# CHAPTER XVII--THE AMATEUR M.D.

When we sailed from San Francisco on the Snark I knew as much about sickness as the Admiral of the Swiss Navy knows about salt water. And here, at the start, let me advise any one who meditates going to out-of-the-way tropic places. Go to a first-class druggist--the sort that have specialists on their salary list who know everything. Talk the matter over with such an one. Note carefully all that he says. Have a list made of all that he recommends. Write out a cheque for the total cost, and tear it up.

I wish I had done the same. I should have been far wiser, I know now, if I had bought one of those ready-made, self-acting, fool-proof medicine chests such as are favoured by fourth-rate ship-masters. In such a chest each bottle has a number. On the inside of the lid is placed a simple table of directions: No. 1, toothache; No. 2, smallpox; No. 3, stomachache; No. 4, cholera; No. 5, rheumatism; and so on, through the list of human ills. And I might have used it as did a certain venerable skipper, who, when No. 3 was empty, mixed a dose from No. 1 and No. 2, or, when No. 7 was all gone, dosed his crew with 4 and 3 till 3 gave out, when he used 5 and 2.

So far, with the exception of corrosive sublimate (which was recommended as an antiseptic in surgical operations, and which I

have not yet used for that purpose), my medicine-chest has been useless. It has been worse than useless, for it has occupied much space which I could have used to advantage.

With my surgical instruments it is different. While I have not yet had serious use for them, I do not regret the space they occupy. The thought of them makes me feel good. They are so much life insurance, only, fairer than that last grim game, one is not supposed to die in order to win. Of course, I don't know how to use them, and what I don't know about surgery would set up a dozen quacks in prosperous practice. But needs must when the devil drives, and we of the Snark have no warning when the devil may take it into his head to drive, ay, even a thousand miles from land and twenty days from the nearest port.

I did not know anything about dentistry, but a friend fitted me out with forceps and similar weapons, and in Honolulu I picked up a book upon teeth. Also, in that sub-tropical city I managed to get hold of a skull, from which I extracted the teeth swiftly and painlessly. Thus equipped, I was ready, though not exactly eager, to tackle any tooth that get in my way. It was in Nuku-hiva, in the Marquesas, that my first case presented itself in the shape of a little, old Chinese. The first thing I did was to got the buck fever, and I leave it to any fair-minded person if buck fever, with its attendant heart-palpitations and arm-tremblings, is the right condition for a man to be in who is endeavouring to pose as an old hand at the business. I did not fool the aged Chinaman. He was as frightened

as I and a bit more shaky. I almost forgot to be frightened in the fear that he would bolt. I swear, if he had tried to, that I would have tripped him up and sat on him until calmness and reason returned.

I wanted that tooth. Also, Martin wanted a snap-shot of me getting it. Likewise Charmian got her camera. Then the procession started. We were stopping at what had been the club-house when Stevenson was in the Marquesas on the Casco. On the veranda, where he had passed so many pleasant hours, the light was not good--for snapshots, I mean. I led on into the garden, a chair in one hand, the other hand filled with forceps of various sorts, my knees knocking together disgracefully. The poor old Chinaman came second, and he was shaking, too. Charmian and Martin brought up the rear, armed with kodaks. We dived under the avocado trees, threaded our way through the cocoanut palms, and came on a spot that satisfied Martin's photographic eye.

I looked at the tooth, and then discovered that I could not remember anything about the teeth I had pulled from the skull five months previously. Did it have one prong? two prongs? or three prongs? What was left of the part that showed appeared very crumbly, and I knew that I should have take hold of the tooth deep down in the gum. It was very necessary that I should know how many prongs that tooth had. Back to the house I went for the book on teeth. The poor old victim looked like photographs I had seen of fellow-countrymen of his, criminals, on their knees, waiting the stroke of the beheading

sword.

"Don't let him get away," I cautioned to Martin. "I want that tooth."

"I sure won't," he replied with enthusiasm, from behind his camera. "I want that photograph."

For the first time I felt sorry for the Chinaman. Though the book did not tell me anything about pulling teeth, it was all right, for on one page I found drawings of all the teeth, including their prongs and how they were set in the jaw. Then came the pursuit of the forceps. I had seven pairs, but was in doubt as to which pair I should use. I did not want any mistake. As I turned the hardware over with rattle and clang, the poor victim began to lose his grip and to turn a greenish yellow around the gills. He complained about the sun, but that was necessary for the photograph, and he had to stand it. I fitted the forceps around the tooth, and the patient shivered and began to wilt.

"Ready?" I called to Martin.

"All ready," he answered.

