach her quietly there.”

“To be sure you did,” he cried. “Why, I ain't sich an infernal lubber

after all. I can see, can't I? I've tried my fling, I have, and I've

lost, and it's you has the wind of me. North Inlet? Why, I haven't no

ch'ice, not I! I'd help you sail her up to Execution Dock, by thunder!

So I would.”

Well, as it seemed to me, there was some sense in this. We struck our

bargain on the spot. In three minutes I had the HISPANIOLA sailing

easily before the wind along the coast of Treasure Island, with good

hopes of turning the northern point ere noon and beating down again as

far as North Inlet before high water, when we might beach her safely and

wait till the subsiding tide permitted us to land.

Then I lashed the tiller and went below to my own chest, where I got a

soft silk handkerchief of my mother's. With this, and with my aid, Hands

bound up the great bleeding stab he had received in the thigh, and after

he had eaten a little and had a swallow or two more of the brandy, he

began to pick up visibly, sat straighter up, spoke louder and clearer,

and looked in every way another man.

The breeze served us admirably. We skimmed before it like a bird, the

coast of the island flashing by and the view changing every minute.

Soon we were past the high lands and bowling beside low, sandy country,

sparsely dotted with dwarf pines, and soon we were beyond that again

and had turned the corner of the rocky hill that ends the island on the

north.

I was greatly elated with my new command, and pleased with the bright,

sunshiny weather and these different prospects of the coast. I had now

plenty of water and good things to eat, and my conscience, which had

smitten me hard for my desertion, was quieted by the great conquest I

had made. I should, I think, have had nothing left me to desire but for

the eyes of the coxswain as they followed me derisively about the deck

and the odd smile that appeared continually on his face. It was a smile

that had in it something both of pain and weakness--a haggard old man's

smile; but there was, besides that, a grain of derision, a shadow of

treachery, in his expression as he craftily watched, and watched, and

watched me at my work.

26

Israel Hands

THE wind, serving us to a desire, now hauled into the west. We could run

so much the easier from the north-east corner of the island to the mouth

of the North Inlet. Only, as we had no power to anchor and dared not

beach her till the tide had flowed a good deal farther, time hung on our

hands. The coxswain told me how to lay the ship to; after a good many

trials I succeeded, and we both sat in silence over another meal.

“Cap'n,” said he at length with that same uncomfortable smile, “here's

my old shipmate, O'Brien; s'pose you was to heave him overboard. I ain't

partic'lar as a rule, and I don't take no blame for settling his hash,

but I don't reckon him ornamental now, do you?”

“I'm not strong enough, and I don't like the job; and there he lies, for

me,” said I.

“This here's an unlucky ship, this HISPANIOLA, Jim,” he went on,

blinking. “There's a power of men been killed in this HISPANIOLA--a

sight o' poor seamen dead and gone since you and me took ship to

Bristol. I never seen sich dirty luck, not I. There was this here

O'Brien now--he's dead, ain't he? Well now, I'm no scholar, and you're a

lad as can read and figure, and to put it straight, do you take it as a

dead man is dead for good, or do he come alive again?”

“You can kill the body, Mr. Hands, but not the spirit; you must know

that already,” I replied. “O'Brien there is in another world, and may be

watching us.”

“Ah!” says he. “Well, that's unfort'nate--appears as if killing parties

was a waste of time. Howsomever, sperrits don't reckon for much, by what

I've seen. I'll chance it with the sperrits, Jim. And now, you've spoke

up free, and I'll take it kind if you'd step down into that there cabin

and get me a--well, a--shiver my timbers! I can't hit the name on 't;

well, you get me a bottle of wine, Jim--this here brandy's too strong

for my head.”

Now, the coxswain's hesitation seemed to be unnatural, and as for the

notion of his preferring wine to brandy, I entirely disbelieved it. The

whole story was a pretext. He wanted me to leave the deck--so much was

plain; but with what purpose I could in no way imagine. His eyes never

met mine; they kept wandering to and fro, up and down, now with a look

to the sky, now with a flitting glance upon the dead O'Brien. All the

time he kept smiling and putting his tongue out in the most guilty,

embarrassed manner, so that a child could have told that he was bent on

some deception. I was prompt with my answer, however, for I saw where

my advantage lay and that with a fellow so densely stupid I could easily

conceal my suspicions to the end.

“Some wine?” I said. “Far better. Will you have white or red?”

“Well, I reckon it's about the blessed same to me, shipmate,” he

replied; “so it's strong, and plenty of it, what's the odds?”

“All right,” I answered. “I'll bring you port, Mr. Hands. But I'll have

to dig for it.”

With that I scuttled down the companion with all the noise I could,

slipped off my shoes, ran quietly along the sparred gallery, mounted the

forecastle ladder, and popped my head out of the fore companion. I

knew he would not expect to see me there, yet I took every precaution

possible, and certainly the worst of my suspicions proved too true.

He had risen from his position to his hands and knees, and though his

leg obviously hurt him pretty sharply when he moved--for I could hear

him stifle a groan--yet it was at a good, rattling rate that he trailed

himself across the deck. In half a minute he had reached the port

scuppers and picked, out of a coil of rope, a long knife, or rather a

short dirk, discoloured to the hilt with blood. He looked upon it for

a moment, thrusting forth his under jaw, tried the point upon his hand,

and then, hastily concealing it in the bosom of his jacket, trundled

back again into his old place against the bulwark.

This was all that I required to know. Israel could move about, he was

now armed, and if he had been at so much trouble to get rid of me,

it was plain that I was meant to be the victim. What he would do

afterwards--whether he would try to crawl right across the island from

North Inlet to the camp among the swamps or whether he would fire Long

Tom, trusting that his own comrades might come first to help him--was,

of course, more than I could say.

Yet I felt sure that I could trust him in one point, since in that

our interests jumped together, and that was in the disposition of

the schooner. We both desired to have her stranded safe enough, in a

sheltered place, and so that, when the time came, she could be got off

again with as little labour and danger as might be; and until that was

done I considered that my life would certainly be spared.

While I was thus turning the business over in my mind, I had not been

idle with my body. I had stolen back to the cabin, slipped once more

into my shoes, and laid my hand at random on a bottle of wine, and now,

with this for an excuse, I made my reappearance on the deck.

Hands lay as I had left him, all fallen together in a bundle and with

his eyelids lowered as though he were too weak to bear the light. He

looked up, however, at my coming, knocked the neck off the bottle like

a man who had done the same thing often, and took a good swig, with his

favourite toast of “Here's luck!” Then he lay quiet for a little, and

then, pulling out a stick of tobacco, begged me to cut him a quid.

“Cut me a junk o' that,” says he, “for I haven't no knife and hardly

strength enough, so be as I had. Ah, Jim, Jim, I reckon I've missed

stays! Cut me a quid, as'll likely be the last, lad, for I'm for my long

home, and no mistake.”

“Well,” said I, “I'll cut you some tobacco, but if I was you and thought

myself so badly, I would go to my prayers like a Christian man.”

“Why?” said he. “Now, you tell me why.”

“Why?” I cried. “You were asking me just now about the dead. You've

broken your trust; you've lived in sin and lies and blood; there's a man

you killed lying at your feet this moment, and you ask me why! For God's

mercy, Mr. Hands, that's why.”

I spoke with a little heat, thinking of the bloody dirk he had hidden

in his pocket and designed, in his ill thoughts, to end me with. He,

for his part, took a great draught of the wine and spoke with the most

unusual solemnity.

“For thirty years,” he said, “I've sailed the seas and seen good and

bad, better and worse, fair weather and foul, provisions running out,

knives going, and what not. Well, now I tell you, I never seen good come

o' goodness yet. Him as strikes first is my fancy; dead men don't bite;

them's my views--amen, so be it. And now, you look here,” he added,

suddenly changing his tone, “we've had about enough of this foolery. The

tide's made good enough by now. You just take my orders, Cap'n Hawkins,

and we'll sail slap in and be done with it.”

All told, we had scarce two miles to run; but the navigation was

delicate, the entrance to this northern anchorage was not only narrow

and shoal, but lay east and west, so that the schooner must be nicely

handled to be got in. I think I was a good, prompt subaltern, and I am

very sure that Hands was an excellent pilot, for we went about and about

and dodged in, shaving the banks, with a certainty and a neatness that

were a pleasure to behold.

Scarcely had we passed the heads before the land closed around us. The

shores of North Inlet were as thickly wooded as those of the southern

anchorage, but the space was longer and narrower and more like, what in

truth it was, the estuary of a river. Right before us, at the southern

end, we saw the wreck of a ship in the last stages of dilapidation. It

had been a great vessel of three masts but had lain so long exposed to

the injuries of the weather that it was hung about with great webs of

dripping seaweed, and on the deck of it shore bushes had taken root and

now flourished thick with flowers. It was a sad sight, but it showed us

that the anchorage was calm.

“Now,” said Hands, “look there; there's a pet bit for to beach a ship

in. Fine flat sand, never a cat's paw, trees all around of it, and

flowers a-blowing like a garding on that old ship.”

“And once beached,” I inquired, “how shall we get her off again?”

“Why, so,” he replied: “you take a line ashore there on the other side

at low water, take a turn about one of them big pines; bring it back,

take a turn around the capstan, and lie to for the tide. Come high

water, all hands take a pull upon the line, and off she comes as sweet

as natur'. And now, boy, you stand by. We're near the bit now, and she's

too much way on her. Starboard a little--so--steady--starboard--larboard

a little--steady--steady!”

So he issued his commands, which I breathlessly obeyed, till, all of a

sudden, he cried, “Now, my hearty, luff!” And I put the helm hard up,

and the HISPANIOLA swung round rapidly and ran stem on for the low,

wooded shore.

The excitement of these last manoeuvres had somewhat interfered with the

watch I had kept hitherto, sharply enough, upon the coxswain. Even then

I was still so much interested, waiting for the ship to touch, that I

had quite forgot the peril that hung over my head and stood craning over

the starboard bulwarks and watching the ripples spreading wide before

the bows. I might have fallen without a struggle for my life had not a

sudden disquietude seized upon me and made me turn my head. Perhaps I

had heard a creak or seen his shadow moving with the tail of my eye;

perhaps it was an instinct like a cat's; but, sure enough, when I looked

round, there was Hands, already half-way towards me, with the dirk in

his right hand.

We must both have cried out aloud when our eyes met, but while mine

was the shrill cry of terror, his was a roar of fury like a charging

bully's. At the same instant, he threw himself forward and I leapt

sideways towards the bows. As I did so, I let go of the tiller, which

sprang sharp to leeward, and I think this saved my life, for it struck

Hands across the chest and stopped him, for the moment, dead.

Before he could recover, I was safe out of the corner where he had me

trapped, with all the deck to dodge about. Just forward of the main-mast

I stopped, drew a pistol from my pocket, took a cool aim, though he had

already turned and was once more coming directly after me, and drew the

trigger. The hammer fell, but there followed neither flash nor sound;

the priming was useless with sea-water. I cursed myself for my neglect.

Why had not I, long before, reprimed and reloaded my only weapons? Then

I should not have been as now, a mere fleeing sheep before this butcher.

Wounded as he was, it was wonderful how fast he could move, his grizzled

hair tumbling over his face, and his face itself as red as a red ensign

with his haste and fury. I had no time to try my other pistol, nor

indeed much inclination, for I was sure it would be useless. One thing I

saw plainly: I must not simply retreat before him, or he would speedily

hold me boxed into the bows, as a moment since he had so nearly boxed

me in the stern. Once so caught, and nine or ten inches of the

blood-stained dirk would be my last experience on this side of eternity.

I placed my palms against the main-mast, which was of a goodish bigness,

and waited, every nerve upon the stretch.

Seeing that I meant to dodge, he also paused; and a moment or two passed

in feints on his part and corresponding movements upon mine. It was such

a game as I had often played at home about the rocks of Black Hill Cove,

but never before, you may be sure, with such a wildly beating heart as

now. Still, as I say, it was a boy's game, and I thought I could hold

my own at it against an elderly seaman with a wounded thigh. Indeed my

courage had begun to rise so high that I allowed myself a few darting

thoughts on what would be the end of the affair, and while I saw

certainly that I could spin it out for long, I saw no hope of any

ultimate escape.

