

## CHAPTER XXIX

### What They Lighted Upon In Further Searching The Craft, And The Resolution They Came To

Descending into the cabin with Samoa, I bade him hunt up the brigantine's log, the captain's writing-desk, and nautical instruments; in a word, aught that could throw light on the previous history of the craft, or aid in navigating her homeward.

But nearly every thing of the kind had disappeared: log, quadrant, and ship's papers. Nothing was left but the sextant-case, which Jarl and I had lighted upon in the state-room.

Upon this, vague though they were, my suspicions returned; and I closely questioned the Islander concerning the disappearance of these important articles. In reply, he gave me to understand, that the nautical instruments had been clandestinely carried down into the fore-castle by Annatoo; and by that indefatigable and inquisitive dame they had been summarily taken apart for scientific inspection. It was impossible to restore them; for many of the fixtures were lost, including the colored glasses, sights, and little mirrors; and many parts still recoverable, were so battered and broken as to be entirely useless. For several days afterward, we now and then came across bits of the quadrant or sextant; but it was only to mourn over their fate.

However, though sextant and quadrant were both unattainable, I did not so quickly renounce all hope of discovering a chronometer, which, if in good order, though at present not ticking, might still be made in some degree serviceable. But no such instrument was to be seen. No: nor to be heard of; Samoa himself professing utter ignorance.

Annatoo, I threatened and coaxed; describing the chronometer--a live, round creature like a toad, that made a strange noise, which I imitated; but she knew nothing about it. Whether she had lighted upon it unbeknown to Samoa, and dissected it as usual, there was now no way to determine. Indeed, upon this one point, she maintained an air of such inflexible stupidity, that if she were really fibbing, her dead-wall countenance superseded the necessity for verbal deceit.

It may be, however, that in this particular she was wronged; for, as with many small vessels, the Parki might never have possessed the instrument in question. All thought, therefore, of feeling our way, as we should penetrate farther and farther into the watery wilderness, was necessarily abandoned.

The log book had also formed a portion of Annatoo's pilferings. It seems she had taken it into her studio to ponder over. But after amusing herself by again and again counting over the leaves, and wondering how so many distinct surfaces could be compacted together in so small a compass, she had very suddenly conceived an aversion to

literature, and dropped the book overboard as worthless. Doubtless, it met the fate of many other ponderous tomes; sinking quickly and profoundly. What Camden or Stowe hereafter will dive for it?

One evening Samoa brought me a quarto half-sheet of yellowish, ribbed paper, much soiled and tarry, which he had discovered in a dark hole of the forecastle. It had plainly formed part of the lost log; but all the writing thereon, at present decipherable, conveyed no information upon the subject then nearest my heart.

But one could not but be struck by a tragical occurrence, which the page very briefly recounted; as well, as by a noteworthy pictorial illustration of the event in the margin of the text. Save the cut, there was no further allusion to the matter than the following:--

"This day, being calm, Tooboi, one of the Lahina men, went overboard for a bath, and was eaten up by a shark. Immediately sent forward for his bag."

Now, this last sentence was susceptible of two meanings. It is truth, that immediately upon the decease of a friendless sailor at sea, his shipmates oftentimes seize upon his effects, and divide them; though the dead man's clothes are seldom worn till a subsequent voyage. This proceeding seems heartless. But sailors reason thus: Better we, than the captain. For by law, either scribbled or unscribbled, the effects of a mariner, dying on shipboard, should be held in trust by that officer. But as sailors are mostly foundlings and castaways, and

carry all their kith and kin in their arms and their legs, there hardly ever appears any heir-at-law to claim their estate; seldom worth inheriting, like Esterhazy's. Wherefore, the withdrawal of a dead man's "kit" from the forecabin to the cabin, is often held tantamount to its virtual appropriation by the captain. At any rate, in small ships on long voyages, such things have been done.

Thus much being said, then, the sentence above quoted from the Parki's log, may be deemed somewhat ambiguous. At the time it struck me as singular; for the poor diver's grass bag could not have contained much of any thing valuable unless, peradventure, he had concealed therein some Cleopatra pearls, feloniously abstracted from the shells brought up from the sea.

Aside of the paragraph, copied above, was a pen-and-ink sketch of the casualty, most cruelly executed; the poor fellow's legs being represented half way in the process of deglutition; his arms firmly grasping the monster's teeth, as if heroically bent upon making as tough a morsel of himself as possible.

But no doubt the honest captain sketched this cenotaph to the departed in all sincerity of heart; perhaps, during the melancholy leisure which followed the catastrophe. Half obliterated were several stains upon the page; seemingly, lingering traces of a salt tear or two.