I gave a pull. Ye gods! The tooth, was loose! Out it came on the instant. I was jubilant as I held it aloft in the forceps.

"Put it back, please, oh, put it back," Martin pleaded. "You were too quick for me."

And the poor old Chinaman sat there while I put the tooth back and pulled over. Martin snapped the camera. The deed was done. Elation? Pride? No hunter was ever prouder of his first pronged buck than I was of that tree-pronged tooth. I did it! I did it! With my of own hands and a pair of forceps I did it, to say nothing of the forgotten memories of the dead man's skull.

My next case was a Tahitian sailor. He was a small man, in a state of collapse from long days and nights of jumping toothache. I lanced the gums first. I didn't know how to lance them, but I lanced them just the same. It was a long pull and a strong pull. The man was a hero. He groaned and moaned, and I thought he was going to faint. But he kept his mouth open and let me pull. And then it came.

After that I was ready to meet all comers--just the proper state of mind for a Waterloo. And it came. Its name was Tomi. He was a strapping giant of a heathen with a bad reputation. He was addicted to deeds of violence. Among other things he had beaten two of his wives to death with his fists. His father and mother had been naked cannibals. When he sat down and I put the forceps into his mouth, he was nearly as tall as I was standing up. Big men, prone to violence, very often have a streak of fat in their make-up, so I was

doubtful of him. Charmian grabbed one arm and Warren grabbed the other. Then the tug of war began. The instant the forceps closed down on the tooth, his jaws closed down on the forceps. Also, both his hands flew up and gripped my pulling hand. I held on, and he held on. Charmian and Warren held on. We wrestled all about the shop.

It was three against one, and my hold on an aching tooth was certainly a foul one; but in spite of the handicap he got away with us. The forceps slipped off, banging and grinding along against his upper teeth with a nerve-scraping sound. Out of his month flew the forceps, and he rose up in the air with a blood-curdling yell. The three of us fell back. We expected to be massacred. But that howling savage of sanguinary reputation sank back in the chair. He held his head in both his hands, and groaned and groaned and groaned. Nor would he listen to reason. I was a quack. My painless tooth-extraction was a delusion and a snare and a low advertising dodge. I was so anxious to get that tooth that I was almost ready to bribe him. But that went against my professional pride and I let him depart with the tooth still intact, the only case on record up to date of failure on my part when once I had got a grip. Since then I have never let a tooth go by me. Only the other day I volunteered to beat up three days to windward to pull a woman missionary's tooth. I expect, before the voyage of the Snark is finished, to be doing bridge work and putting on gold crowns.

I don't know whether they are yaws or not--a physician in Fiji told

me they were, and a missionary in the Solomons told me they were not; but at any rate I can vouch for the fact that they are most uncomfortable. It was my luck to ship in Tahiti a French-sailor, who, when we got to sea, proved to be afflicted with a vile skin disease. The Snark was too small and too much of a family party to permit retaining him on board; but perforce, until we could reach land and discharge him, it was up to me to doctor him. I read up the books and proceeded to treat him, taking care afterwards always to use a thorough antiseptic wash. When we reached Tutuila, far from getting rid of him, the port doctor declared a quarantine against him and refused to allow him ashore. But at Apia, Samoa, I managed to ship him off on a steamer to New Zealand. Here at Apia my ankles were badly bitten by mosquitoes, and I confess to having scratched the bites--as I had a thousand times before. By the time I reached the island of Savaii, a small sore had developed on the hollow of my instep. I thought it was due to chafe and to acid fumes from the hot lava over which I tramped. An application of salve would cure it--so I thought. The salve did heal it over, whereupon an astonishing inflammation set in, the new skin came off, and a larger sore was exposed. This was repeated many times. Each time new skin formed, an inflammation followed, and the circumference of the sore increased. I was puzzled and frightened. All my life my skin had been famous for its healing powers, yet here was something that would not heal. Instead, it was daily eating up more skin, while it had eaten down clear through the skin and was eating up the muscle itself.

By this time the Snark was at sea on her way to Fiji. I remembered the French sailor, and for the first time became seriously alarmed. Four other similar sores had appeared--or ulcers, rather, and the pain of them kept me awake at night. All my plans were made to lay up the Snark in Fiji and get away on the first steamer to Australia and professional M.D.'s. In the meantime, in my amateur M.D. way, I did my best. I read through all the medical works on board. Not a line nor a word could I find descriptive of my affliction. I brought common horse-sense to bear on the problem. Here were malignant and excessively active ulcers that were eating me up. There was an organic and corroding poison at work. Two things I concluded must be done. First, some agent must be found to destroy the poison. Secondly, the ulcers could not possibly heal from the outside in; they must heal from the inside out. I decided to fight the poison with corrosive sublimate. The very name of it struck me as vicious. Talk of fighting fire with fire! I was being consumed by a corrosive poison, and it appealed to my fancy to fight it with another corrosive poison. After several days I alternated dressings of corrosive sublimate with dressings of peroxide of hydrogen. And behold, by the time we reached Fiji four of the five ulcers were healed, while the remaining one was no bigger than a pea.

