

Chapter 5

Days became weeks, and weeks became months, and the months followed one another in a lazy procession of hot, humid days and warm, humid nights.

The fugitives saw never a Wieroo by day though often at night they heard the melancholy flapping of giant wings far above them.

Each day was much like its predecessor. Bradley splashed about for a few minutes in the cold pool early each morning and after a time the girl tried it and liked it. Toward the center it was deep enough for swimming, and so he taught her to swim--she was probably the first human being in all Caspak's long ages who had done this thing. And then while she prepared breakfast, the man shaved--this he never neglected. At first it was a source of wonderment to the girl, for the Galu men are beardless.

When they needed meat, he hunted, otherwise he busied himself in improving their shelter, making new and better weapons, perfecting his knowledge of the girl's language and teaching her to speak and to write English--anything that would keep them both occupied. He still sought new plans for escape, but with ever-lessening enthusiasm, since each new scheme presented some insurmountable obstacle.

And then one day as a bolt out of a clear sky came that which blasted the peace and security of their sanctuary forever. Bradley was just emerging from the water after his morning plunge when from overhead

came the sound of flapping wings. Glancing quickly up the man saw a white-robed Wieroo circling slowly above him. That he had been discovered he could not doubt since the creature even dropped to a lower altitude as though to assure itself that what it saw was a man. Then it rose rapidly and winged away toward the city.

For two days Bradley and the girl lived in a constant state of apprehension, awaiting the moment when the hunters would come for them; but nothing happened until just after dawn of the third day, when the flapping of wings apprised them of the approach of Wieroos. Together they went to the edge of the wood and looked up to see five red-robed creatures dropping slowly in ever-lessening spirals toward their little amphitheater. With no attempt at concealment they came, sure of their ability to overwhelm these two fugitives, and with the fullest measure of self-confidence they landed in the clearing but a few yards from the man and the girl.

Following a plan already discussed Bradley and the girl retreated slowly into the woods. The Wieroos advanced, calling upon them to give themselves up; but the quarry made no reply. Farther and farther into the little wood Bradley led the hunters, permitting them to approach ever closer; then he circled back again toward the clearing, evidently to the great delight of the Wieroos, who now followed more leisurely, awaiting the moment when they should be beyond the trees and able to use their wings. They had opened into semicircular formation now with the evident intention of cutting the two off from returning into the

wood. Each Wieroo advanced with his curved blade ready in his hand, each hideous face blank and expressionless.

It was then that Bradley opened fire with his pistol--three shots, aimed with careful deliberation, for it had been long since he had used the weapon, and he could not afford to chance wasting ammunition on misses. At each shot a Wieroo dropped; and then the remaining two sought escape by flight, screaming and wailing after the manner of their kind. When a Wieroo runs, his wings spread almost without any volition upon his part, since from time immemorial he has always used them to balance himself and accelerate his running speed so that in the open they appear to skim the surface of the ground when in the act of running. But here in the woods, among the close-set boles, the spreading of their wings proved their undoing--it hindered and stopped them and threw them to the ground, and then Bradley was upon them threatening them with instant death if they did not surrender--promising them their freedom if they did his bidding.

"As you have seen," he cried, "I can kill you when I wish and at a distance. You cannot escape me. Your only hope of life lies in obedience. Quick, or I kill!"

The Wieroos stopped and faced him. "What do you want of us?" asked one.

"Throw aside your weapons," Bradley commanded. After a moment's hesitation they obeyed.

"Now approach!" A great plan--the only plan--had suddenly come to him like an inspiration.

The Wieroos came closer and halted at his command. Bradley turned to the girl. "There is rope in the shelter," he said. "Fetch it!"

She did as he bid, and then he directed her to fasten one end of a fifty-foot length to the ankle of one of the Wieroos and the opposite end to the second. The creatures gave evidence of great fear, but they dared not attempt to prevent the act.

"Now go out into the clearing," said Bradley, "and remember that I am walking close behind and that I will shoot the nearer one should either attempt to escape--that will hold the other until I can kill him as well."

