

CHAPTER XVII.

AND PYM?

“And Pym--poor Pym?”

I turned round quickly.

Hunt had spoken. This strange person was standing motionless at a little distance, gazing fixedly at the horizon.

It was so unusual to hear Hunt's voice on board the schooner, that the men, whom the unaccustomed sound reached, drew near, moved by curiosity. Did not his unexpected intervention point to--I had a presentiment that it did--some wonderful revelation?

A movement of West's hand sent the men forward, leaving only the mate, the boatswain, Martin Holt, the sailing-master, and Hardy, with the captain and myself in the vicinity of Hunt. The captain approached and addressed him:

“What did you say?”

“I said, ‘And Pym--poor Pym.’”

“Well, then, what do you mean by repeating the name of the man

whose pernicious advice led my brother to the island on which the Jane was lost, the greater part of her crew was massacred, and where we have not found even one left of those who were still here seven months ago?"

Hunt did not speak.

"Answer, I say--answer!" cried the captain.

Hunt hesitated, not because he did not know what to say, but from a certain difficulty in expressing his ideas. The latter were quite clear, but his speech was confused, his words were unconnected. He had a certain language of his own which sometimes was picturesque, and his pronunciation was strongly marked by the hoarse accent of the Indians of the Far West.

"You see," he said, "I do not know how to tell things. My tongue stops. Understand me, I spoke of Pym, poor Pym, did I not?"

"Yes," answered West, sternly; "and what have you to say about Arthur Pym?"

"I have to say that he must not be abandoned."

"Abandoned!" I exclaimed.

"No, never! It would be cruel--too cruel. We must go to seek

him.”

“To seek him?” repeated Captain Len Guy.

“Understand me; it is for this that I have embarked on the Halbrane--yes, to find poor Pym!”

“And where is he,” I asked, “if not deep in a grave, in the cemetery of his natal city?”

“No, he is in the place where he remained, alone, all alone,” continued Hunt, pointing towards the south; “and since then the sun has risen on that horizon seven times.”

It was evident that Hunt intended to designate the Antarctic regions, but what did he mean by this?

“Do you not know that Arthur Pym is dead?” said the captain.

“Dead!” replied Hunt, emphasizing the word with an expressive gesture. “No! listen to me: I know things; understand me, he is not dead.”

“Come now, Hunt,” said I, “remember what you do know. In the last chapter of the adventures of Arthur Pym, does not Edgar Poe relate his sudden and deplorable end?”

“Explain yourself, Hunt,” said the captain, in a tone of command. “Reflect, take your time, and say plainly whatever you have to say.”

And, while Hunt passed his hand over his brow, as though to collect his memory of far-off things, I observed to Captain Len Guy,--

“There is something very singular in the intervention of this man, if indeed he be not mad.”

At my words the boatswain shook his head, for he did not believe Hunt to be in his right mind.

The latter understood this shake of the boatswain’s head, and cried out in a harsh tone,--

“No, not mad. And madmen are respected on the prairies, even if they are not believed. And I--I must be believed. No, no, no! Pym is not dead!”

“Edgar Poe asserts that he is,” I replied.

“Yes, I know, Edgar Poe of Baltimore. But--he never saw poor Pym, never, never.”

“What!” exclaimed Captain Len Guy; “the two men were not acquainted?”

“No!”

“And it was not Arthur Pym himself who related his adventures to Edgar Poe?”

“No, captain, no! He, below there, at Baltimore, had only the notes written by Pym from the day when he hid himself on board the Grampus to the very last hour--the last--understand me the last.”

“Who, then, brought back that journal?” asked Captain Len Guy, as he seized Hunt’s hand.

“It was Pym’s companion, he who loved him, his poor Pym, like a son. It was Dirk Peters, the half-breed, who came back alone from there--beyond.”

“The half-breed, Dirk Peters!” I exclaimed.

“Yes.”

“Alone?”

“Alone.”

“And Arthur Pym may be--”

“There,” answered Hunt, in a loud voice, bending towards the southern line, from which he had not diverted his gaze for a moment.