I now felt fully qualified to treat yaws. Likewise I had a wholesome respect for them. Not so the rest of the crew of the Snark. In their case, seeing was not believing. One and all, they had seen my dreadful predicament; and all of them, I am convinced, had a subconscious certitude that their own superb constitutions and

glorious personalities would never allow lodgment of so vile a poison in their carcasses as my anaemic constitution and mediocre personality had allowed to lodge in mine. At Port Resolution, in the New Hebrides, Martin elected to walk barefooted in the bush and returned on board with many cuts and abrasions, especially on his shins.

"You'd better be careful," I warned him. "I'll mix up some corrosive sublimate for you to wash those cuts with. An ounce of prevention, you know."

But Martin smiled a superior smile. Though he did not say so. I nevertheless was given to understand that he was not as other men (I was the only man he could possibly have had reference to), and that in a couple of days his cuts would be healed. He also read me a dissertation upon the peculiar purity of his blood and his remarkable healing powers. I felt quite humble when he was done with me. Evidently I was different from other men in so far as purity of blood was concerned.

Nakata, the cabin-boy, while ironing one day, mistook the calf of his leg for the ironing-block and accumulated a burn three inches in length and half an inch wide. He, too, smiled the superior smile when I offered him corrosive sublimate and reminded him of my own cruel experience. I was given to understand, with all due suavity and courtesy, that no matter what was the matter with my blood, his number-one, Japanese, Port-Arthur blood was all right and scornful

of the festive microbe.

Wada, the cook, took part in a disastrous landing of the launch, when he had to leap overboard and fend the launch off the beach in a smashing surf. By means of shells and coral he cut his legs and feet up beautifully. I offered him the corrosive sublimate bottle. Once again I suffered the superior smile and was given to understand that his blood was the same blood that had licked Russia and was going to lick the United States some day, and that if his blood wasn't able to cure a few trifling cuts, he'd commit hari-kari in sheer disgrace.

From all of which I concluded that an amateur M.D. is without honour on his own vessel, even if he has cured himself. The rest of the crew had begun to look upon me as a sort of mild mono-maniac on the question of sores and sublimate. Just because my blood was impure was no reason that I should think everybody else's was. I made no more overtures. Time and microbes were with me, and all I had to do was wait.

"I think there's some dirt in these cuts," Martin said tentatively, after several days. "I'll wash them out and then they'll be all right," he added, after I had refused to rise to the bait.

Two more days passed, but the cuts did not pass, and I caught Martin soaking his feet and legs in a pail of hot water.

"Nothing like hot water," he proclaimed enthusiastically. "It beats all the dope the doctors ever put up. These sores will be all right in the morning."

But in the morning he wore a troubled look, and I knew that the hour of my triumph approached.

"I think I WILL try some of that medicine," he announced later on in the day. "Not that I think it'll do much good," he qualified, "but I'll just give it a try anyway."

Next came the proud blood of Japan to beg medicine for its illustrious sores, while I heaped coals of fire on all their houses by explaining in minute and sympathetic detail the treatment that should be given. Nakata followed instructions implicitly, and day by day his sores grew smaller. Wada was apathetic, and cured less readily. But Martin still doubted, and because he did not cure immediately, he developed the theory that while doctor's dope was all right, it did not follow that the same kind of dope was efficacious with everybody. As for himself, corrosive sublimate had no effect. Besides, how did I know that it was the right stuff? I had had no experience. Just because I happened to get well while using it was not proof that it had played any part in the cure. There were such things as coincidences. Without doubt there was a dope that would cure the sores, and when he ran across a real doctor he would find what that dope was and get some of it.