In the open he halted them. "The girl will get upon the back of the one in front," announced the Englishman. "I will mount the other. She carries a sharp blade, and I carry this weapon that you know kills easily at a distance. If you disobey in the slightest, the instructions that I am about to give you, you shall both die. That we must die with you, will not deter us. If you obey, I promise to set you free without harming you.

"You will carry us due west, depositing us upon the shore of the

mainland--that is all. It is the price of your lives. Do you agree?"

Sullenly the Wieroos acquiesced. Bradley examined the knots that held the rope to their ankles, and feeling them secure directed the girl to mount the back of the leading Wieroo, himself upon the other. Then he gave the signal for the two to rise together. With loud flapping of the powerful wings the creatures took to the air, circling once before they topped the trees upon the hill and then taking a course due west out over the waters of the sea.

Nowhere about them could Bradley see signs of other Wieroos, nor of those other menaces which he had feared might bring disaster to his plans for escape--the huge, winged reptilia that are so numerous above the southern areas of Caspak and which are often seen, though in lesser numbers, farther north.

Nearer and nearer loomed the mainland--a broad, parklike expanse stretching inland to the foot of a low plateau spread out before them. The little dots in the foreground became grazing herds of deer and antelope and bos; a huge woolly rhinoceros wallowed in a mudhole to the right, and beyond, a mighty mammoth culled the tender shoots from a tall tree. The roars and screams and growls of giant carnivora came faintly to their ears. Ah, this was Caspak. With all of its dangers and its primal savagery it brought a fullness to the throat of the Englishman as to one who sees and hears the familiar sights and sounds of home after a long absence. Then the Wieroos dropped swiftly

downward to the flower-starred turf that grew almost to the water's edge, the fugitives slipped from their backs, and Bradley told the red-robed creatures they were free to go.

When he had cut the ropes from their ankles they rose with that uncanny wailing upon their lips that always brought a shudder to the Englishman, and upon dismal wings they flapped away toward frightful Oo-oh.

When the creatures had gone, the girl turned toward Bradley. "Why did you have them bring us here?" she asked. "Now we are far from my country. We may never live to reach it, as we are among enemies who, while not so horrible will kill us just as surely as would the Wieroos should they capture us, and we have before us many marches through lands filled with savage beasts."

"There were two reasons," replied Bradley. "You told me that there are two Wieroo cities at the eastern end of the island. To have passed near either of them might have been to have brought about our heads hundreds of the creatures from whom we could not possibly have escaped. Again, my friends must be near this spot--it cannot be over two marches to the fort of which I have told you. It is my duty to return to them. If they still live we shall find a way to return you to your people."

"And you?" asked the girl.

"I escaped from Oo-oh," replied Bradley. "I have accomplished the impossible once, and so I shall accomplish it again--I shall escape from Caspak."

He was not looking at her face as he answered her, and so he did not see the shadow of sorrow that crossed her countenance. When he raised his eyes again, she was smiling.

"What you wish, I wish," said the girl.

Southward along the coast they made their way following the beach, where the walking was best, but always keeping close enough to trees to insure sanctuary from the beasts and reptiles that so often menaced them. It was late in the afternoon when the girl suddenly seized Bradley's arm and pointed straight ahead along the shore. "What is that?" she whispered. "What strange reptile is it?"

Bradley looked in the direction her slim forefinger indicated. He rubbed his eyes and looked again, and then he seized her wrist and drew her quickly behind a clump of bushes.

"What is it?" she asked.

"It is the most frightful reptile that the waters of the world have ever known," he replied. "It is a German U-boat!"

An expression of amazement and understanding lighted her features. "It is the thing of which you told me," she exclaimed, "--the thing that swims under the water and carries men in its belly!"

"It is," replied Bradley.

"Then why do you hide from it?" asked the girl. "You said that now it belonged to your friends."

"Many months have passed since I knew what was going on among my friends," he replied. "I cannot know what has befallen them. They should have been gone from here in this vessel long since, and so I cannot understand why it is still here. I am going to investigate first before I show myself. When I left, there were more Germans on the U-33 than there were men of my own party at the fort, and I have had sufficient experience of Germans to know that they will bear watching--if they have not been properly watched since I left."