Well, while things stood thus, suddenly the HISPANIOLA struck,

staggered, ground for an instant in the sand, and then, swift as a

blow, canted over to the port side till the deck stood at an angle

of forty-five degrees and about a puncheon of water splashed into the

scupper holes and lay, in a pool, between the deck and bulwark.

We were both of us capsized in a second, and both of us rolled, almost

together, into the scuppers, the dead red-cap, with his arms still

spread out, tumbling stiffly after us. So near were we, indeed, that my

head came against the coxswain's foot with a crack that made my teeth

rattle. Blow and all, I was the first afoot again, for Hands had got

involved with the dead body. The sudden canting of the ship had made the

deck no place for running on; I had to find some new way of escape,

and that upon the instant, for my foe was almost touching me. Quick as

thought, I sprang into the mizzen shrouds, rattled up hand over hand,

and did not draw a breath till I was seated on the cross-trees.

I had been saved by being prompt; the dirk had struck not half a foot

below me as I pursued my upward flight; and there stood Israel Hands

with his mouth open and his face upturned to mine, a perfect statue of

surprise and disappointment.

Now that I had a moment to myself, I lost no time in changing the

priming of my pistol, and then, having one ready for service, and to

make assurance doubly sure, I proceeded to draw the load of the other

and recharge it afresh from the beginning.

My new employment struck Hands all of a heap; he began to see the dice

going against him, and after an obvious hesitation, he also hauled

himself heavily into the shrouds, and with the dirk in his teeth, began

slowly and painfully to mount. It cost him no end of time and groans

to haul his wounded leg behind him, and I had quietly finished my

arrangements before he was much more than a third of the way up. Then,

with a pistol in either hand, I addressed him.

“One more step, Mr. Hands,” said I, “and I'll blow your brains out! Dead

men don't bite, you know,” I added with a chuckle.

He stopped instantly. I could see by the working of his face that he was

trying to think, and the process was so slow and laborious that, in my

new-found security, I laughed aloud. At last, with a swallow or two, he

spoke, his face still wearing the same expression of extreme perplexity.

In order to speak he had to take the dagger from his mouth, but in all

else he remained unmoved.

“Jim,” says he, “I reckon we're fouled, you and me, and we'll have to

sign articles. I'd have had you but for that there lurch, but I don't

have no luck, not I; and I reckon I'll have to strike, which comes hard,

you see, for a master mariner to a ship's younker like you, Jim.”

I was drinking in his words and smiling away, as conceited as a cock

upon a wall, when, all in a breath, back went his right hand over his

shoulder. Something sang like an arrow through the air; I felt a blow

and then a sharp pang, and there I was pinned by the shoulder to the

mast. In the horrid pain and surprise of the moment--I scarce can say

it was by my own volition, and I am sure it was without a conscious

aim--both my pistols went off, and both escaped out of my hands. They

did not fall alone; with a choked cry, the coxswain loosed his grasp

upon the shrouds and plunged head first into the water.

27

“Pieces of Eight”

OWING to the cant of the vessel, the masts hung far out over the water,

and from my perch on the cross-trees I had nothing below me but the

surface of the bay. Hands, who was not so far up, was in consequence

nearer to the ship and fell between me and the bulwarks. He rose once to

the surface in a lather of foam and blood and then sank again for good.

As the water settled, I could see him lying huddled together on the

clean, bright sand in the shadow of the vessel's sides. A fish or two

whipped past his body. Sometimes, by the quivering of the water, he

appeared to move a little, as if he were trying to rise. But he was dead

enough, for all that, being both shot and drowned, and was food for fish

in the very place where he had designed my slaughter.

I was no sooner certain of this than I began to feel sick, faint, and

terrified. The hot blood was running over my back and chest. The dirk,

where it had pinned my shoulder to the mast, seemed to burn like a hot

iron; yet it was not so much these real sufferings that distressed me,

for these, it seemed to me, I could bear without a murmur; it was the

horror I had upon my mind of falling from the cross-trees into that

still green water, beside the body of the coxswain.

I clung with both hands till my nails ached, and I shut my eyes as if to

cover up the peril. Gradually my mind came back again, my pulses quieted

down to a more natural time, and I was once more in possession of

myself.

It was my first thought to pluck forth the dirk, but either it stuck too

hard or my nerve failed me, and I desisted with a violent shudder. Oddly

enough, that very shudder did the business. The knife, in fact, had come

the nearest in the world to missing me altogether; it held me by a mere

pinch of skin, and this the shudder tore away. The blood ran down the

faster, to be sure, but I was my own master again and only tacked to the

mast by my coat and shirt.

These last I broke through with a sudden jerk, and then regained the

deck by the starboard shrouds. For nothing in the world would I have

again ventured, shaken as I was, upon the overhanging port shrouds from

which Israel had so lately fallen.

I went below and did what I could for my wound; it pained me a good deal

and still bled freely, but it was neither deep nor dangerous, nor did it

greatly gall me when I used my arm. Then I looked around me, and as the

ship was now, in a sense, my own, I began to think of clearing it from

its last passenger--the dead man, O'Brien.

He had pitched, as I have said, against the bulwarks, where he lay

like some horrible, ungainly sort of puppet, life-size, indeed, but how

different from life's colour or life's comeliness! In that position

I could easily have my way with him, and as the habit of tragical

adventures had worn off almost all my terror for the dead, I took him

by the waist as if he had been a sack of bran and with one good heave,

tumbled him overboard. He went in with a sounding plunge; the red cap

came off and remained floating on the surface; and as soon as the splash

subsided, I could see him and Israel lying side by side, both wavering

with the tremulous movement of the water. O'Brien, though still quite a

young man, was very bald. There he lay, with that bald head across the

knees of the man who had killed him and the quick fishes steering to and

fro over both.

I was now alone upon the ship; the tide had just turned. The sun was

within so few degrees of setting that already the shadow of the pines

upon the western shore began to reach right across the anchorage and

fall in patterns on the deck. The evening breeze had sprung up, and

though it was well warded off by the hill with the two peaks upon the

east, the cordage had begun to sing a little softly to itself and the

idle sails to rattle to and fro.

I began to see a danger to the ship. The jibs I speedily doused and

brought tumbling to the deck, but the main-sail was a harder matter. Of

course, when the schooner canted over, the boom had swung out-board, and

the cap of it and a foot or two of sail hung even under water. I thought

this made it still more dangerous; yet the strain was so heavy that I

half feared to meddle. At last I got my knife and cut the halyards. The

peak dropped instantly, a great belly of loose canvas floated broad upon

the water, and since, pull as I liked, I could not budge the downhall,

that was the extent of what I could accomplish. For the rest, the

HISPANIOLA must trust to luck, like myself.

By this time the whole anchorage had fallen into shadow--the last rays,

I remember, falling through a glade of the wood and shining bright as

jewels on the flowery mantle of the wreck. It began to be chill; the

tide was rapidly fleeting seaward, the schooner settling more and more

on her beam-ends.

I scrambled forward and looked over. It seemed shallow enough, and

holding the cut hawser in both hands for a last security, I let myself

drop softly overboard. The water scarcely reached my waist; the sand was

firm and covered with ripple marks, and I waded ashore in great spirits,

leaving the HISPANIOLA on her side, with her main-sail trailing wide

upon the surface of the bay. About the same time, the sun went fairly

down and the breeze whistled low in the dusk among the tossing pines.

At least, and at last, I was off the sea, nor had I returned thence

empty-handed. There lay the schooner, clear at last from buccaneers

and ready for our own men to board and get to sea again. I had nothing

nearer my fancy than to get home to the stockade and boast of my

achievements. Possibly I might be blamed a bit for my truantry, but the

recapture of the HISPANIOLA was a clenching answer, and I hoped that

even Captain Smollett would confess I had not lost my time.

So thinking, and in famous spirits, I began to set my face homeward for

the block house and my companions. I remembered that the most easterly

of the rivers which drain into Captain Kidd's anchorage ran from the

two-peaked hill upon my left, and I bent my course in that direction

that I might pass the stream while it was small. The wood was pretty

open, and keeping along the lower spurs, I had soon turned the corner

of that hill, and not long after waded to the mid-calf across the

watercourse.

This brought me near to where I had encountered Ben Gunn, the maroon;

and I walked more circumspectly, keeping an eye on every side. The dusk

had come nigh hand completely, and as I opened out the cleft between the

two peaks, I became aware of a wavering glow against the sky, where, as

I judged, the man of the island was cooking his supper before a roaring

fire. And yet I wondered, in my heart, that he should show himself so

careless. For if I could see this radiance, might it not reach the eyes

of Silver himself where he camped upon the shore among the marshes?

Gradually the night fell blacker; it was all I could do to guide myself

even roughly towards my destination; the double hill behind me and the

Spy-glass on my right hand loomed faint and fainter; the stars were few

and pale; and in the low ground where I wandered I kept tripping among

bushes and rolling into sandy pits.

Suddenly a kind of brightness fell about me. I looked up; a pale glimmer

of moonbeams had alighted on the summit of the Spy-glass, and soon after

I saw something broad and silvery moving low down behind the trees, and

knew the moon had risen.

With this to help me, I passed rapidly over what remained to me of my

journey, and sometimes walking, sometimes running, impatiently drew near

to the stockade. Yet, as I began to thread the grove that lies before

it, I was not so thoughtless but that I slacked my pace and went a

trifle warily. It would have been a poor end of my adventures to get

shot down by my own party in mistake.

The moon was climbing higher and higher, its light began to fall here

and there in masses through the more open districts of the wood, and

right in front of me a glow of a different colour appeared among

the trees. It was red and hot, and now and again it was a little

darkened--as it were, the embers of a bonfire smouldering.

For the life of me I could not think what it might be.

At last I came right down upon the borders of the clearing. The western

end was already steeped in moonshine; the rest, and the block house

itself, still lay in a black shadow chequered with long silvery streaks

of light. On the other side of the house an immense fire had burned

itself into clear embers and shed a steady, red reverberation,

contrasted strongly with the mellow paleness of the moon. There was not

a soul stirring nor a sound beside the noises of the breeze.

I stopped, with much wonder in my heart, and perhaps a little terror

also. It had not been our way to build great fires; we were, indeed,

by the captain's orders, somewhat niggardly of firewood, and I began to

fear that something had gone wrong while I was absent.

I stole round by the eastern end, keeping close in shadow, and at a

convenient place, where the darkness was thickest, crossed the palisade.

To make assurance surer, I got upon my hands and knees and crawled,

without a sound, towards the corner of the house. As I drew nearer, my

heart was suddenly and greatly lightened. It is not a pleasant noise in

itself, and I have often complained of it at other times, but just

then it was like music to hear my friends snoring together so loud and

peaceful in their sleep. The sea-cry of the watch, that beautiful “All's

well,” never fell more reassuringly on my ear.

In the meantime, there was no doubt of one thing; they kept an infamous

bad watch. If it had been Silver and his lads that were now creeping

in on them, not a soul would have seen daybreak. That was what it

was, thought I, to have the captain wounded; and again I blamed myself

sharply for leaving them in that danger with so few to mount guard.

By this time I had got to the door and stood up. All was dark within,

so that I could distinguish nothing by the eye. As for sounds, there

was the steady drone of the snorers and a small occasional noise, a

flickering or pecking that I could in no way account for.

With my arms before me I walked steadily in. I should lie down in my own

place (I thought with a silent chuckle) and enjoy their faces when they

found me in the morning.

My foot struck something yielding--it was a sleeper's leg; and he turned

and groaned, but without awaking.

And then, all of a sudden, a shrill voice broke forth out of the

darkness:

“Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight!

Pieces of eight!” and so forth, without pause or change, like the

clacking of a tiny mill.

Silver's green parrot, Captain Flint! It was she whom I had heard

pecking at a piece of bark; it was she, keeping better watch than any

human being, who thus announced my arrival with her wearisome refrain.