About this time we arrived in the Solomon Islands. No physician would ever recommend the group for invalids or sanitoriums. I spent but little time there ere I really and for the first time in my life comprehended how frail and unstable is human tissue. Our first anchorage was Port Mary, on the island of Santa Anna. The one lone white man, a trader, came alongside. Tom Butler was his name, and he was a beautiful example of what the Solomons can do to a strong man. He lay in his whale-boat with the helplessness of a dying man. No smile and little intelligence illumined his face. He was a sombre death's-head, too far gone to grin. He, too, had yaws, big ones. We were compelled to drag him over the rail of the Snark. He said that his health was good, that he had not had the fever for some time, and that with the exception of his arm he was all right and trim. His arm appeared to be paralysed. Paralysis he rejected with scorn. He had had it before, and recovered. It was a common native disease on Santa Anna, he said, as he was helped down the companion ladder, his dead arm dropping, bump-bump, from step to step. He was certainly the ghastliest guest we ever entertained, and we've had not a few lepers and elephantiasis victims on board.

Martin inquired about yaws, for here was a man who ought to know. He certainly did know, if we could judge by his scarred arms and legs and by the live ulcers that corroded in the midst of the scars. Oh, one got used to yaws, quoth Tom Butler. They were never really serious until they had eaten deep into the flesh. Then they attacked the walls of the arteries, the arteries burst, and there was a funeral. Several of the natives had recently died that way

ashore. But what did it matter? If it wasn't yaws, it was something else in the Solomons.

I noticed that from this moment Martin displayed a swiftly increasing interest in his own yaws. Dosings with corrosive sublimate were more frequent, while, in conversation, he began to revert with growing enthusiasm to the clean climate of Kansas and all other things Kansan. Charmian and I thought that California was a little bit of all right. Henry swore by Rapa, and Tehei staked all on Bora Bora for his own blood's sake; while Wada and Nakata sang the sanitary paean of Japan.

One evening, as the Snark worked around the southern end of the island of Ugi, looking for a reputed anchorage, a Church of England missionary, a Mr. Drew, bound in his whaleboat for the coast of San Cristoval, came alongside and stopped for dinner. Martin, his legs swathed in Red Cross bandages till they looked like a mummy's, turned the conversation upon yaws. Yes, said Mr. Drew, they were quite common in the Solomons. All white men caught them.

"And have you had them?" Martin demanded, in the soul of him quite shocked that a Church of England missionary could possess so vulgar an affliction.

Mr. Drew nodded his head and added that not only had he had them, but at that moment he was doctoring several.

"What do you use on them?" Martin asked like a flash.

My heart almost stood still waiting the answer. By that answer my professional medical prestige stood or fell. Martin, I could see, was quite sure it was going to fall. And then the answer--O blessed answer!

"Corrosive sublimate," said Mr. Drew.

Martin gave in handsomely, I'll admit, and I am confident that at that moment, if I had asked permission to pull one of his teeth, he would not have denied me.

All white men in the Solomons catch yaws, and every cut or abrasion practically means another yaw. Every man I met had had them, and nine out of ten had active ones. There was but one exception, a young fellow who had been in the islands five months, who had come down with fever ten days after he arrived, and who had since then been down so often with fever that he had had neither time nor opportunity for yaws.

Every one on the Snark except Charmian came down with yaws. Hers was the same egotism that Japan and Kansas had displayed. She ascribed her immunity to the pureness of her blood, and as the days went by she ascribed it more often and more loudly to the pureness of her blood. Privately I ascribed her immunity to the fact that, being a woman, she escaped most of the cuts and abrasions to which

we hard-working men were subject in the course of working the Snark around the world. I did not tell her so. You see, I did not wish to bruise her ego with brutal facts. Being an M.D., if only an amateur one, I knew more about the disease than she, and I knew that time was my ally. But alas, I abused my ally when it dealt a charming little yaw on the shin. So quickly did I apply antiseptic treatment, that the yaw was cured before she was convinced that she had one. Again, as an M.D., I was without honour on my own vessel; and, worse than that, I was charged with having tried to mislead her into the belief that she had had a yaw. The pureness of her blood was more rampant than ever, and I poked my nose into my navigation books and kept quiet. And then came the day. We were cruising along the coast of Malaita at the time.

"What's that abaft your ankle-bone?" said I.

"Nothing," said she.

"All right," said I; "but put some corrosive sublimate on it just the same. And some two or three weeks from now, when it is well and you have a scar that you will carry to your grave, just forget about the purity of your blood and your ancestral history and tell me what you think about yaws anyway."

It was as large as a silver dollar, that yaw, and it took all of three weeks to heal. There were times when Charmian could not walk because of the hurt of it; and there were times upon times when she

explained that abaft the ankle-bone was the most painful place to have a yaw. I explained, in turn, that, never having experienced a yaw in that locality, I was driven to conclude the hollow of the instep was the most painful place for yaw-culture. We left it to Martin, who disagreed with both of us and proclaimed passionately that the only truly painful place was the shin. No wonder horse-racing is so popular.