Making their way through a fringe of wood that grew a few yards inland the two crept unseen toward the U-boat which lay moored to the shore at a point which Bradley now recognized as being near the oil-pool north of Dinosaur. As close as possible to the vessel they halted, crouching low among the dense vegetation, and watched the boat for signs of human life about it. The hatches were closed--no one could be seen or heard. For five minutes Bradley watched, and then he determined to board the submarine and investigate. He had risen to carry his decision into

effect when there suddenly broke upon his ear, uttered in loud and menacing tones, a volley of German oaths and expletives among which he heard Englische schweinhunde repeated several times. The voice did not come from the direction of the U-boat; but from inland. Creeping forward Bradley reached a spot where, through the creepers hanging from the trees, he could see a party of men coming down toward the shore.

He saw Baron Friedrich von Schoenvorts and six of his men--all armed--while marching in a little knot among them were Olson, Brady, Sinclair, Wilson, and Whitely.

Bradley knew nothing of the disappearance of Bowen Tyler and Miss La Rue, nor of the perfidy of the Germans in shelling the fort and attempting to escape in the U-33; but he was in no way surprised at what he saw before him.

The little party came slowly onward, the prisoners staggering beneath heavy cans of oil, while Schwartz, one of the German noncommissioned officers cursed and beat them with a stick of wood, impartially. Von Schoenvorts walked in the rear of the column, encouraging Schwartz and laughing at the discomfiture of the Britishers. Dietz, Heinz, and Klatz also seemed to enjoy the entertainment immensely; but two of the men--Plesser and Hindle--marched with eyes straight to the front and with scowling faces.

Bradley felt his blood boil at sight of the cowardly indignities being

heaped upon his men, and in the brief span of time occupied by the column to come abreast of where he lay hidden he made his plans, foolhardy though he knew them. Then he drew the girl close to him. "Stay here," he whispered. "I am going out to fight those beasts; but I shall be killed. Do not let them see you. Do not let them take you alive. They are more cruel, more cowardly, more bestial than the Wieroos."

The girl pressed close to him, her face very white. "Go, if that is right," she whispered; "but if you die, I shall die, for I cannot live without you." He looked sharply into her eyes. "Oh!" he ejaculated. "What an idiot I have been! Nor could I live without you, little girl." And he drew her very close and kissed her lips. "Good-bye." He disengaged himself from her arms and looked again in time to see that the rear of the column had just passed him. Then he rose and leaped quickly and silently from the jungle.

Suddenly von Schoenvorts felt an arm thrown about his neck and his pistol jerked from its holster. He gave a cry of fright and warning, and his men turned to see a half-naked white man holding their leader securely from behind and aiming a pistol at them over his shoulder.

"Drop those guns!" came in short, sharp syllables and perfect German from the lips of the newcomer. "Drop them or I'll put a bullet through the back of von Schoenvorts' head."

The Germans hesitated for a moment, looking first toward von Schoenvorts and then to Schwartz, who was evidently second in command, for orders.

"It's the English pig, Bradley," shouted the latter, "and he's alone--go and get him!"

"Go yourself," growled Plesser. Hindle moved close to the side of Plesser and whispered something to him. The latter nodded. Suddenly von Schoenvorts wheeled about and seized Bradley's pistol arm with both hands, "Now!" he shouted. "Come and take him, quick!"

Schwartz and three others leaped forward; but Plesser and Hindle held back, looking questioningly toward the English prisoners. Then Plesser spoke. "Now is your chance, Englander," he called in low tones.

"Seize Hindle and me and take our guns from us--we will not fight hard."

Olson and Brady were not long in acting upon the suggestion. They had seen enough of the brutal treatment von Schoenvorts accorded his men and the especially venomous attentions he had taken great enjoyment in according Plesser and Hindle to understand that these two might be sincere in a desire for revenge. In another moment the two Germans were unarmed and Olson and Brady were running to the support of Bradley; but already it seemed too late.