I had no time left me to recover. At the sharp, clipping tone of the

parrot, the sleepers awoke and sprang up; and with a mighty oath, the

voice of Silver cried, “Who goes?”

I turned to run, struck violently against one person, recoiled, and ran

full into the arms of a second, who for his part closed upon and held me

tight.

“Bring a torch, Dick,” said Silver when my capture was thus assured.

And one of the men left the log-house and presently returned with a

lighted brand.

PART SIX--Captain Silver

28

In the Enemy's Camp

THE red glare of the torch, lighting up the interior of the block house,

showed me the worst of my apprehensions realized. The pirates were in

possession of the house and stores: there was the cask of cognac,

there were the pork and bread, as before, and what tenfold increased

my horror, not a sign of any prisoner. I could only judge that all had

perished, and my heart smote me sorely that I had not been there to

perish with them.

There were six of the buccaneers, all told; not another man was left

alive. Five of them were on their feet, flushed and swollen, suddenly

called out of the first sleep of drunkenness. The sixth had only risen

upon his elbow; he was deadly pale, and the blood-stained bandage round

his head told that he had recently been wounded, and still more recently

dressed. I remembered the man who had been shot and had run back among

the woods in the great attack, and doubted not that this was he.

The parrot sat, preening her plumage, on Long John's shoulder. He

himself, I thought, looked somewhat paler and more stern than I was used

to. He still wore the fine broadcloth suit in which he had fulfilled his

mission, but it was bitterly the worse for wear, daubed with clay and

torn with the sharp briers of the wood.

“So,” said he, “here's Jim Hawkins, shiver my timbers! Dropped in, like,

eh? Well, come, I take that friendly.”

And thereupon he sat down across the brandy cask and began to fill a

pipe.

“Give me a loan of the link, Dick,” said he; and then, when he had a

good light, “That'll do, lad,” he added; “stick the glim in the wood

heap; and you, gentlemen, bring yourselves to! You needn't stand up

for Mr. Hawkins; HE'LL excuse you, you may lay to that. And so,

Jim”--stopping the tobacco--“here you were, and quite a pleasant

surprise for poor old John. I see you were smart when first I set my

eyes on you, but this here gets away from me clean, it do.”

To all this, as may be well supposed, I made no answer. They had set me

with my back against the wall, and I stood there, looking Silver in the

face, pluckily enough, I hope, to all outward appearance, but with black

despair in my heart.

Silver took a whiff or two of his pipe with great composure and then ran

on again.

“Now, you see, Jim, so be as you ARE here,” says he, “I'll give you a

piece of my mind. I've always liked you, I have, for a lad of spirit,

and the picter of my own self when I was young and handsome. I always

wanted you to jine and take your share, and die a gentleman, and now, my

cock, you've got to. Cap'n Smollett's a fine seaman, as I'll own up to

any day, but stiff on discipline. 'Dooty is dooty,' says he, and right

he is. Just you keep clear of the cap'n. The doctor himself is gone dead

again you--'ungrateful scamp' was what he said; and the short and the

long of the whole story is about here: you can't go back to your own

lot, for they won't have you; and without you start a third ship's

company all by yourself, which might be lonely, you'll have to jine with

Cap'n Silver.”

So far so good. My friends, then, were still alive, and though I partly

believed the truth of Silver's statement, that the cabin party were

incensed at me for my desertion, I was more relieved than distressed by

what I heard.

“I don't say nothing as to your being in our hands,” continued Silver,

“though there you are, and you may lay to it. I'm all for argyment; I

never seen good come out o' threatening. If you like the service, well,

you'll jine; and if you don't, Jim, why, you're free to answer no--free

and welcome, shipmate; and if fairer can be said by mortal seaman,

shiver my sides!”

“Am I to answer, then?” I asked with a very tremulous voice. Through all

this sneering talk, I was made to feel the threat of death that overhung

me, and my cheeks burned and my heart beat painfully in my breast.

“Lad,” said Silver, “no one's a-pressing of you. Take your bearings.

None of us won't hurry you, mate; time goes so pleasant in your company,

you see.”

“Well,” says I, growing a bit bolder, “if I'm to choose, I declare I

have a right to know what's what, and why you're here, and where my

friends are.”

“Wot's wot?” repeated one of the buccaneers in a deep growl. “Ah, he'd

be a lucky one as knowed that!”

“You'll perhaps batten down your hatches till you're spoke to, my

friend,” cried Silver truculently to this speaker. And then, in

his first gracious tones, he replied to me, “Yesterday morning, Mr.

Hawkins,” said he, “in the dog-watch, down came Doctor Livesey with a

flag of truce. Says he, 'Cap'n Silver, you're sold out. Ship's gone.'

Well, maybe we'd been taking a glass, and a song to help it round. I

won't say no. Leastways, none of us had looked out. We looked out, and

by thunder, the old ship was gone! I never seen a pack o' fools look

fishier; and you may lay to that, if I tells you that looked the

fishiest. 'Well,' says the doctor, 'let's bargain.' We bargained, him

and I, and here we are: stores, brandy, block house, the firewood you

was thoughtful enough to cut, and in a manner of speaking, the whole

blessed boat, from cross-trees to kelson. As for them, they've tramped;

I don't know where's they are.”

He drew again quietly at his pipe.

“And lest you should take it into that head of yours,” he went on, “that

you was included in the treaty, here's the last word that was said: 'How

many are you,' says I, 'to leave?' 'Four,' says he; 'four, and one of us

wounded. As for that boy, I don't know where he is, confound him,' says

he, 'nor I don't much care. We're about sick of him.' These was his

words.

“Is that all?” I asked.

“Well, it's all that you're to hear, my son,” returned Silver.

“And now I am to choose?”

“And now you are to choose, and you may lay to that,” said Silver.

“Well,” said I, “I am not such a fool but I know pretty well what I have

to look for. Let the worst come to the worst, it's little I care. I've

seen too many die since I fell in with you. But there's a thing or two

I have to tell you,” I said, and by this time I was quite excited; “and

the first is this: here you are, in a bad way--ship lost, treasure lost,

men lost, your whole business gone to wreck; and if you want to know who

did it--it was I! I was in the apple barrel the night we sighted land,

and I heard you, John, and you, Dick Johnson, and Hands, who is now at

the bottom of the sea, and told every word you said before the hour was

out. And as for the schooner, it was I who cut her cable, and it was I

that killed the men you had aboard of her, and it was I who brought her

where you'll never see her more, not one of you. The laugh's on my side;

I've had the top of this business from the first; I no more fear you

than I fear a fly. Kill me, if you please, or spare me. But one thing

I'll say, and no more; if you spare me, bygones are bygones, and when

you fellows are in court for piracy, I'll save you all I can. It is for

you to choose. Kill another and do yourselves no good, or spare me and

keep a witness to save you from the gallows.”

I stopped, for, I tell you, I was out of breath, and to my wonder, not

a man of them moved, but all sat staring at me like as many sheep. And

while they were still staring, I broke out again, “And now, Mr. Silver,”

I said, “I believe you're the best man here, and if things go to the

worst, I'll take it kind of you to let the doctor know the way I took

it.”

“I'll bear it in mind,” said Silver with an accent so curious that I

could not, for the life of me, decide whether he were laughing at my

request or had been favourably affected by my courage.

“I'll put one to that,” cried the old mahogany-faced seaman--Morgan

by name--whom I had seen in Long John's public-house upon the quays of

Bristol. “It was him that knowed Black Dog.”

“Well, and see here,” added the sea-cook. “I'll put another again to

that, by thunder! For it was this same boy that faked the chart from

Billy Bones. First and last, we've split upon Jim Hawkins!”

“Then here goes!” said Morgan with an oath.

And he sprang up, drawing his knife as if he had been twenty.

“Avast, there!” cried Silver. “Who are you, Tom Morgan? Maybe you

thought you was cap'n here, perhaps. By the powers, but I'll teach you

better! Cross me, and you'll go where many a good man's gone before you,

first and last, these thirty year back--some to the yard-arm, shiver

my timbers, and some by the board, and all to feed the fishes. There's

never a man looked me between the eyes and seen a good day a'terwards,

Tom Morgan, you may lay to that.”

Morgan paused, but a hoarse murmur rose from the others.

“Tom's right,” said one.

“I stood hazing long enough from one,” added another. “I'll be hanged if

I'll be hazed by you, John Silver.”

“Did any of you gentlemen want to have it out with ME?” roared Silver,

bending far forward from his position on the keg, with his pipe still

glowing in his right hand. “Put a name on what you're at; you ain't

dumb, I reckon. Him that wants shall get it. Have I lived this many

years, and a son of a rum puncheon cock his hat athwart my hawse at the

latter end of it? You know the way; you're all gentlemen o' fortune, by

your account. Well, I'm ready. Take a cutlass, him that dares, and I'll

see the colour of his inside, crutch and all, before that pipe's empty.”

Not a man stirred; not a man answered.

“That's your sort, is it?” he added, returning his pipe to his mouth.

“Well, you're a gay lot to look at, anyway. Not much worth to fight, you

ain't. P'r'aps you can understand King George's English. I'm cap'n here

by 'lection. I'm cap'n here because I'm the best man by a long sea-mile.

You won't fight, as gentlemen o' fortune should; then, by thunder,

you'll obey, and you may lay to it! I like that boy, now; I never seen

a better boy than that. He's more a man than any pair of rats of you in

this here house, and what I say is this: let me see him that'll lay a

hand on him--that's what I say, and you may lay to it.”

There was a long pause after this. I stood straight up against the wall,

my heart still going like a sledge-hammer, but with a ray of hope

now shining in my bosom. Silver leant back against the wall, his arms

crossed, his pipe in the corner of his mouth, as calm as though he had

been in church; yet his eye kept wandering furtively, and he kept the

tail of it on his unruly followers. They, on their part, drew gradually

together towards the far end of the block house, and the low hiss of

their whispering sounded in my ear continuously, like a stream. One

after another, they would look up, and the red light of the torch would

fall for a second on their nervous faces; but it was not towards me, it

was towards Silver that they turned their eyes.

“You seem to have a lot to say,” remarked Silver, spitting far into the

air. “Pipe up and let me hear it, or lay to.”

“Ax your pardon, sir,” returned one of the men; “you're pretty free with

some of the rules; maybe you'll kindly keep an eye upon the rest. This

crew's dissatisfied; this crew don't vally bullying a marlin-spike; this

crew has its rights like other crews, I'll make so free as that; and by

your own rules, I take it we can talk together. I ax your pardon, sir,

acknowledging you for to be captaing at this present; but I claim my

right, and steps outside for a council.”

And with an elaborate sea-salute, this fellow, a long, ill-looking,

yellow-eyed man of five and thirty, stepped coolly towards the door and

disappeared out of the house. One after another the rest followed his

example, each making a salute as he passed, each adding some apology.

“According to rules,” said one. “Forecastle council,” said Morgan. And

so with one remark or another all marched out and left Silver and me

alone with the torch.

The sea-cook instantly removed his pipe.

“Now, look you here, Jim Hawkins,” he said in a steady whisper that was

no more than audible, “you're within half a plank of death, and what's

a long sight worse, of torture. They're going to throw me off. But, you

mark, I stand by you through thick and thin. I didn't mean to; no, not

till you spoke up. I was about desperate to lose that much blunt, and

be hanged into the bargain. But I see you was the right sort. I says to

myself, you stand by Hawkins, John, and Hawkins'll stand by you. You're

his last card, and by the living thunder, John, he's yours! Back to

back, says I. You save your witness, and he'll save your neck!”

I began dimly to understand.

“You mean all's lost?” I asked.

“Aye, by gum, I do!” he answered. “Ship gone, neck gone--that's the

size of it. Once I looked into that bay, Jim Hawkins, and seen no

schooner--well, I'm tough, but I gave out. As for that lot and their

council, mark me, they're outright fools and cowards. I'll save your

life--if so be as I can--from them. But, see here, Jim--tit for tat--you

save Long John from swinging.”