But yaws lose their novelty after a time. At the present moment of writing I have five yaws on my hands and three more on my shin. Charmian has one on each side of her right instep. Tehei is frantic with his. Martin's latest shin-cultures have eclipsed his earlier ones. And Nakata has several score casually eating away at his tissue. But the history of the Snark in the Solomons has been the history of every ship since the early discoverers. From the "Sailing Directions" I quote the following:

"The crews of vessels remaining any considerable time in the Solomons find wounds and sores liable to change into malignant ulcers."

Nor on the question of fever were the "Sailing Directions" any more encouraging, for in them I read:

"New arrivals are almost certain sooner or later to suffer from fever. The natives are also subject to it. The number of deaths among the whites in the year 1897 amounted to 9 among a population

of 50."

Some of these deaths, however, were accidental.

Nakata was the first to come down with fever. This occurred at Penduffryn. Wada and Henry followed him. Charmian surrendered next. I managed to escape for a couple of months; but when I was bowled over, Martin sympathetically joined me several days later. Out of the seven of us all told Tehei is the only one who has escaped; but his sufferings from nostalgia are worse than fever. Nakata, as usual, followed instructions faithfully, so that by the end of his third attack he could take a two hours' sweat, consume thirty or forty grains of quinine, and be weak but all right at the end of twenty-four hours.

Wada and Henry, however, were tougher patients with which to deal. In the first place, Wada got in a bad funk. He was of the firm conviction that his star had set and that the Solomons would receive his bones. He saw that life about him was cheap. At Penduffryn he saw the ravages of dysentery, and, unfortunately for him, he saw one victim carried out on a strip of galvanized sheet-iron and dumped without coffin or funeral into a hole in the ground. Everybody had fever, everybody had dysentery, everybody had everything. Death was common. Here to-day and gone to-morrow--and Wada forgot all about to-day and made up his mind that to-morrow had come.

He was careless of his ulcers, neglected to sublimate them, and by

uncontrolled scratching spread them all over his body. Nor would he follow instructions with fever, and, as a result, would be down five days at a time, when a day would have been sufficient. Henry, who is a strapping giant of a man, was just as bad. He refused point blank to take quinine, on the ground that years before he had had fever and that the pills the doctor gave him were of different size and colour from the quinine tablets I offered him. So Henry joined Wada.

But I fooled the pair of them, and dosed them with their own medicine, which was faith-cure. They had faith in their funk that they were going to die. I slammed a lot of quinine down their throats and took their temperature. It was the first time I had used my medicine-chest thermometer, and I quickly discovered that it was worthless, that it had been produced for profit and not for service. If I had let on to my two patients that the thermometer did not work, there would have been two funerals in short order. Their temperature I swear was 105 degrees. I solemnly made one and then the other smoke the thermometer, allowed an expression of satisfaction to irradiate my countenance, and joyfully told them that their temperature was 94 degrees. Then I slammed more quinine down their throats, told them that any sickness or weakness they might experience would be due to the quinine, and left them to get well. And they did get well, Wada in spite of himself. If a man can die through a misapprehension, is there any immorality in making him live through a misapprehension?

Commend me the white race when it comes to grit and surviving. One of our two Japanese and both our Tahitians funked and had to be slapped on the back and cheered up and dragged along by main strength toward life. Charmian and Martin took their afflictions cheerfully, made the least of them, and moved with calm certitude along the way of life. When Wada and Henry were convinced that they were going to die, the funeral atmosphere was too much for Tehei, who prayed dolorously and cried for hours at a time. Martin, on the other hand, cursed and got well, and Charmian groaned and made plans for what she was going to do when she got well again.

Charmian had been raised a vegetarian and a sanitarian. Her Aunt Netta, who brought her up and who lived in a healthful climate, did not believe in drugs. Neither did Charmian. Besides, drugs disagreed with her. Their effects were worse than the ills they were supposed to alleviate. But she listened to the argument in favour of quinine, accepted it as the lesser evil, and in consequence had shorter, less painful, and less frequent attacks of fever. We encountered a Mr. Caulfeild, a missionary, whose two predecessors had died after less than six months' residence in the Solomons. Like them he had been a firm believer in homeopathy, until after his first fever, whereupon, unlike them, he made a grand slide back to allopathy and quinine, catching fever and carrying on his Gospel work.