Von Schoenvorts had managed to drag the Englishman around so that his

back was toward Schwartz and the other advancing Germans. Schwartz was almost upon Bradley with gun clubbed and ready to smash down upon the Englishman's skull. Brady and Olson were charging the Germans in the rear with Wilson, Whitely, and Sinclair supporting them with bare fists. It seemed that Bradley was doomed when, apparently out of space, an arrow whizzed, striking Schwartz in the side, passing half-way through his body to crumple him to earth. With a shriek the man fell, and at the same time Olson and Brady saw the slim figure of a young girl standing at the edge of the jungle coolly fitting another arrow to her bow.

Bradley had now succeeded in wrestling his arm free from von Schoenvorts' grip and in dropping the latter with a blow from the butt of his pistol. The rest of the English and Germans were engaged in a hand-to-hand encounter. Plesser and Hindle standing aside from the melee and urging their comrades to surrender and join with the English against the tyranny of von Schoenvorts. Heinz and Klatz, possibly influenced by their exhortation, were putting up but a half-hearted resistance; but Dietz, a huge, bearded, bull-necked Prussian, yelling like a maniac, sought to exterminate the Englische schweinhunde with his bayonet, fearing to fire his piece lest he kill some of his comrades.

It was Olson who engaged him, and though unused to the long German rifle and bayonet, he met the bull-rush of the Hun with the cold, cruel precision and science of English bayonet-fighting. There was no

feinting, no retiring and no parrying that was not also an attack. Bayonet-fighting today is not a pretty thing to see--it is not an artistic fencing-match in which men give and take--it is slaughter inevitable and quickly over.

Dietz lunged once madly at Olson's throat. A short point, with just a twist of the bayonet to the left sent the sharp blade over the Englishman's left shoulder. Instantly he stepped close in, dropped his rifle through his hands and grasped it with both hands close below the muzzle and with a short, sharp jab sent his blade up beneath Dietz's chin to the brain. So quickly was the thing done and so quick the withdrawal that Olson had wheeled to take on another adversary before the German's corpse had toppled to the ground.

But there were no more adversaries to take on. Heinz and Klatz had thrown down their rifles and with hands above their heads were crying "Kamerad! Kamerad!" at the tops of their voices. Von Schoenvorts still lay where he had fallen. Plessner and Hindle were explaining to Bradley that they were glad of the outcome of the fight, as they could no longer endure the brutality of the U-boat commander.

The remainder of the men were looking at the girl who now advanced slowly, her bow ready, when Bradley turned toward her and held out his hand.

"Co-Tan," he said, "unstring your bow--these are my friends, and

yours." And to the Englishmen: "This is Co-Tan. You who saw her save me from Schwartz know a part of what I owe her."

The rough men gathered about the girl, and when she spoke to them in broken English, with a smile upon her lips enhancing the charm of her irresistible accent, each and every one of them promptly fell in love with her and constituted himself henceforth her guardian and her slave.

A moment later the attention of each was called to Plesser by a volley of invective. They turned in time to see the man running toward von Schoenvorts who was just rising from the ground. Plesser carried a rifle with bayonet fixed, that he had snatched from the side of Dietz's corpse. Von Schoenvorts' face was livid with fear, his jaws working as though he would call for help; but no sound came from his blue lips.

"You struck me," shrieked Plesser. "Once, twice, three times, you struck me, pig. You murdered Schwerke--you drove him insane by your cruelty until he took his own life. You are only one of your kind--they are all like you from the Kaiser down. I wish that you were the Kaiser. Thus would I do!" And he lunged his bayonet through von Schoenvorts' chest. Then he let his rifle fall with the dying man and wheeled toward Bradley. "Here I am," he said. "Do with me as you like. All my life I have been kicked and cuffed by such as that, and yet always have I gone out when they commanded, singing, to give up my life if need be to keep them in power. Only lately have I come to know what a fool I have been. But now I am no longer a fool, and besides, I

am avenged and Schwerke is avenged, so you can kill me if you wish.
Here I am."

"If I was after bein' the king," said Olson, "I'd pin the V.C. on your noble chest; but bein' only an Irishman with a Swede name, for which God forgive me, the best I can do is shake your hand."

"You will not be punished," said Bradley. "There are four of you left--if you four want to come along and work with us, we will take you; but you will come as prisoners."