I was bewildered; it seemed a thing so hopeless he was asking--he, the

old buccaneer, the ringleader throughout.

“What I can do, that I'll do,” I said.

“It's a bargain!” cried Long John. “You speak up plucky, and by thunder,

I've a chance!”

He hobbled to the torch, where it stood propped among the firewood, and

took a fresh light to his pipe.

“Understand me, Jim,” he said, returning. “I've a head on my shoulders,

I have. I'm on squire's side now. I know you've got that ship safe

somewheres. How you done it, I don't know, but safe it is. I guess Hands

and O'Brien turned soft. I never much believed in neither of THEM. Now

you mark me. I ask no questions, nor I won't let others. I know when

a game's up, I do; and I know a lad that's staunch. Ah, you that's

young--you and me might have done a power of good together!”

He drew some cognac from the cask into a tin cannikin.

“Will you taste, messmate?” he asked; and when I had refused: “Well,

I'll take a drain myself, Jim,” said he. “I need a caulker, for there's

trouble on hand. And talking o' trouble, why did that doctor give me the

chart, Jim?”

My face expressed a wonder so unaffected that he saw the needlessness of

further questions.

“Ah, well, he did, though,” said he. “And there's something under that,

no doubt--something, surely, under that, Jim--bad or good.”

And he took another swallow of the brandy, shaking his great fair head

like a man who looks forward to the worst.

29

The Black Spot Again

THE council of buccaneers had lasted some time, when one of them

re-entered the house, and with a repetition of the same salute, which

had in my eyes an ironical air, begged for a moment's loan of the torch.

Silver briefly agreed, and this emissary retired again, leaving us

together in the dark.

“There's a breeze coming, Jim,” said Silver, who had by this time

adopted quite a friendly and familiar tone.

I turned to the loophole nearest me and looked out. The embers of the

great fire had so far burned themselves out and now glowed so low and

duskily that I understood why these conspirators desired a torch. About

half-way down the slope to the stockade, they were collected in a group;

one held the light, another was on his knees in their midst, and I saw

the blade of an open knife shine in his hand with varying colours in

the moon and torchlight. The rest were all somewhat stooping, as though

watching the manoeuvres of this last. I could just make out that he

had a book as well as a knife in his hand, and was still wondering how

anything so incongruous had come in their possession when the kneeling

figure rose once more to his feet and the whole party began to move

together towards the house.

“Here they come,” said I; and I returned to my former position, for it

seemed beneath my dignity that they should find me watching them.

“Well, let 'em come, lad--let 'em come,” said Silver cheerily. “I've

still a shot in my locker.”

The door opened, and the five men, standing huddled together just

inside, pushed one of their number forward. In any other circumstances

it would have been comical to see his slow advance, hesitating as he set

down each foot, but holding his closed right hand in front of him.

“Step up, lad,” cried Silver. “I won't eat you. Hand it over, lubber. I

know the rules, I do; I won't hurt a depytation.”

Thus encouraged, the buccaneer stepped forth more briskly, and having

passed something to Silver, from hand to hand, slipped yet more smartly

back again to his companions.

The sea-cook looked at what had been given him.

“The black spot! I thought so,” he observed. “Where might you have got

the paper? Why, hillo! Look here, now; this ain't lucky! You've gone and

cut this out of a Bible. What fool's cut a Bible?”

“Ah, there!” said Morgan. “There! Wot did I say? No good'll come o'

that, I said.”

“Well, you've about fixed it now, among you,” continued Silver. “You'll

all swing now, I reckon. What soft-headed lubber had a Bible?”

“It was Dick,” said one.

“Dick, was it? Then Dick can get to prayers,” said Silver. “He's seen

his slice of luck, has Dick, and you may lay to that.”

But here the long man with the yellow eyes struck in.

“Belay that talk, John Silver,” he said. “This crew has tipped you the

black spot in full council, as in dooty bound; just you turn it over, as

in dooty bound, and see what's wrote there. Then you can talk.”

“Thanky, George,” replied the sea-cook. “You always was brisk for

business, and has the rules by heart, George, as I'm pleased to see.

Well, what is it, anyway? Ah! 'Deposed'--that's it, is it? Very pretty

wrote, to be sure; like print, I swear. Your hand o' write, George? Why,

you was gettin' quite a leadin' man in this here crew. You'll be cap'n

next, I shouldn't wonder. Just oblige me with that torch again, will

you? This pipe don't draw.”

“Come, now,” said George, “you don't fool this crew no more. You're a

funny man, by your account; but you're over now, and you'll maybe step

down off that barrel and help vote.”

“I thought you said you knowed the rules,” returned Silver

contemptuously. “Leastways, if you don't, I do; and I wait here--and I'm

still your cap'n, mind--till you outs with your grievances and I reply;

in the meantime, your black spot ain't worth a biscuit. After that,

we'll see.”

“Oh,” replied George, “you don't be under no kind of apprehension; WE'RE

all square, we are. First, you've made a hash of this cruise--you'll be

a bold man to say no to that. Second, you let the enemy out o' this here

trap for nothing. Why did they want out? I dunno, but it's pretty plain

they wanted it. Third, you wouldn't let us go at them upon the march.

Oh, we see through you, John Silver; you want to play booty, that's

what's wrong with you. And then, fourth, there's this here boy.”

“Is that all?” asked Silver quietly.

“Enough, too,” retorted George. “We'll all swing and sun-dry for your

bungling.”

“Well now, look here, I'll answer these four p'ints; one after another

I'll answer 'em. I made a hash o' this cruise, did I? Well now, you all

know what I wanted, and you all know if that had been done that we'd

'a been aboard the HISPANIOLA this night as ever was, every man of us

alive, and fit, and full of good plum-duff, and the treasure in the hold

of her, by thunder! Well, who crossed me? Who forced my hand, as was the

lawful cap'n? Who tipped me the black spot the day we landed and began

this dance? Ah, it's a fine dance--I'm with you there--and looks mighty

like a hornpipe in a rope's end at Execution Dock by London town, it

does. But who done it? Why, it was Anderson, and Hands, and you, George

Merry! And you're the last above board of that same meddling crew;

and you have the Davy Jones's insolence to up and stand for cap'n over

me--you, that sank the lot of us! By the powers! But this tops the

stiffest yarn to nothing.”

Silver paused, and I could see by the faces of George and his late

comrades that these words had not been said in vain.

“That's for number one,” cried the accused, wiping the sweat from his

brow, for he had been talking with a vehemence that shook the house.

“Why, I give you my word, I'm sick to speak to you. You've neither sense

nor memory, and I leave it to fancy where your mothers was that let you

come to sea. Sea! Gentlemen o' fortune! I reckon tailors is your trade.”

“Go on, John,” said Morgan. “Speak up to the others.”

“Ah, the others!” returned John. “They're a nice lot, ain't they? You

say this cruise is bungled. Ah! By gum, if you could understand how bad

it's bungled, you would see! We're that near the gibbet that my neck's

stiff with thinking on it. You've seen 'em, maybe, hanged in chains,

birds about 'em, seamen p'inting 'em out as they go down with the tide.

'Who's that?' says one. 'That! Why, that's John Silver. I knowed him

well,' says another. And you can hear the chains a-jangle as you go

about and reach for the other buoy. Now, that's about where we are,

every mother's son of us, thanks to him, and Hands, and Anderson, and

other ruination fools of you. And if you want to know about number four,

and that boy, why, shiver my timbers, isn't he a hostage? Are we a-going

to waste a hostage? No, not us; he might be our last chance, and I

shouldn't wonder. Kill that boy? Not me, mates! And number three? Ah,

well, there's a deal to say to number three. Maybe you don't count it

nothing to have a real college doctor to see you every day--you, John,

with your head broke--or you, George Merry, that had the ague shakes

upon you not six hours agone, and has your eyes the colour of lemon peel

to this same moment on the clock? And maybe, perhaps, you didn't know

there was a consort coming either? But there is, and not so long till

then; and we'll see who'll be glad to have a hostage when it comes to

that. And as for number two, and why I made a bargain--well, you came

crawling on your knees to me to make it--on your knees you came, you was

that downhearted--and you'd have starved too if I hadn't--but that's a

trifle! You look there--that's why!”

And he cast down upon the floor a paper that I instantly

recognized--none other than the chart on yellow paper, with the three

red crosses, that I had found in the oilcloth at the bottom of the

captain's chest. Why the doctor had given it to him was more than I

could fancy.

But if it were inexplicable to me, the appearance of the chart was

incredible to the surviving mutineers. They leaped upon it like cats

upon a mouse. It went from hand to hand, one tearing it from another;

and by the oaths and the cries and the childish laughter with which they

accompanied their examination, you would have thought, not only they

were fingering the very gold, but were at sea with it, besides, in

safety.

“Yes,” said one, “that's Flint, sure enough. J. F., and a score below,

with a clove hitch to it; so he done ever.”

“Mighty pretty,” said George. “But how are we to get away with it, and

us no ship.”

Silver suddenly sprang up, and supporting himself with a hand against

the wall: “Now I give you warning, George,” he cried. “One more word

of your sauce, and I'll call you down and fight you. How? Why, how do I

know? You had ought to tell me that--you and the rest, that lost me my

schooner, with your interference, burn you! But not you, you can't; you

hain't got the invention of a cockroach. But civil you can speak, and

shall, George Merry, you may lay to that.”

“That's fair enow,” said the old man Morgan.

“Fair! I reckon so,” said the sea-cook. “You lost the ship; I found the

treasure. Who's the better man at that? And now I resign, by thunder!

Elect whom you please to be your cap'n now; I'm done with it.”

“Silver!” they cried. “Barbecue forever! Barbecue for cap'n!”

“So that's the toon, is it?” cried the cook. “George, I reckon you'll

have to wait another turn, friend; and lucky for you as I'm not a

revengeful man. But that was never my way. And now, shipmates, this

black spot? 'Tain't much good now, is it? Dick's crossed his luck and

spoiled his Bible, and that's about all.”

“It'll do to kiss the book on still, won't it?” growled Dick, who was

evidently uneasy at the curse he had brought upon himself.

“A Bible with a bit cut out!” returned Silver derisively. “Not it. It

don't bind no more'n a ballad-book.”

“Don't it, though?” cried Dick with a sort of joy. “Well, I reckon

that's worth having too.”

“Here, Jim--here's a cur'osity for you,” said Silver, and he tossed me

the paper.

It was around about the size of a crown piece. One side was blank,

for it had been the last leaf; the other contained a verse or two of

Revelation--these words among the rest, which struck sharply home upon

my mind: “Without are dogs and murderers.” The printed side had been

blackened with wood ash, which already began to come off and soil my

fingers; on the blank side had been written with the same material the

one word “Depposed.” I have that curiosity beside me at this moment, but

not a trace of writing now remains beyond a single scratch, such as a

man might make with his thumb-nail.

That was the end of the night's business. Soon after, with a drink all

round, we lay down to sleep, and the outside of Silver's vengeance was

to put George Merry up for sentinel and threaten him with death if he

should prove unfaithful.

It was long ere I could close an eye, and heaven knows I had matter

enough for thought in the man whom I had slain that afternoon, in my own

most perilous position, and above all, in the remarkable game that I saw

Silver now engaged upon--keeping the mutineers together with one hand

and grasping with the other after every means, possible and impossible,

to make his peace and save his miserable life. He himself slept

peacefully and snored aloud, yet my heart was sore for him, wicked as he

was, to think on the dark perils that environed and the shameful gibbet

that awaited him.

30

On Parole

I WAS wakened--indeed, we were all wakened, for I could see even the

sentinel shake himself together from where he had fallen against the

door-post--by a clear, hearty voice hailing us from the margin of the

wood:

“Block house, ahoy!” it cried. “Here's the doctor.”

And the doctor it was. Although I was glad to hear the sound, yet my

gladness was not without admixture. I remembered with confusion my

insubordinate and stealthy conduct, and when I saw where it had brought

me--among what companions and surrounded by what dangers--I felt ashamed

to look him in the face.