But poor Wada! The straw that broke the cook's back was when Charmian and I took him along on a cruise to the cannibal island of

Malaita, in a small yacht, on the deck of which the captain had been murdered half a year before. Kai-kai means to eat, and Wada was sure he was going to be kai-kai'd. We went about heavily armed, our vigilance was unremitting, and when we went for a bath in the mouth of a fresh-water stream, black boys, armed with rifles, did sentry duty about us. We encountered English war vessels burning and shelling villages in punishment for murders. Natives with prices on their heads sought shelter on board of us. Murder stalked abroad in the land. In out-of-they-way places we received warnings from friendly savages of impending attacks. Our vessel owed two heads to Malaita, which were liable to be collected any time. Then to cap it all, we were wrecked on a reef, and with rifles in one hand warned the canoes of wreckers off while with the other hand we toiled to save the ship. All of which was too much for Wada, who went daffy, and who finally quitted the Snark on the island of Ysabel, going ashore for good in a driving rain-storm, between two attacks of fever, while threatened with pneumonia. If he escapes being kai-kai'd, and if he can survive sores and fever which are riotous ashore, he can expect, if he is reasonably lucky, to get away from that place to the adjacent island in anywhere from six to eight weeks. He never did think much of my medicine, despite the fact that I successfully and at the first trail pulled two aching teeth for him.

The Snark has been a hospital for months, and I confess that we are getting used to it. At Meringe Lagoon, where we careened and cleaned the Snark's copper, there were times when only one man of us

was able to go into the water, while the three white men on the plantation ashore were all down with fever. At the moment of writing this we are lost at sea somewhere northeast of Ysabel and trying vainly to find Lord Howe Island, which is an atoll that cannot be sighted unless one is on top of it. The chronometer has gone wrong. The sun does not shine anyway, nor can I get a star observation at night, and we have had nothing but squalls and rain for days and days. The cook is gone. Nakata, who has been trying to be both cook and cabin boy, is down on his back with fever. Martin is just up from fever, and going down again. Charmian, whose fever has become periodical, is looking up in her date book to find when the next attack will be. Henry has begun to eat quinine in an expectant mood. And, since my attacks hit me with the suddenness of bludgeon-blows I do not know from moment to moment when I shall be brought down. By a mistake we gave our last flour away to some white men who did not have any flour. We don't know when we'll make land. Our Solomon sores are worse than ever, and more numerous. The corrosive sublimate was accidentally left ashore at Penduffryn; the peroxide of hydrogen is exhausted; and I am experimenting with boracic acid, lysol, and antiphlogystine. At any rate, if I fail in becoming a reputable M.D., it won't be from lack of practice.

P.S. It is now two weeks since the foregoing was written, and Tehei, the only immune on board has been down ten days with far severer fever than any of us and is still down. His temperature has been repeatedly as high as 104, and his pulse 115.

P.S. At sea, between Tasman atoll and Manning Straits. Tehei's attack developed into black water fever--the severest form of malarial fever, which, the doctor-book assures me, is due to some outside infection as well. Having pulled him through his fever, I am now at my wit's end, for he has lost his wits altogether. I am rather recent in practice to take up the cure of insanity. This makes the second lunacy case on this short voyage.

P.S. Some day I shall write a book (for the profession), and entitle it, "Around the World on the Hospital Ship Snark." Even our pets have not escaped. We sailed from Meringe Lagoon with two, an Irish terrier and a white cockatoo. The terrier fell down the cabin companionway and lamed its nigh hind leg, then repeated the manoeuvre and lamed its off fore leg. At the present moment it has but two legs to walk on. Fortunately, they are on opposite sides and ends, so that she can still dot and carry two. The cockatoo was crushed under the cabin skylight and had to be killed. This was our first funeral--though for that matter, the several chickens we had, and which would have made welcome broth for the convalescents, flew overboard and were drowned. Only the cockroaches flourish. Neither illness nor accident ever befalls them, and they grow larger and more carnivorous day by day, gnawing our finger-nails and toe-nails while we sleep.

P.S. Charmian is having another bout with fever. Martin, in despair, has taken to horse-doctoring his yaws with bluestone and to blessing the Solomons. As for me, in addition to navigating,

doctoring, and writing short stories, I am far from well. With the exception of the insanity cases, I'm the worst off on board. I shall catch the next steamer to Australia and go on the operating table. Among my minor afflictions, I may mention a new and mysterious one. For the past week my hands have been swelling as with dropsy. It is only by a painful effort that I can close them. A pull on a rope is excruciating. The sensations are like those that accompany severe chilblains. Also, the skin is peeling off both hands at an alarming rate, besides which the new skin underneath is growing hard and thick. The doctor-book fails to mention this disease. Nobody knows what it is.