"It suits me," said Plesser. "Now that the captain-lieutenant is dead you need not fear us. All our lives we have known nothing but to obey his class. If I had not killed him, I suppose I would be fool enough to obey him again; but he is dead. Now we will obey you--we must obey some one."

"And you?" Bradley turned to the other survivors of the original crew of the U-33. Each promised obedience.

The two dead Germans were buried in a single grave, and then the party boarded the submarine and stowed away the oil.

Here Bradley told the men what had befallen him since the night of September 14th when he had disappeared so mysteriously from the camp upon the plateau. Now he learned for the first time that Bowen J.

Tyler, Jr., and Miss La Rue had been missing even longer than he and that no faintest trace of them had been discovered.

Olson told him of how the Germans had returned and waited in ambush for them outside the fort, capturing them that they might be used to assist in the work of refining the oil and later in manning the U-33, and Plesser told briefly of the experiences of the German crew under von Schoenvorts since they had escaped from Caspak months before--of how they lost their bearings after having been shelled by ships they had attempted to sneak farther north and how at last with provisions gone and fuel almost exhausted they had sought and at last found, more by accident than design, the mysterious island they had once been so glad to leave behind.

"Now," announced Bradley, "we'll plan for the future. The boat has fuel, provisions and water for a month, I believe you said, Plesser; there are ten of us to man it. We have a last sad duty here--we must search for Miss La Rue and Mr. Tyler. I say a sad duty because we know that we shall not find them; but it is none the less our duty to comb the shoreline, firing signal shells at intervals, that we at least may leave at last with full knowledge that we have done all that men might do to locate them."

None dissented from this conviction, nor was there a voice raised in protest against the plan to at least make assurance doubly sure before quitting Caspak forever.

And so they started, cruising slowly up the coast and firing an occasional shot from the gun. Often the vessel was brought to a stop, and always there were anxious eyes scanning the shore for an answering signal. Late in the afternoon they caught sight of a number of Band-lu warriors; but when the vessel approached the shore and the natives realized that human beings stood upon the back of the strange monster of the sea, they fled in terror before Bradley could come within hailing distance.

That night they dropped anchor at the mouth of a sluggish stream whose warm waters swarmed with millions of tiny tadpolelike organisms--minute human spawn starting on their precarious journey from some inland pool toward "the beginning"--a journey which one in millions, perhaps, might survive to complete. Already almost at the inception of life they were being greeted by thousands of voracious mouths as fish and reptiles of many kinds fought to devour them, the while other and larger creatures pursued the devourers, to be, in turn, preyed upon by some other of the countless forms that inhabit the deeps of Caprona's frightful sea.

The second day was practically a repetition of the first. They moved very slowly with frequent stops and once they landed in the Kro-lu country to hunt. Here they were attacked by the bow-and-arrow men, whom they could not persuade to palaver with them. So belligerent were the natives that it became necessary to fire into them in order to escape their persistent and ferocious attentions.

"What chance," asked Bradley, as they were returning to the boat with their game, "could Tyler and Miss La Rue have had among such as these?"

But they continued on their fruitless quest, and the third day, after cruising along the shore of a deep inlet, they passed a line of lofty cliffs that formed the southern shore of the inlet and rounded a sharp promontory about noon. Co-Tan and Bradley were on deck alone, and as the new shoreline appeared beyond the point, the girl gave an exclamation of joy and seized the man's hand in hers.

"Oh, look!" she cried. "The Galu country! The Galu country! It is my country that I never thought to see again."

"You are glad to come again, Co-Tan?" asked Bradley.

"Oh, so glad!" she cried. "And you will come with me to my people? We may live here among them, and you will be a great warrior--oh, when Jor dies you may even be chief, for there is none so mighty as my warrior. You will come?"

Bradley shook his head. "I cannot, little Co-Tan," he answered. "My country needs me, and I must go back. Maybe someday I shall return. You will not forget me, Co-Tan?"

She looked at him in wide-eyed wonder. "You are going away from me?"

she asked in a very small voice. "You are going away from Co-Tan?"