He must have risen in the dark, for the day had hardly come; and when I

ran to a loophole and looked out, I saw him standing, like Silver once

before, up to the mid-leg in creeping vapour.

“You, doctor! Top o' the morning to you, sir!” cried Silver, broad awake

and beaming with good nature in a moment. “Bright and early, to be sure;

and it's the early bird, as the saying goes, that gets the rations.

George, shake up your timbers, son, and help Dr. Livesey over the ship's

side. All a-doin' well, your patients was--all well and merry.”

So he pattered on, standing on the hilltop with his crutch under his

elbow and one hand upon the side of the log-house--quite the old John in

voice, manner, and expression.

“We've quite a surprise for you too, sir,” he continued. “We've a little

stranger here--he! he! A noo boarder and lodger, sir, and looking fit

and taut as a fiddle; slep' like a supercargo, he did, right alongside

of John--stem to stem we was, all night.”

Dr. Livesey was by this time across the stockade and pretty near the

cook, and I could hear the alteration in his voice as he said, “Not

Jim?”

“The very same Jim as ever was,” says Silver.

The doctor stopped outright, although he did not speak, and it was some

seconds before he seemed able to move on.

“Well, well,” he said at last, “duty first and pleasure afterwards, as

you might have said yourself, Silver. Let us overhaul these patients of

yours.”

A moment afterwards he had entered the block house and with one grim

nod to me proceeded with his work among the sick. He seemed under no

apprehension, though he must have known that his life, among these

treacherous demons, depended on a hair; and he rattled on to his

patients as if he were paying an ordinary professional visit in a quiet

English family. His manner, I suppose, reacted on the men, for they

behaved to him as if nothing had occurred, as if he were still ship's

doctor and they still faithful hands before the mast.

“You're doing well, my friend,” he said to the fellow with the bandaged

head, “and if ever any person had a close shave, it was you; your head

must be as hard as iron. Well, George, how goes it? You're a pretty

colour, certainly; why, your liver, man, is upside down. Did you take

that medicine? Did he take that medicine, men?”

“Aye, aye, sir, he took it, sure enough,” returned Morgan.

“Because, you see, since I am mutineers' doctor, or prison doctor as I

prefer to call it,” says Doctor Livesey in his pleasantest way, “I make

it a point of honour not to lose a man for King George (God bless him!)

and the gallows.”

The rogues looked at each other but swallowed the home-thrust in

silence.

“Dick don't feel well, sir,” said one.

“Don't he?” replied the doctor. “Well, step up here, Dick, and let me

see your tongue. No, I should be surprised if he did! The man's tongue

is fit to frighten the French. Another fever.”

“Ah, there,” said Morgan, “that comed of sp'iling Bibles.”

“That comes--as you call it--of being arrant asses,” retorted the

doctor, “and not having sense enough to know honest air from poison,

and the dry land from a vile, pestiferous slough. I think it most

probable--though of course it's only an opinion--that you'll all have

the deuce to pay before you get that malaria out of your systems. Camp

in a bog, would you? Silver, I'm surprised at you. You're less of a fool

than many, take you all round; but you don't appear to me to have the

rudiments of a notion of the rules of health.

“Well,” he added after he had dosed them round and they had taken

his prescriptions, with really laughable humility, more like charity

schoolchildren than blood-guilty mutineers and pirates--“well, that's

done for today. And now I should wish to have a talk with that boy,

please.”

And he nodded his head in my direction carelessly.

George Merry was at the door, spitting and spluttering over some

bad-tasted medicine; but at the first word of the doctor's proposal he

swung round with a deep flush and cried “No!” and swore.

Silver struck the barrel with his open hand.

“Si-lence!” he roared and looked about him positively like a lion.

“Doctor,” he went on in his usual tones, “I was a-thinking of that,

knowing as how you had a fancy for the boy. We're all humbly grateful

for your kindness, and as you see, puts faith in you and takes the drugs

down like that much grog. And I take it I've found a way as'll suit all.

Hawkins, will you give me your word of honour as a young gentleman--for

a young gentleman you are, although poor born--your word of honour not

to slip your cable?”

I readily gave the pledge required.

“Then, doctor,” said Silver, “you just step outside o' that stockade,

and once you're there I'll bring the boy down on the inside, and I

reckon you can yarn through the spars. Good day to you, sir, and all our

dooties to the squire and Cap'n Smollett.”

The explosion of disapproval, which nothing but Silver's black looks had

restrained, broke out immediately the doctor had left the house. Silver

was roundly accused of playing double--of trying to make a separate

peace for himself, of sacrificing the interests of his accomplices and

victims, and, in one word, of the identical, exact thing that he was

doing. It seemed to me so obvious, in this case, that I could not

imagine how he was to turn their anger. But he was twice the man

the rest were, and his last night's victory had given him a huge

preponderance on their minds. He called them all the fools and dolts

you can imagine, said it was necessary I should talk to the doctor,

fluttered the chart in their faces, asked them if they could afford to

break the treaty the very day they were bound a-treasure-hunting.

“No, by thunder!” he cried. “It's us must break the treaty when the time

comes; and till then I'll gammon that doctor, if I have to ile his boots

with brandy.”

And then he bade them get the fire lit, and stalked out upon his crutch,

with his hand on my shoulder, leaving them in a disarray, and silenced

by his volubility rather than convinced.

“Slow, lad, slow,” he said. “They might round upon us in a twinkle of an

eye if we was seen to hurry.”

Very deliberately, then, did we advance across the sand to where the

doctor awaited us on the other side of the stockade, and as soon as we

were within easy speaking distance Silver stopped.

“You'll make a note of this here also, doctor,” says he, “and the boy'll

tell you how I saved his life, and were deposed for it too, and you

may lay to that. Doctor, when a man's steering as near the wind as

me--playing chuck-farthing with the last breath in his body, like--you

wouldn't think it too much, mayhap, to give him one good word? You'll

please bear in mind it's not my life only now--it's that boy's into the

bargain; and you'll speak me fair, doctor, and give me a bit o' hope to

go on, for the sake of mercy.”

Silver was a changed man once he was out there and had his back to his

friends and the block house; his cheeks seemed to have fallen in, his

voice trembled; never was a soul more dead in earnest.

“Why, John, you're not afraid?” asked Dr. Livesey.

“Doctor, I'm no coward; no, not I--not SO much!” and he snapped his

fingers. “If I was I wouldn't say it. But I'll own up fairly, I've the

shakes upon me for the gallows. You're a good man and a true; I never

seen a better man! And you'll not forget what I done good, not any more

than you'll forget the bad, I know. And I step aside--see here--and

leave you and Jim alone. And you'll put that down for me too, for it's a

long stretch, is that!”

So saying, he stepped back a little way, till he was out of earshot, and

there sat down upon a tree-stump and began to whistle, spinning round

now and again upon his seat so as to command a sight, sometimes of me

and the doctor and sometimes of his unruly ruffians as they went to and

fro in the sand between the fire--which they were busy rekindling--and

the house, from which they brought forth pork and bread to make the

breakfast.

“So, Jim,” said the doctor sadly, “here you are. As you have brewed, so

shall you drink, my boy. Heaven knows, I cannot find it in my heart to

blame you, but this much I will say, be it kind or unkind: when Captain

Smollett was well, you dared not have gone off; and when he was ill and

couldn't help it, by George, it was downright cowardly!”

I will own that I here began to weep. “Doctor,” I said, “you might spare

me. I have blamed myself enough; my life's forfeit anyway, and I should

have been dead by now if Silver hadn't stood for me; and doctor,

believe this, I can die--and I dare say I deserve it--but what I fear is

torture. If they come to torture me--”

“Jim,” the doctor interrupted, and his voice was quite changed, “Jim, I

can't have this. Whip over, and we'll run for it.”

“Doctor,” said I, “I passed my word.”

“I know, I know,” he cried. “We can't help that, Jim, now. I'll take it

on my shoulders, holus bolus, blame and shame, my boy; but stay here,

I cannot let you. Jump! One jump, and you're out, and we'll run for it

like antelopes.”

“No,” I replied; “you know right well you wouldn't do the thing

yourself--neither you nor squire nor captain; and no more will I. Silver

trusted me; I passed my word, and back I go. But, doctor, you did not

let me finish. If they come to torture me, I might let slip a word of

where the ship is, for I got the ship, part by luck and part by risking,

and she lies in North Inlet, on the southern beach, and just below high

water. At half tide she must be high and dry.”

“The ship!” exclaimed the doctor.

Rapidly I described to him my adventures, and he heard me out in

silence.

“There is a kind of fate in this,” he observed when I had done. “Every

step, it's you that saves our lives; and do you suppose by any chance

that we are going to let you lose yours? That would be a poor return, my

boy. You found out the plot; you found Ben Gunn--the best deed that

ever you did, or will do, though you live to ninety. Oh, by Jupiter, and

talking of Ben Gunn! Why, this is the mischief in person. Silver!” he

cried. “Silver! I'll give you a piece of advice,” he continued as

the cook drew near again; “don't you be in any great hurry after that

treasure.”

“Why, sir, I do my possible, which that ain't,” said Silver. “I can

only, asking your pardon, save my life and the boy's by seeking for that

treasure; and you may lay to that.”

“Well, Silver,” replied the doctor, “if that is so, I'll go one step

further: look out for squalls when you find it.”

“Sir,” said Silver, “as between man and man, that's too much and too

little. What you're after, why you left the block house, why you given

me that there chart, I don't know, now, do I? And yet I done your

bidding with my eyes shut and never a word of hope! But no, this here's

too much. If you won't tell me what you mean plain out, just say so and

I'll leave the helm.”

“No,” said the doctor musingly; “I've no right to say more; it's not my

secret, you see, Silver, or, I give you my word, I'd tell it you. But

I'll go as far with you as I dare go, and a step beyond, for I'll have

my wig sorted by the captain or I'm mistaken! And first, I'll give you a

bit of hope; Silver, if we both get alive out of this wolf-trap, I'll do

my best to save you, short of perjury.”

Silver's face was radiant. “You couldn't say more, I'm sure, sir, not if

you was my mother,” he cried.

“Well, that's my first concession,” added the doctor. “My second is a

piece of advice: keep the boy close beside you, and when you need help,

halloo. I'm off to seek it for you, and that itself will show you if I

speak at random. Good-bye, Jim.”

And Dr. Livesey shook hands with me through the stockade, nodded to

Silver, and set off at a brisk pace into the wood.

31

The Treasure-hunt--Flint's Pointer

“JIM,” said Silver when we were alone, “if I saved your life, you saved

mine; and I'll not forget it. I seen the doctor waving you to run for

it--with the tail of my eye, I did; and I seen you say no, as plain as

hearing. Jim, that's one to you. This is the first glint of hope I had

since the attack failed, and I owe it you. And now, Jim, we're to go in

for this here treasure-hunting, with sealed orders too, and I don't like

it; and you and me must stick close, back to back like, and we'll save

our necks in spite o' fate and fortune.”

Just then a man hailed us from the fire that breakfast was ready, and

we were soon seated here and there about the sand over biscuit and fried

junk. They had lit a fire fit to roast an ox, and it was now grown so

hot that they could only approach it from the windward, and even there

not without precaution. In the same wasteful spirit, they had cooked,

I suppose, three times more than we could eat; and one of them, with an

empty laugh, threw what was left into the fire, which blazed and roared

again over this unusual fuel. I never in my life saw men so careless of

the morrow; hand to mouth is the only word that can describe their way

of doing; and what with wasted food and sleeping sentries, though they

were bold enough for a brush and be done with it, I could see their

entire unfitness for anything like a prolonged campaign.

Even Silver, eating away, with Captain Flint upon his shoulder, had not

a word of blame for their recklessness. And this the more surprised me,

for I thought he had never shown himself so cunning as he did then.

“Aye, mates,” said he, “it's lucky you have Barbecue to think for you

with this here head. I got what I wanted, I did. Sure enough, they have

the ship. Where they have it, I don't know yet; but once we hit the

treasure, we'll have to jump about and find out. And then, mates, us

that has the boats, I reckon, has the upper hand.”