P.S. Well, anyway, I've cured the chronometer. After knocking about the sea for eight squally, rainy days, most of the time hove to, I succeeded in catching a partial observation of the sun at midday. From this I worked up my latitude, then headed by log to the latitude of Lord Howe, and ran both that latitude and the island down together. Here I tested the chronometer by longitude sights and found it something like three minutes out. Since each minute is equivalent to fifteen miles, the total error can be appreciated. By repeated observations at Lord Howe I rated the chronometer, finding it to have a daily losing error of seven-tenths of a second. Now it happens that a year ago, when we sailed from Hawaii, that selfsame chronometer had that selfsame losing error of seven-tenths of a second. Since that error was faithfully added every day, and since that error, as proved by my observations at Lord Howe, has not changed, then what under the sun made that chronometer all of a

sudden accelerate and catch up with itself three minutes? Can such things be? Expert watchmakers say no; but I say that they have never done any expert watch-making and watch-rating in the Solomons. That it is the climate is my only diagnosis. At any rate, I have successfully doctored the chronometer, even if I have failed with the lunacy cases and with Martin's yaws.

P.S. Martin has just tried burnt alum, and is blessing the Solomons more fervently than ever.

P.S. Between Manning Straits and Pavuvu Islands.

Henry has developed rheumatism in his back, ten skins have peeled off my hands and the eleventh is now peeling, while Tehei is more lunatic than ever and day and night prays God not to kill him. Also, Nakata and I are slashing away at fever again. And finally up to date, Nakata last evening had an attack of ptomaine poisoning, and we spent half the night pulling him through.

BACK WORD

The Snark was forty-three feet on the water-line and fifty-five over all, with fifteen feet beam (tumble-home sides) and seven feet eight

inches draught. She was ketch-rigged, carrying flying-jib, jib, fore-staysail, main-sail, mizzen, and spinnaker. There were six feet of head-room below, and she was crown-decked and flush-decked. There were four alleged WATER-TIGHT compartments. A seventy-horse power auxiliary gas-engine sporadically furnished locomotion at an approximate cost of twenty dollars per mile. A five-horse power engine ran the pumps when it was in order, and on two occasions proved capable of furnishing juice for the search-light. The storage batteries worked four or five times in the course of two years. The fourteen-foot launch was rumoured to work at times, but it invariably broke down whenever I stepped on board.

But the Snark sailed. It was the only way she could get anywhere. She sailed for two years, and never touched rock, reef, nor shoal. She had no inside ballast, her iron keel weighed five tons, but her deep draught and high freeboard made her very stiff. Caught under full sail in tropic squalls, she buried her rail and deck many times, but stubbornly refused to turn turtle. She steered easily, and she could run day and night, without steering, close-by, full-and-by, and with the wind abeam. With the wind on her quarter and the sails properly trimmed, she steered herself within two points, and with the wind almost astern she required scarcely three points for self-steering.

The Snark was partly built in San Francisco. The morning her iron keel was to be cast was the morning of the great earthquake. Then came anarchy. Six months overdue in the building, I sailed the

shell of her to Hawaii to be finished, the engine lashed to the bottom, building materials lashed on deck. Had I remained in San Francisco for completion, I'd still be there. As it was, partly built, she cost four times what she ought to have cost.

The Snark was born unfortunately. She was libelled in San Francisco, had her cheques protested as fraudulent in Hawaii, and was fined for breach of quarantine in the Solomons. To save themselves, the newspapers could not tell the truth about her. When I discharged an incompetent captain, they said I had beaten him to a pulp. When one young man returned home to continue at college, it was reported that I was a regular Wolf Larsen, and that my whole crew had deserted because I had beaten it to a pulp. In fact the only blow struck on the Snark was when the cook was manhandled by a captain who had shipped with me under false pretences, and whom I discharged in Fiji. Also, Charmian and I boxed for exercise; but neither of us was seriously maimed.

The voyage was our idea of a good time. I built the Snark and paid for it, and for all expenses. I contracted to write thirty-five thousand words descriptive of the trip for a magazine which was to pay me the same rate I received for stories written at home. Promptly the magazine advertised that it was sending me especially around the world for itself. It was a wealthy magazine. And every man who had business dealings with the Snark charged three prices because forsooth the magazine could afford it. Down in the uttermost South Sea isle this myth obtained, and I paid accordingly.

To this day everybody believes that the magazine paid for everything and that I made a fortune out of the voyage. It is hard, after such advertising, to hammer it into the human understanding that the whole voyage was done for the fun of it.