Bradley looked down upon the little bowed head. He felt the soft cheek against his bare arm; and he felt something else there too--hot drops of moisture that ran down to his very finger-tips and splashed, but each one wrung from a woman's heart.

He bent low and raised the tear-stained face to his own. "No, Co-Tan," he said, "I am not going away from you--for you are going with me. You are going back to my own country to be my wife. Tell me that you will, Co-Tan." And he bent still lower yet from his height and kissed her lips. Nor did he need more than the wonderful new light in her eyes to tell him that she would go to the end of the world with him if he would but take her. And then the gun-crew came up from below again to fire a signal shot, and the two were brought down from the high heaven of their new happiness to the scarred and weather-beaten deck of the U-33.

An hour later the vessel was running close in by a shore of wondrous beauty beside a parklike meadow that stretched back a mile inland to the foot of a plateau when Whitely called attention to a score of figures clambering downward from the elevation to the lowland below. The engines were reversed and the boat brought to a stop while all hands gathered on deck to watch the little party coming toward them across the meadow.

"They are Galus," cried Co-Tan; "they are my own people. Let me speak

to them lest they think we come to fight them. Put me ashore, my man, and I will go meet them."

The nose of the U-boat was run close in to the steep bank; but when Co-Tan would have run forward alone, Bradley seized her hand and held her back. "I will go with you, Co-Tan," he said; and together they advanced to meet the oncoming party.

There were about twenty warriors moving forward in a thin line, as our infantry advance as skirmishers. Bradley could not but notice the marked difference between this formation and the moblike methods of the lower tribes he had come in contact with, and he commented upon it to Co-Tan.

"Galú warriors always advance into battle thus," she said. "The lesser people remain in a huddled group where they can scarce use their weapons the while they present so big a mark to us that our spears and arrows cannot miss them; but when they hurl theirs at our warriors, if they miss the first man, there is no chance that they will kill some one behind him.

"Stand still now," she cautioned, "and fold your arms. They will not harm us then."

Bradley did as he was bid, and the two stood with arms folded as the line of warriors approached. When they had come within some fifty

yards, they halted and one spoke. "Who are you and from whence do you come?" he asked; and then Co-Tan gave a little, glad cry and sprang forward with out-stretched arms.

"Oh, Tan!" she exclaimed. "Do you not know your little Co-Tan?"

The warrior stared, incredulous, for a moment, and then he, too, ran forward and when they met, took the girl in his arms. It was then that Bradley experienced to the full a sensation that was new to him--a sudden hatred for the strange warrior before him and a desire to kill without knowing why he would kill. He moved quickly to the girl's side and grasped her wrist.

"Who is this man?" he demanded in cold tones.

Co-Tan turned a surprised face toward the Englishman and then of a sudden broke forth into a merry peal of laughter. "This is my father, Brad-lee," she cried.

"And who is Brad-lee?" demanded the warrior.

"He is my man," replied Co-Tan simply.

"By what right?" insisted Tan.

And then she told him briefly of all that she had passed through since

the Wieros had stolen her and of how Bradley had rescued her and sought to rescue An-Tak, her brother.

"You are satisfied with him?" asked Tan.

"Yes," replied the girl proudly.

It was then that Bradley's attention was attracted to the edge of the plateau by a movement there, and looking closely he saw a horse bearing two figures sliding down the steep declivity. Once at the bottom, the animal came charging across the meadowland at a rapid run. It was a magnificent animal--a great bay stallion with a white-blazed face and white forelegs to the knees, its barrel encircled by a broad surcingle of white; and as it came to a sudden stop beside Tan, the Englishman saw that it bore a man and a girl--a tall man and a girl as beautiful as Co-Tan. When the girl espied the latter, she slid from the horse and ran toward her, fairly screaming for joy.

The man dismounted and stood beside Tan. Like Bradley he was garbed after the fashion of the surrounding warriors; but there was a subtle difference between him and his companion. Possibly he detected a similar difference in Bradley, for his first question was, "From what country?" and though he spoke in Galu Bradley thought he detected an accent.

"England," replied Bradley.