From this unwonted embellishment of the text, I was led to infer, that the designer, at one time or other, must have been engaged in the vocation of whaling. For, in India ink, the logs of certain whalemen are decorated by somewhat similar illustrations.

When whales are seen, but not captured, the fact is denoted by an outline figure representing the creature's flukes, the broad, curving lobes of his tail. But in those cases where the monster is both chased and killed, this outline is filled up jet black; one for every whale slain; presenting striking objects in turning over the log; and so facilitating reference. Hence, it is quite imposing to behold, all in a row, three or four, sometime five or six, of these drawings; showing that so many monsters that day jetted their last spout. And the chief mate, whose duty it is to keep the ship's record, generally prides himself upon the beauty, and flushy likeness to life, of his flukes; though, sooth to say, many of these artists are no Landseers.

After vainly searching the cabin for those articles we most needed, we proceeded to explore the hold, into which as yet we had not penetrated. Here, we found a considerable quantity of pearl shells; cocoanuts; an abundance of fresh water in casks; spare sails and rigging; and some fifty barrels or more of salt beef and biscuit.

Unromantic as these last mentioned objects were, I lingered over them long, and in a revery. Branded upon each barrel head was the name of a place in America, with which I was very familiar. It is from America chiefly, that ship's stores are originally procured for the

few vessels sailing out of the Hawaiian Islands.

Having now acquainted myself with all things respecting the Parki, which could in any way be learned, I repaired to the quarter-deck, and summoning round me Samoa, Annatoo, and Jarl, gravely addressed them.

I said, that nothing would give me greater satisfaction than forthwith to return to the scene of the massacre, and chastise its surviving authors. But as there were only four of us in all; and the place of those islands was wholly unknown to me; and even if known, would be altogether out of our reach, since we possessed no instruments of navigation; it was quite plain that all thought of returning thither was entirely useless. The last mentioned reason, also, prevented our voyaging to the Hawaiian group, where the vessel belonged; though that would have been the most advisable step, resulting, as it would, if successful, in restoring the ill-fated craft to her owners.

But all things considered, it seemed best, I added, cautiously to hold on our way to the westward. It was our easiest course; for we would ever have the wind from astern; and though we could not so much as hope to arrive at any one spot previously designated, there was still a positive certainty, if we floated long enough, of falling in with islands whereat to refresh ourselves; and whence, if we thought fit, we might afterward embark for more agreeable climes. I then

reminded them of the fact, that so long as we kept the sea, there was always some prospect of encountering a friendly sail; in which event, our solicitude would be over.

All this I said in the mild, firm tone of a superior; being anxious, at once to assume the unquestioned supremacy. For, otherwise, Jarl and I might better quit the vessel forthwith, than remain on board subject to the outlandish caprices of Annatoo, who through Samoa would then have the sway. But I was sure of my Viking; and if Samoa proved docile, had no fear of his dame.

And therefore during my address, I steadfastly eyed him; thereby learning enough to persuade me, that though he deferred to me at present, he was, notwithstanding, a man who, without precisely meditating mischief, could upon occasion act an ugly part. But of his courage, and savage honor, such as it was, I had little doubt. Then, wild buffalo that he was, tamed down in the yoke matrimonial, I could not but fancy, that if upon no other account, our society must please him, as rendering less afflictive the tyranny of his spouse.

For a hen-pecked husband, by the way, Samoa was a most terrible fellow to behold. And though, after all, I liked him; it was as you fancy a fiery steed with mane disheveled, as young Alexander fancied Bucephalus; which wild horse, when he patted, he preferred holding by the bridle. But more of Samoa anon.

Our course determined, and the command of the vessel tacitly yielded up to myself, the next thing done was to put every thing in order. The tattered sails were replaced by others, dragged up from the sail-room below; in several places, new running-rigging was rove; blocks restrapped; and the slackened stays and shrouds set taught. For all of which, we were mostly indebted to my Viking's unwearied and skillful marling-spike, which he swayed like a scepter.

The little Parki's toilet being thus thoroughly made for the first time since the massacre, we gave her new raiment to the breeze, and daintily squaring her yards, she gracefully glided away; honest old Jarl at the helm, watchfully guiding her path, like some devoted old foster-father.

As I stood by his side like a captain, or walked up and down on the quarter-deck, I felt no little importance upon thus assuming for the first time in my life, the command of a vessel at sea. The novel circumstances of the case only augmented this feeling; the wild and remote seas where we were; the character of my crew, and the consideration, that to all purposes, I was owner, as well as commander of the craft I sailed.