I went to Australia to go into hospital, where I spent five weeks. I spent five months miserably sick in hotels. The mysterious malady that afflicted my hands was too much for the Australian specialists. It was unknown in the literature of medicine. No case like it had ever been reported. It extended from my hands to my feet so that at times I was as helpless as a child. On occasion my hands were twice their natural size, with seven dead and dying skins peeling off at the same time. There were times when my toe-nails, in twenty-four hours, grew as thick as they were long. After filing them off, inside another twenty-four hours they were as thick as before.

The Australian specialists agreed that the malady was non-parasitic, and that, therefore, it must be nervous. It did not mend, and it was impossible for me to continue the voyage. The only way I could have continued it would have been by being lashed in my bunk, for in my helpless condition, unable to clutch with my hands, I could not have moved about on a small rolling boat. Also, I said to myself that while there were many boats and many voyages, I had but one pair of hands and one set of toe-nails. Still further, I reasoned that in my own climate of California I had always maintained a stable nervous equilibrium. So back I came.

Since my return I have completely recovered. And I have found out what was the matter with me. I encountered a book by Lieutenant-Colonel Charles E. Woodruff of the United States Army entitled "Effects of Tropical Light on White Men." Then I knew. Later, I met Colonel Woodruff, and learned that he had been similarly afflicted. Himself an Army surgeon, seventeen Army surgeons sat on his case in the Philippines, and, like the Australian specialists, confessed themselves beaten. In brief, I had a strong predisposition toward the tissue-destructiveness of tropical light. I was being torn to pieces by the ultra-violet rays just as many experimenters with the X-ray have been torn to pieces.

In passing, I may mention that among the other afflictions that jointly compelled the abandonment of the voyage, was one that is variously called the healthy man's disease, European Leprosy, and Biblical Leprosy. Unlike True Leprosy, nothing is known of this mysterious malady. No doctor has ever claimed a cure for a case of it, though spontaneous cures are recorded. It comes, they know not how. It is, they know not what. It goes, they know not why. Without the use of drugs, merely by living in the wholesome California climate, my silvery skin vanished. The only hope the doctors had held out to me was a spontaneous cure, and such a cure was mine.

A last word: the test of the voyage. It is easy enough for me or any man to say that it was enjoyable. But there is a better witness, the one woman who made it from beginning to end. In

hospital when I broke the news to Charmian that I must go back to California, the tears welled into her eyes. For two days she was wrecked and broken by the knowledge that the happy, happy voyage was abandoned.

GLEN ELLEN, CALIFORNIA,

April 7, 1911

Footnotes:

{1} To point out that we of the Snark are not a crowd of weaklings, which might be concluded from our divers afflictions, I quote the following, which I gleaned verbatim from the Eugenie's log and which may be considered as a sample of Solomon Islands cruising:

Ulava, Thursday, March 12, 1908.

Boat went ashore in the morning. Got two loads ivory nut, 4000 copra. Skipper down with fever.

Ulava, Friday, March 13, 1908.

Buying nuts from bushmen, 1.5 ton. Mate and skipper down with fever.

Ulava, Saturday, March 14, 1908.

At noon hove up and proceeded with a very light E.N.E. wind for Ngora-Ngora. Anchored in 5 fathoms--shell and coral. Mate down with fever.

Ngora-Ngora, Sunday, March 15, 1908.

At daybreak found that the boy Bagua had died during the night, on dysentery. He was about 14 days sick. At sunset, big N.W. squall. (Second anchor ready) Lasting one hour and 30 minutes.

At sea, Monday, March 16, 1908.

Set course for Sikiana at 4 P.M. Wind broke off. Heavy squalls during the night. Skipper down on dysentery, also one man.

At sea, Tuesday, March 17, 1908.

Skipper and 2 crew down on dysentery. Mate fever.

At sea, Wednesday, March 18, 1908.

Big sea. Lee-rail under water all the time. Ship under reefed mainsail, staysail, and inner jib. Skipper and 3 men dysentery. Mate fever.

At sea, Thursday, March 19, 1908.

Too thick to see anything. Blowing a gale all the time. Pump plugged up and bailing with buckets. Skipper and five boys down on dysentery.

At sea, Friday, March 20, 1908.

During night squalls with hurricane force. Skipper and six men down on dysentery.

At sea, Saturday, March 21, 1908.

Turned back from Sikiana. Squalls all day with heavy rain and sea. Skipper and best part of crew on dysentery. Mate fever.

And so, day by day, with the majority of all on board prostrated, the Eugenie's log goes on. The only variety occurred on March 31, when the mate came down with dysentery and the skipper was floored by fever.