A broad smile lighted the newcomer's face as he held out his hand. "I am Tom Billings of Santa Monica, California," he said. "I know all about you, and I'm mighty glad to find you alive."

"How did you get here?" asked Bradley. "I thought ours was the only party of men from the outer world ever to enter Caprona."

"It was, until we came in search of Bowen J. Tyler, Jr.," replied Billings. "We found him and sent him home with his bride; but I was kept a prisoner here."

Bradley's face darkened--then they were not among friends after all. "There are ten of us down there on a German sub with small-arms and a gun," he said quickly in English. "It will be no trick to get away from these people."

"You don't know my jailer," replied Billings, "or you'd not be so sure. Wait, I'll introduce you." And then turning to the girl who had accompanied him he called her by name. "Ajo," he said, "permit me to introduce Lieutenant Bradley; Lieutenant, Mrs. Billings--my jailer!"

The Englishman laughed as he shook hands with the girl. "You are not as good a soldier as I," he said to Billings. "Instead of being taken prisoner myself I have taken one--Mrs. Bradley, this is Mr. Billings."

Ajor, quick to understand, turned toward Co-Tan. "You are going back with him to his country?" she asked. Co-Tan admitted it.

"You dare?" asked Ajor. "But your father will not permit it--Jor, my father, High Chief of the Galus, will not permit it, for like me you are cos-ata-lo. Oh, Co-Tan, if we but could! How I would love to see all the strange and wonderful things of which my Tom tells me!"

Bradley bent and whispered in her ear. "Say the word and you may both go with us."

Billings heard and speaking in English, asked Ajor if she would go.

"Yes," she answered, "If you wish it; but you know, my Tom, that if Jor captures us, both you and Co-Tan's man will pay the penalty with your lives--not even his love for me nor his admiration for you can save you."

Bradley noticed that she spoke in English--broken English like Co-Tan's but equally appealing. "We can easily get you aboard the ship," he said, "on some pretext or other, and then we can steam away. They can neither harm nor detain us, nor will we have to fire a shot at them."

And so it was done, Bradley and Co-Tan taking Ajor and Billings aboard to "show" them the vessel, which almost immediately raised anchor and moved slowly out into the sea.

"I hate to do it," said Billings. "They have been fine to me. Jor and Tan are splendid men and they will think me an ingrate; but I can't waste my life here when there is so much to be done in the outer world."

As they steamed down the inland sea past the island of Oo-oh, the stories of their adventures were retold, and Bradley learned that Bowen Tyler and his bride had left the Galu country but a fortnight before and that there was every reason to believe that the Toreador might still be lying in the Pacific not far off the subterranean mouth of the river which emitted Caprona's heated waters into the ocean.

Late in the second day, after running through swarms of hideous reptiles, they submerged at the point where the river entered beneath the cliffs and shortly after rose to the sunlit surface of the Pacific; but nowhere as far as they could see was sign of another craft. Down the coast they steamed toward the beach where Billings had made his crossing in the hydro-aeroplane and just at dusk the lookout announced a light dead ahead. It proved to be aboard the Toreador, and a half-hour later there was such a reunion on the deck of the trig little yacht as no one there had ever dreamed might be possible. Of the Allies there were only Tippet and James to be mourned, and no one mourned any of the Germans dead nor Benson, the traitor, whose ugly story was first told in Bowen Tyler's manuscript.

Tyler and the rescue party had but just reached the yacht that

afternoon. They had heard, faintly, the signal shots fired by the U-33 but had been unable to locate their direction and so had assumed that they had come from the guns of the Toreador.

It was a happy party that sailed north toward sunny, southern California, the old U-33 trailing in the wake of the Toreador and flying with the latter the glorious Stars and Stripes beneath which she had been born in the shipyard at Santa Monica. Three newly married couples, their bonds now duly solemnized by the master of the ship, joyed in the peace and security of the untracked waters of the south Pacific and the unique honeymoon which, had it not been for stern duty ahead, they could have wished protracted till the end of time.

And so they came one day to dock at the shipyard which Bowen Tyler now controlled, and here the U-33 still lies while those who passed so many eventful days within and because of her, have gone their various ways.