Thus he kept running on, with his mouth full of the hot bacon; thus he

restored their hope and confidence, and, I more than suspect, repaired

his own at the same time.

“As for hostage,” he continued, “that's his last talk, I guess, with

them he loves so dear. I've got my piece o' news, and thanky to him

for that; but it's over and done. I'll take him in a line when we go

treasure-hunting, for we'll keep him like so much gold, in case of

accidents, you mark, and in the meantime. Once we got the ship and

treasure both and off to sea like jolly companions, why then we'll talk

Mr. Hawkins over, we will, and we'll give him his share, to be sure, for

all his kindness.”

It was no wonder the men were in a good humour now. For my part, I

was horribly cast down. Should the scheme he had now sketched prove

feasible, Silver, already doubly a traitor, would not hesitate to adopt

it. He had still a foot in either camp, and there was no doubt he

would prefer wealth and freedom with the pirates to a bare escape from

hanging, which was the best he had to hope on our side.

Nay, and even if things so fell out that he was forced to keep his faith

with Dr. Livesey, even then what danger lay before us! What a moment

that would be when the suspicions of his followers turned to certainty

and he and I should have to fight for dear life--he a cripple and I a

boy--against five strong and active seamen!

Add to this double apprehension the mystery that still hung over the

behaviour of my friends, their unexplained desertion of the stockade,

their inexplicable cession of the chart, or harder still to understand,

the doctor's last warning to Silver, “Look out for squalls when you

find it,” and you will readily believe how little taste I found in my

breakfast and with how uneasy a heart I set forth behind my captors on

the quest for treasure.

We made a curious figure, had anyone been there to see us--all in soiled

sailor clothes and all but me armed to the teeth. Silver had two guns

slung about him--one before and one behind--besides the great cutlass

at his waist and a pistol in each pocket of his square-tailed coat.

To complete his strange appearance, Captain Flint sat perched upon his

shoulder and gabbling odds and ends of purposeless sea-talk. I had a

line about my waist and followed obediently after the sea-cook, who

held the loose end of the rope, now in his free hand, now between his

powerful teeth. For all the world, I was led like a dancing bear.

The other men were variously burthened, some carrying picks and

shovels--for that had been the very first necessary they brought ashore

from the HISPANIOLA--others laden with pork, bread, and brandy for the

midday meal. All the stores, I observed, came from our stock, and I

could see the truth of Silver's words the night before. Had he not

struck a bargain with the doctor, he and his mutineers, deserted by the

ship, must have been driven to subsist on clear water and the proceeds

of their hunting. Water would have been little to their taste; a sailor

is not usually a good shot; and besides all that, when they were so

short of eatables, it was not likely they would be very flush of powder.

Well, thus equipped, we all set out--even the fellow with the broken

head, who should certainly have kept in shadow--and straggled, one after

another, to the beach, where the two gigs awaited us. Even these bore

trace of the drunken folly of the pirates, one in a broken thwart, and

both in their muddy and unbailed condition. Both were to be carried

along with us for the sake of safety; and so, with our numbers divided

between them, we set forth upon the bosom of the anchorage.

As we pulled over, there was some discussion on the chart. The red cross

was, of course, far too large to be a guide; and the terms of the note

on the back, as you will hear, admitted of some ambiguity. They ran, the

reader may remember, thus:

Tall tree, Spy-glass shoulder, bearing a point to

the N. of N.N.E.

Skeleton Island E.S.E. and by E.

Ten feet.

A tall tree was thus the principal mark. Now, right before us the

anchorage was bounded by a plateau from two to three hundred feet high,

adjoining on the north the sloping southern shoulder of the Spy-glass

and rising again towards the south into the rough, cliffy eminence

called the Mizzen-mast Hill. The top of the plateau was dotted thickly

with pine-trees of varying height. Every here and there, one of a

different species rose forty or fifty feet clear above its neighbours,

and which of these was the particular “tall tree” of Captain Flint could

only be decided on the spot, and by the readings of the compass.

Yet, although that was the case, every man on board the boats had

picked a favourite of his own ere we were half-way over, Long John alone

shrugging his shoulders and bidding them wait till they were there.

We pulled easily, by Silver's directions, not to weary the hands

prematurely, and after quite a long passage, landed at the mouth of

the second river--that which runs down a woody cleft of the Spy-glass.

Thence, bending to our left, we began to ascend the slope towards the

plateau.

At the first outset, heavy, miry ground and a matted, marish vegetation

greatly delayed our progress; but by little and little the hill began

to steepen and become stony under foot, and the wood to change its

character and to grow in a more open order. It was, indeed, a most

pleasant portion of the island that we were now approaching. A

heavy-scented broom and many flowering shrubs had almost taken the place

of grass. Thickets of green nutmeg-trees were dotted here and there with

the red columns and the broad shadow of the pines; and the first mingled

their spice with the aroma of the others. The air, besides, was fresh

and stirring, and this, under the sheer sunbeams, was a wonderful

refreshment to our senses.

The party spread itself abroad, in a fan shape, shouting and leaping to

and fro. About the centre, and a good way behind the rest, Silver and

I followed--I tethered by my rope, he ploughing, with deep pants, among

the sliding gravel. From time to time, indeed, I had to lend him a hand,

or he must have missed his footing and fallen backward down the hill.

We had thus proceeded for about half a mile and were approaching the

brow of the plateau when the man upon the farthest left began to cry

aloud, as if in terror. Shout after shout came from him, and the others

began to run in his direction.

“He can't 'a found the treasure,” said old Morgan, hurrying past us from

the right, “for that's clean a-top.”

Indeed, as we found when we also reached the spot, it was something

very different. At the foot of a pretty big pine and involved in a green

creeper, which had even partly lifted some of the smaller bones, a human

skeleton lay, with a few shreds of clothing, on the ground. I believe a

chill struck for a moment to every heart.

“He was a seaman,” said George Merry, who, bolder than the rest, had

gone up close and was examining the rags of clothing. “Leastways, this

is good sea-cloth.”

“Aye, aye,” said Silver; “like enough; you wouldn't look to find a

bishop here, I reckon. But what sort of a way is that for bones to lie?

'Tain't in natur'.”

Indeed, on a second glance, it seemed impossible to fancy that the body

was in a natural position. But for some disarray (the work, perhaps, of

the birds that had fed upon him or of the slow-growing creeper that had

gradually enveloped his remains) the man lay perfectly straight--his

feet pointing in one direction, his hands, raised above his head like a

diver's, pointing directly in the opposite.

“I've taken a notion into my old numbskull,” observed Silver. “Here's

the compass; there's the tip-top p'int o' Skeleton Island, stickin'

out like a tooth. Just take a bearing, will you, along the line of them

bones.”

It was done. The body pointed straight in the direction of the island,

and the compass read duly E.S.E. and by E.

“I thought so,” cried the cook; “this here is a p'inter. Right up there

is our line for the Pole Star and the jolly dollars. But, by thunder!

If it don't make me cold inside to think of Flint. This is one of HIS

jokes, and no mistake. Him and these six was alone here; he killed 'em,

every man; and this one he hauled here and laid down by compass, shiver

my timbers! They're long bones, and the hair's been yellow. Aye, that

would be Allardyce. You mind Allardyce, Tom Morgan?”

“Aye, aye,” returned Morgan; “I mind him; he owed me money, he did, and

took my knife ashore with him.”

“Speaking of knives,” said another, “why don't we find his'n lying

round? Flint warn't the man to pick a seaman's pocket; and the birds, I

guess, would leave it be.”

“By the powers, and that's true!” cried Silver.

“There ain't a thing left here,” said Merry, still feeling round among

the bones; “not a copper doit nor a baccy box. It don't look nat'ral to

me.”

“No, by gum, it don't,” agreed Silver; “not nat'ral, nor not nice, says

you. Great guns! Messmates, but if Flint was living, this would be a hot

spot for you and me. Six they were, and six are we; and bones is what

they are now.”

“I saw him dead with these here deadlights,” said Morgan. “Billy took me

in. There he laid, with penny-pieces on his eyes.”

“Dead--aye, sure enough he's dead and gone below,” said the fellow with

the bandage; “but if ever sperrit walked, it would be Flint's. Dear

heart, but he died bad, did Flint!”

“Aye, that he did,” observed another; “now he raged, and now he hollered

for the rum, and now he sang. 'Fifteen Men' were his only song, mates;

and I tell you true, I never rightly liked to hear it since. It was

main hot, and the windy was open, and I hear that old song comin' out as

clear as clear--and the death-haul on the man already.”

“Come, come,” said Silver; “stow this talk. He's dead, and he don't

walk, that I know; leastways, he won't walk by day, and you may lay to

that. Care killed a cat. Fetch ahead for the doubloons.”

We started, certainly; but in spite of the hot sun and the staring

daylight, the pirates no longer ran separate and shouting through the

wood, but kept side by side and spoke with bated breath. The terror of

the dead buccaneer had fallen on their spirits.

32

The Treasure-hunt--The Voice Among the Trees

PARTLY from the damping influence of this alarm, partly to rest Silver

and the sick folk, the whole party sat down as soon as they had gained

the brow of the ascent.

The plateau being somewhat tilted towards the west, this spot on which

we had paused commanded a wide prospect on either hand. Before us,

over the tree-tops, we beheld the Cape of the Woods fringed with surf;

behind, we not only looked down upon the anchorage and Skeleton Island,

but saw--clear across the spit and the eastern lowlands--a great field

of open sea upon the east. Sheer above us rose the Spyglass, here dotted

with single pines, there black with precipices. There was no sound but

that of the distant breakers, mounting from all round, and the chirp of

countless insects in the brush. Not a man, not a sail, upon the sea; the

very largeness of the view increased the sense of solitude.

Silver, as he sat, took certain bearings with his compass.

“There are three 'tall trees'” said he, “about in the right line from

Skeleton Island. 'Spy-glass shoulder,' I take it, means that lower p'int

there. It's child's play to find the stuff now. I've half a mind to dine

first.”

“I don't feel sharp,” growled Morgan. “Thinkin' o' Flint--I think it

were--as done me.”

“Ah, well, my son, you praise your stars he's dead,” said Silver.

“He were an ugly devil,” cried a third pirate with a shudder; “that blue

in the face too!”

“That was how the rum took him,” added Merry. “Blue! Well, I reckon he

was blue. That's a true word.”

Ever since they had found the skeleton and got upon this train of

thought, they had spoken lower and lower, and they had almost got to

whispering by now, so that the sound of their talk hardly interrupted

the silence of the wood. All of a sudden, out of the middle of the trees

in front of us, a thin, high, trembling voice struck up the well-known

air and words:

“Fifteen men on the dead man's chest--

Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!”

I never have seen men more dreadfully affected than the pirates. The

colour went from their six faces like enchantment; some leaped to their

feet, some clawed hold of others; Morgan grovelled on the ground.

“It's Flint, by ----!” cried Merry.

The song had stopped as suddenly as it began--broken off, you would have

said, in the middle of a note, as though someone had laid his hand upon

the singer's mouth. Coming through the clear, sunny atmosphere among the

green tree-tops, I thought it had sounded airily and sweetly; and the

effect on my companions was the stranger.

“Come,” said Silver, struggling with his ashen lips to get the word out;

“this won't do. Stand by to go about. This is a rum start, and I can't

name the voice, but it's someone skylarking--someone that's flesh and

blood, and you may lay to that.”

His courage had come back as he spoke, and some of the colour to his

face along with it. Already the others had begun to lend an ear to this

encouragement and were coming a little to themselves, when the same

voice broke out again--not this time singing, but in a faint distant

hail that echoed yet fainter among the clefts of the Spy-glass.

“Darby M'Graw,” it wailed--for that is the word that best describes the

sound--“Darby M'Graw! Darby M'Graw!” again and again and again; and then

rising a little higher, and with an oath that I leave out: “Fetch aft

the rum, Darby!”

The buccaneers remained rooted to the ground, their eyes starting from

their heads. Long after the voice had died away they still stared in

silence, dreadfully, before them.

“That fixes it!” gasped one. “Let's go.”

“They was his last words,” moaned Morgan, “his last words above board.”

Dick had his Bible out and was praying volubly. He had been well brought

up, had Dick, before he came to sea and fell among bad companions.

Still Silver was unconquered. I could hear his teeth rattle in his head,

but he had not yet surrendered.

“Nobody in this here island ever heard of Darby,” he muttered; “not one

but us that's here.” And then, making a great effort: “Shipmates,”

he cried, “I'm here to get that stuff, and I'll not be beat by man or

devil. I never was feared of Flint in his life, and, by the powers, I'll

face him dead. There's seven hundred thousand pound not a quarter of a

mile from here. When did ever a gentleman o' fortune show his stern to

that much dollars for a boozy old seaman with a blue mug--and him dead

too?”

But there was no sign of reawakening courage in his followers, rather,

indeed, of growing terror at the irreverence of his words.

“Belay there, John!” said Merry. “Don't you cross a sperrit.”

And the rest were all too terrified to reply. They would have run away

severally had they dared; but fear kept them together, and kept them

close by John, as if his daring helped them. He, on his part, had pretty

well fought his weakness down.

“Sperrit? Well, maybe,” he said. “But there's one thing not clear to me.

There was an echo. Now, no man ever seen a sperrit with a shadow; well

then, what's he doing with an echo to him, I should like to know? That

ain't in natur', surely?”

This argument seemed weak enough to me. But you can never tell what will

affect the superstitious, and to my wonder, George Merry was greatly

relieved.

“Well, that's so,” he said. “You've a head upon your shoulders, John,

and no mistake. 'Bout ship, mates! This here crew is on a wrong tack, I

do believe. And come to think on it, it was like Flint's voice, I

grant you, but not just so clear-away like it, after all. It was liker

somebody else's voice now--it was liker--”

“By the powers, Ben Gunn!” roared Silver.

“Aye, and so it were,” cried Morgan, springing on his knees. “Ben Gunn

it were!”

“It don't make much odds, do it, now?” asked Dick. “Ben Gunn's not here

in the body any more'n Flint.”

But the older hands greeted this remark with scorn.

“Why, nobody minds Ben Gunn,” cried Merry; “dead or alive, nobody minds

him.”

It was extraordinary how their spirits had returned and how the natural

colour had revived in their faces. Soon they were chatting together,

with intervals of listening; and not long after, hearing no further

sound, they shouldered the tools and set forth again, Merry walking

first with Silver's compass to keep them on the right line with Skeleton

Island. He had said the truth: dead or alive, nobody minded Ben Gunn.

Dick alone still held his Bible, and looked around him as he went, with

fearful glances; but he found no sympathy, and Silver even joked him on

his precautions.

“I told you,” said he--“I told you you had sp'iled your Bible. If it

ain't no good to swear by, what do you suppose a sperrit would give for

it? Not that!” and he snapped his big fingers, halting a moment on his

crutch.

But Dick was not to be comforted; indeed, it was soon plain to me that

the lad was falling sick; hastened by heat, exhaustion, and the shock

of his alarm, the fever, predicted by Dr. Livesey, was evidently growing

swiftly higher.

It was fine open walking here, upon the summit; our way lay a little

downhill, for, as I have said, the plateau tilted towards the west. The

pines, great and small, grew wide apart; and even between the clumps of

nutmeg and azalea, wide open spaces baked in the hot sunshine. Striking,

as we did, pretty near north-west across the island, we drew, on the

one hand, ever nearer under the shoulders of the Spy-glass, and on the

other, looked ever wider over that western bay where I had once tossed

and trembled in the coracle.

The first of the tall trees was reached, and by the bearings proved the

wrong one. So with the second. The third rose nearly two hundred feet

into the air above a clump of underwood--a giant of a vegetable, with

a red column as big as a cottage, and a wide shadow around in which a

company could have manoeuvred. It was conspicuous far to sea both on

the east and west and might have been entered as a sailing mark upon the

chart.

But it was not its size that now impressed my companions; it was the

knowledge that seven hundred thousand pounds in gold lay somewhere

buried below its spreading shadow. The thought of the money, as they

drew nearer, swallowed up their previous terrors. Their eyes burned in

their heads; their feet grew speedier and lighter; their whole soul

was bound up in that fortune, that whole lifetime of extravagance and

pleasure, that lay waiting there for each of them.

Silver hobbled, grunting, on his crutch; his nostrils stood out and

quivered; he cursed like a madman when the flies settled on his hot and

shiny countenance; he plucked furiously at the line that held me to

him and from time to time turned his eyes upon me with a deadly look.

Certainly he took no pains to hide his thoughts, and certainly I read

them like print. In the immediate nearness of the gold, all else had

been forgotten: his promise and the doctor's warning were both things

of the past, and I could not doubt that he hoped to seize upon the

treasure, find and board the HISPANIOLA under cover of night, cut

every honest throat about that island, and sail away as he had at first

intended, laden with crimes and riches.

Shaken as I was with these alarms, it was hard for me to keep up with

the rapid pace of the treasure-hunters. Now and again I stumbled, and it

was then that Silver plucked so roughly at the rope and launched at me

his murderous glances. Dick, who had dropped behind us and now brought

up the rear, was babbling to himself both prayers and curses as his

fever kept rising. This also added to my wretchedness, and to crown all,

I was haunted by the thought of the tragedy that had once been acted

on that plateau, when that ungodly buccaneer with the blue face--he who

died at Savannah, singing and shouting for drink--had there, with his

own hand, cut down his six accomplices. This grove that was now so

peaceful must then have rung with cries, I thought; and even with the

thought I could believe I heard it ringing still.

We were now at the margin of the thicket.

“Huzza, mates, all together!” shouted Merry; and the foremost broke into

a run.

And suddenly, not ten yards further, we beheld them stop. A low cry

arose. Silver doubled his pace, digging away with the foot of his crutch

like one possessed; and next moment he and I had come also to a dead

halt.

Before us was a great excavation, not very recent, for the sides had

fallen in and grass had sprouted on the bottom. In this were the shaft

of a pick broken in two and the boards of several packing-cases strewn

around. On one of these boards I saw, branded with a hot iron, the name

WALRUS--the name of Flint's ship.

All was clear to probation. The CACHE had been found and rifled; the

seven hundred thousand pounds were gone!

33

The Fall of a Chieftain

THERE never was such an overturn in this world. Each of these six men

was as though he had been struck. But with Silver the blow passed almost

instantly. Every thought of his soul had been set full-stretch, like a

racer, on that money; well, he was brought up, in a single second, dead;

and he kept his head, found his temper, and changed his plan before the

others had had time to realize the disappointment.

“Jim,” he whispered, “take that, and stand by for trouble.”

And he passed me a double-barrelled pistol.

At the same time, he began quietly moving northward, and in a few steps

had put the hollow between us two and the other five. Then he looked at

me and nodded, as much as to say, “Here is a narrow corner,” as, indeed,

I thought it was. His looks were not quite friendly, and I was so

revolted at these constant changes that I could not forbear whispering,

“So you've changed sides again.”

There was no time left for him to answer in. The buccaneers, with oaths

and cries, began to leap, one after another, into the pit and to dig

with their fingers, throwing the boards aside as they did so. Morgan

found a piece of gold. He held it up with a perfect spout of oaths. It

was a two-guinea piece, and it went from hand to hand among them for a

quarter of a minute.

“Two guineas!” roared Merry, shaking it at Silver. “That's your seven

hundred thousand pounds, is it? You're the man for bargains, ain't you?

You're him that never bungled nothing, you wooden-headed lubber!”

“Dig away, boys,” said Silver with the coolest insolence; “you'll find

some pig-nuts and I shouldn't wonder.”

“Pig-nuts!” repeated Merry, in a scream. “Mates, do you hear that? I

tell you now, that man there knew it all along. Look in the face of him

and you'll see it wrote there.”

“Ah, Merry,” remarked Silver, “standing for cap'n again? You're a

pushing lad, to be sure.”

But this time everyone was entirely in Merry's favour. They began to

scramble out of the excavation, darting furious glances behind them. One

thing I observed, which looked well for us: they all got out upon the

opposite side from Silver.

Well, there we stood, two on one side, five on the other, the pit

between us, and nobody screwed up high enough to offer the first blow.

Silver never moved; he watched them, very upright on his crutch, and

looked as cool as ever I saw him. He was brave, and no mistake.

At last Merry seemed to think a speech might help matters.

“Mates,” says he, “there's two of them alone there; one's the old

cripple that brought us all here and blundered us down to this; the

other's that cub that I mean to have the heart of. Now, mates--”

He was raising his arm and his voice, and plainly meant to lead a

charge. But just then--crack! crack! crack!--three musket-shots flashed

out of the thicket. Merry tumbled head foremost into the excavation; the

man with the bandage spun round like a teetotum and fell all his length

upon his side, where he lay dead, but still twitching; and the other

three turned and ran for it with all their might.

Before you could wink, Long John had fired two barrels of a pistol into

the struggling Merry, and as the man rolled up his eyes at him in the

last agony, “George,” said he, “I reckon I settled you.”

At the same moment, the doctor, Gray, and Ben Gunn joined us, with

smoking muskets, from among the nutmeg-trees.

“Forward!” cried the doctor. “Double quick, my lads. We must head 'em

off the boats.”

And we set off at a great pace, sometimes plunging through the bushes to

the chest.

I tell you, but Silver was anxious to keep up with us. The work that man

went through, leaping on his crutch till the muscles of his chest were

fit to burst, was work no sound man ever equalled; and so thinks the

doctor. As it was, he was already thirty yards behind us and on the

verge of strangling when we reached the brow of the slope.

“Doctor,” he hailed, “see there! No hurry!”

Sure enough there was no hurry. In a more open part of the plateau, we

could see the three survivors still running in the same direction as

they had started, right for Mizzenmast Hill. We were already between

them and the boats; and so we four sat down to breathe, while Long John,

mopping his face, came slowly up with us.

“Thank ye kindly, doctor,” says he. “You came in in about the nick, I

guess, for me and Hawkins. And so it's you, Ben Gunn!” he added. “Well,

you're a nice one, to be sure.”

“I'm Ben Gunn, I am,” replied the maroon, wriggling like an eel in his

embarrassment. “And,” he added, after a long pause, “how do, Mr. Silver?

Pretty well, I thank ye, says you.”

“Ben, Ben,” murmured Silver, “to think as you've done me!”

The doctor sent back Gray for one of the pick-axes deserted, in their

flight, by the mutineers, and then as we proceeded leisurely downhill to

where the boats were lying, related in a few words what had taken place.

It was a story that profoundly interested Silver; and Ben Gunn, the

half-idiot maroon, was the hero from beginning to end.

Ben, in his long, lonely wanderings about the island, had found the

skeleton--it was he that had rifled it; he had found the treasure; he

had dug it up (it was the haft of his pick-axe that lay broken in the

excavation); he had carried it on his back, in many weary journeys, from

the foot of the tall pine to a cave he had on the two-pointed hill at

the north-east angle of the island, and there it had lain stored in

safety since two months before the arrival of the HISPANIOLA.

When the doctor had wormed this secret from him on the afternoon of the

attack, and when next morning he saw the anchorage deserted, he had gone

to Silver, given him the chart, which was now useless--given him the

stores, for Ben Gunn's cave was well supplied with goats' meat salted

by himself--given anything and everything to get a chance of moving in

safety from the stockade to the two-pointed hill, there to be clear of

malaria and keep a guard upon the money.

“As for you, Jim,” he said, “it went against my heart, but I did what I

thought best for those who had stood by their duty; and if you were not

one of these, whose fault was it?”

That morning, finding that I was to be involved in the horrid

disappointment he had prepared for the mutineers, he had run all the way

to the cave, and leaving the squire to guard the captain, had taken Gray

and the maroon and started, making the diagonal across the island to be

at hand beside the pine. Soon, however, he saw that our party had the

start of him; and Ben Gunn, being fleet of foot, had been dispatched in

front to do his best alone. Then it had occurred to him to work upon the

superstitions of his former shipmates, and he was so far successful that

Gray and the doctor had come up and were already ambushed before the

arrival of the treasure-hunters.

“Ah,” said Silver, “it were fortunate for me that I had Hawkins here.

You would have let old John be cut to bits, and never given it a

thought, doctor.”

“Not a thought,” replied Dr. Livesey cheerily.

And by this time we had reached the gigs. The doctor, with the pick-axe,

demolished one of them, and then we all got aboard the other and set out

to go round by sea for North Inlet.

This was a run of eight or nine miles. Silver, though he was almost

killed already with fatigue, was set to an oar, like the rest of us, and

we were soon skimming swiftly over a smooth sea. Soon we passed out

of the straits and doubled the south-east corner of the island, round

which, four days ago, we had towed the HISPANIOLA.

As we passed the two-pointed hill, we could see the black mouth of Ben

Gunn's cave and a figure standing by it, leaning on a musket. It was the

squire, and we waved a handkerchief and gave him three cheers, in which

the voice of Silver joined as heartily as any.

Three miles farther, just inside the mouth of North Inlet, what should

we meet but the HISPANIOLA, cruising by herself? The last flood had

lifted her, and had there been much wind or a strong tide current, as

in the southern anchorage, we should never have found her more, or found

her stranded beyond help. As it was, there was little amiss beyond the

wreck of the main-sail. Another anchor was got ready and dropped in a

fathom and a half of water. We all pulled round again to Rum Cove,

the nearest point for Ben Gunn's treasure-house; and then Gray,

single-handed, returned with the gig to the HISPANIOLA, where he was to

pass the night on guard.

A gentle slope ran up from the beach to the entrance of the cave. At the

top, the squire met us. To me he was cordial and kind, saying nothing

of my escapade either in the way of blame or praise. At Silver's polite

salute he somewhat flushed.

“John Silver,” he said, “you're a prodigious villain and imposter--a

monstrous imposter, sir. I am told I am not to prosecute you. Well,

then, I will not. But the dead men, sir, hang about your neck like

mill-stones.”

“Thank you kindly, sir,” replied Long John, again saluting.

“I dare you to thank me!” cried the squire. “It is a gross dereliction

of my duty. Stand back.”

And thereupon we all entered the cave. It was a large, airy place, with

a little spring and a pool of clear water, overhung with ferns. The

floor was sand. Before a big fire lay Captain Smollett; and in a far

corner, only duskily flickered over by the blaze, I beheld great heaps

of coin and quadrilaterals built of bars of gold. That was Flint's

treasure that we had come so far to seek and that had cost already the

lives of seventeen men from the HISPANIOLA. How many it had cost in the

amassing, what blood and sorrow, what good ships scuttled on the deep,

what brave men walking the plank blindfold, what shot of cannon, what

shame and lies and cruelty, perhaps no man alive could tell. Yet there

were still three upon that island--Silver, and old Morgan, and Ben

Gunn--who had each taken his share in these crimes, as each had hoped in

vain to share in the reward.

“Come in, Jim,” said the captain. “You're a good boy in your line, Jim,

but I don't think you and me'll go to sea again. You're too much of the

born favourite for me. Is that you, John Silver? What brings you here,

man?”

“Come back to my dooty, sir,” returned Silver.

“Ah!” said the captain, and that was all he said.

What a supper I had of it that night, with all my friends around me; and

what a meal it was, with Ben Gunn's salted goat and some delicacies and

a bottle of old wine from the HISPANIOLA. Never, I am sure, were people

gayer or happier. And there was Silver, sitting back almost out of the

firelight, but eating heartily, prompt to spring forward when anything

was wanted, even joining quietly in our laughter--the same bland,

polite, obsequious seaman of the voyage out.

34

And Last

THE next morning we fell early to work, for the transportation of this

great mass of gold near a mile by land to the beach, and thence three

miles by boat to the HISPANIOLA, was a considerable task for so small

a number of workmen. The three fellows still abroad upon the island did

not greatly trouble us; a single sentry on the shoulder of the hill was

sufficient to ensure us against any sudden onslaught, and we thought,

besides, they had had more than enough of fighting.

Therefore the work was pushed on briskly. Gray and Ben Gunn came and

went with the boat, while the rest during their absences piled treasure

on the beach. Two of the bars, slung in a rope's end, made a good load

for a grown man--one that he was glad to walk slowly with. For my part,

as I was not much use at carrying, I was kept busy all day in the cave

packing the minted money into bread-bags.

It was a strange collection, like Billy Bones's hoard for the diversity

of coinage, but so much larger and so much more varied that I think I

never had more pleasure than in sorting them. English, French, Spanish,

Portuguese, Georges, and Louises, doubloons and double guineas and

moidores and sequins, the pictures of all the kings of Europe for the

last hundred years, strange Oriental pieces stamped with what looked

like wisps of string or bits of spider's web, round pieces and square

pieces, and pieces bored through the middle, as if to wear them round

your neck--nearly every variety of money in the world must, I think,

have found a place in that collection; and for number, I am sure they

were like autumn leaves, so that my back ached with stooping and my

fingers with sorting them out.

Day after day this work went on; by every evening a fortune had been

stowed aboard, but there was another fortune waiting for the morrow; and

all this time we heard nothing of the three surviving mutineers.

At last--I think it was on the third night--the doctor and I were

strolling on the shoulder of the hill where it overlooks the lowlands of

the isle, when, from out the thick darkness below, the wind brought us

a noise between shrieking and singing. It was only a snatch that reached

our ears, followed by the former silence.

“Heaven forgive them,” said the doctor; “'tis the mutineers!”

“All drunk, sir,” struck in the voice of Silver from behind us.

Silver, I should say, was allowed his entire liberty, and in spite of

daily rebuffs, seemed to regard himself once more as quite a privileged

and friendly dependent. Indeed, it was remarkable how well he bore

these slights and with what unwearying politeness he kept on trying to

ingratiate himself with all. Yet, I think, none treated him better than

a dog, unless it was Ben Gunn, who was still terribly afraid of his old

quartermaster, or myself, who had really something to thank him for;

although for that matter, I suppose, I had reason to think even worse of

him than anybody else, for I had seen him meditating a fresh treachery

upon the plateau. Accordingly, it was pretty gruffly that the doctor

answered him.

“Drunk or raving,” said he.

“Right you were, sir,” replied Silver; “and precious little odds which,

to you and me.”

“I suppose you would hardly ask me to call you a humane man,” returned

the doctor with a sneer, “and so my feelings may surprise you, Master

Silver. But if I were sure they were raving--as I am morally certain

one, at least, of them is down with fever--I should leave this camp,

and at whatever risk to my own carcass, take them the assistance of my

skill.”

“Ask your pardon, sir, you would be very wrong,” quoth Silver. “You

would lose your precious life, and you may lay to that. I'm on your side

now, hand and glove; and I shouldn't wish for to see the party weakened,

let alone yourself, seeing as I know what I owes you. But these men down

there, they couldn't keep their word--no, not supposing they wished to;

and what's more, they couldn't believe as you could.”

“No,” said the doctor. “You're the man to keep your word, we know that.”

Well, that was about the last news we had of the three pirates. Only

once we heard a gunshot a great way off and supposed them to be hunting.

A council was held, and it was decided that we must desert them on the

island--to the huge glee, I must say, of Ben Gunn, and with the strong

approval of Gray. We left a good stock of powder and shot, the bulk

of the salt goat, a few medicines, and some other necessaries, tools,

clothing, a spare sail, a fathom or two of rope, and by the particular

desire of the doctor, a handsome present of tobacco.

That was about our last doing on the island. Before that, we had got the

treasure stowed and had shipped enough water and the remainder of the

goat meat in case of any distress; and at last, one fine morning, we

weighed anchor, which was about all that we could manage, and stood out

of North Inlet, the same colours flying that the captain had flown and

fought under at the palisade.

The three fellows must have been watching us closer than we thought for,

as we soon had proved. For coming through the narrows, we had to

lie very near the southern point, and there we saw all three of

them kneeling together on a spit of sand, with their arms raised in

supplication. It went to all our hearts, I think, to leave them in that

wretched state; but we could not risk another mutiny; and to take them

home for the gibbet would have been a cruel sort of kindness. The doctor

hailed them and told them of the stores we had left, and where they were

to find them. But they continued to call us by name and appeal to us,

for God's sake, to be merciful and not leave them to die in such a

place.

At last, seeing the ship still bore on her course and was now swiftly

drawing out of earshot, one of them--I know not which it was--leapt to

his feet with a hoarse cry, whipped his musket to his shoulder, and sent

a shot whistling over Silver's head and through the main-sail.

After that, we kept under cover of the bulwarks, and when next I looked

out they had disappeared from the spit, and the spit itself had almost

melted out of sight in the growing distance. That was, at least, the end

of that; and before noon, to my inexpressible joy, the highest rock of

Treasure Island had sunk into the blue round of sea.

We were so short of men that everyone on board had to bear a hand--only

the captain lying on a mattress in the stern and giving his orders, for

though greatly recovered he was still in want of quiet. We laid her

head for the nearest port in Spanish America, for we could not risk the

voyage home without fresh hands; and as it was, what with baffling winds

and a couple of fresh gales, we were all worn out before we reached it.

It was just at sundown when we cast anchor in a most beautiful

land-locked gulf, and were immediately surrounded by shore boats full

of Negroes and Mexican Indians and half-bloods selling fruits and

vegetables and offering to dive for bits of money. The sight of so many

good-humoured faces (especially the blacks), the taste of the tropical

fruits, and above all the lights that began to shine in the town made a

most charming contrast to our dark and bloody sojourn on the island;

and the doctor and the squire, taking me along with them, went ashore

to pass the early part of the night. Here they met the captain of an

English man-of-war, fell in talk with him, went on board his ship, and,

in short, had so agreeable a time that day was breaking when we came

alongside the HISPANIOLA.

Ben Gunn was on deck alone, and as soon as we came on board he began,

with wonderful contortions, to make us a confession. Silver was gone.

The maroon had connived at his escape in a shore boat some hours ago,

and he now assured us he had only done so to preserve our lives, which

would certainly have been forfeit if “that man with the one leg

had stayed aboard.” But this was not all. The sea-cook had not gone

empty-handed. He had cut through a bulkhead unobserved and had removed

one of the sacks of coin, worth perhaps three or four hundred guineas,

to help him on his further wanderings.

I think we were all pleased to be so cheaply quit of him.

Well, to make a long story short, we got a few hands on board, made a

good cruise home, and the HISPANIOLA reached Bristol just as Mr. Blandly

was beginning to think of fitting out her consort. Five men only of

those who had sailed returned with her. “Drink and the devil had done

for the rest,” with a vengeance, although, to be sure, we were not quite

in so bad a case as that other ship they sang about:

With one man of her crew alive,

What put to sea with seventy-five.

All of us had an ample share of the treasure and used it wisely or

foolishly, according to our natures. Captain Smollett is now retired

from the sea. Gray not only saved his money, but being suddenly smit

with the desire to rise, also studied his profession, and he is now

mate and part owner of a fine full-rigged ship, married besides, and the

father of a family. As for Ben Gunn, he got a thousand pounds, which he

spent or lost in three weeks, or to be more exact, in nineteen days, for

he was back begging on the twentieth. Then he was given a lodge to keep,

exactly as he had feared upon the island; and he still lives, a great

favourite, though something of a butt, with the country boys, and a

notable singer in church on Sundays and saints' days.

Of Silver we have heard no more. That formidable seafaring man with one

leg has at last gone clean out of my life; but I dare say he met his old

Negress, and perhaps still lives in comfort with her and Captain Flint.

It is to be hoped so, I suppose, for his chances of comfort in another

world are very small.

The bar silver and the arms still lie, for all that I know, where

Flint buried them; and certainly they shall lie there for me. Oxen and

wain-ropes would not bring me back again to that accursed island; and

the worst dreams that ever I have are when I hear the surf booming about

its coasts or start upright in bed with the sharp voice of Captain Flint

still ringing in my ears: “Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight!”

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