Could such an assertion prevail against the general incredulity? No, assuredly not! Martin Holt nudged Hurliguerly with his elbow, and both regarded Hunt with pity, while West observed him without speaking. Captain Len Guy made me a sign, meaning that nothing serious was to be got out of this poor fellow, whose mental faculties must have been out of gear for a long time.

And nevertheless, when I looked keenly at Hunt, it seemed to me that a sort of radiance of truth shone out of his eyes:

Then I set to work to interrogate the man, putting to him precise and pressing questions which he tried to answer categorically, as we shall see, and not once did he contradict himself.

“Tell me,” I asked, “did Arthur Pym really come to Tsalal Island on board the Grampus?”

“Yes.”

“Did Arthur Pym separate himself, with the half-breed and one of the sailors, from his companions while Captain William Guy had gone to the village of Klock-Klock?”

“Yes. The sailor was one Allen, and he was almost immediately

stifled under the stones.”

“Then the two others saw the attack, and the destruction of the schooner, from the top of the hill?”

“Yes.”

“Then, some time later, the two left the island, after they had got possession of one of the boats which the natives could not take from them?”

“Yes.”

“And, after twenty days, having reached the front of the curtain of vapour, they were both carried down into the gulf of the cataract?”

This time Hunt did not reply in the affirmative; he hesitated, he stammered out some vague words; he seemed to be trying to rekindle the half-extinguished flame of his memory. At length, looking at me and shaking his head, he answered,--

“No, not both. Understand me--Dirk never told me--”

“Dirk Peters” interposed Captain Len Guy, quickly. “You knew Dirk Peters?”

“Yes.”

“Where?”

“At Vandalia, State of Illinois.”

“And it is from him that you have all this information concerning the voyage?”

“From him.”

“And he came back alone--alone--from that voyage, having left Arthur Pym.”

“Alone!”

“Speak, man--do speak!” I cried, impatiently. Then, in broken, but intelligible sentences, Hunt spoke,--

“Yes--there--a curtain of vapour--so the half-breed often said--understand me. The two, Arthur Pym and he, were in the Tsalal boat. Then an enormous block of ice came full upon them. At the shock Dirk Peters was thrown into the sea, but he clung to the ice block, and--understand me, he saw the boat drift with the current, far, very far, too far! In vain did Pym try to rejoin his companion, he could not; the boat drifted on and on, and Pym, that poor dear Pym, was carried away. It is he who has never come back, and he is

there, still there!”

If Hunt had been the half-breed in person he could not have spoken with more heartfelt emotion of “poor Pym.”

It was then, in front of the “curtain of vapour,” that Arthur Pym and the half-breed had been separated from each other. Dirk Peters had succeeded in returning from the ice-world to America, whither he had conveyed the notes that were communicated to Edgar Poe.

Hunt was minutely questioned upon all these points and he replied, conformably, he declared, to what the half-breed had told him many times. According to this statement, Dirk Peters had Arthur Pym’s note-book in his pocket at the moment when the ice-block struck them, and thus the journal which the half-breed placed at the disposal of the American romance-writer was saved.

“Understand me,” Hunt repeated, “for I tell you things as I have them from Dirk Peters. While the drift was carrying him away, he cried out with all his strength. Pym, poor Pym, had already disappeared in the midst of the vapour. The half-breed, feeding upon raw fish, which he contrived to catch, was carried back by a cross current to Tsalal Island, where he landed half dead from hunger.”

“To Tsalal Island!” exclaimed Captain Len Guy. “And how long was it since they had left it?”

“Three weeks--yes, three weeks at the farthest, so Dirk Peters told me.”

“Then he must have found all that remained of the crew of the Jane--my brother William and those who had survived with him?”

“No,” replied Hunt; “and Dirk Peters always believed that they had perished--yes, to the very last man. There was no one upon the island.”

“No one?”

“Not a living soul.”

“But the population?”

”No one! No one, I tell you. The island was a desert--yes, a desert!”

This statement contradicted certain facts of which we were absolutely certain. After all, though, it that when Dirk Peters returned to Tsalal Island, the population, seized by who can tell what terror, had already taken refuge upon the south-western group, and that William Guy and his companions were still hidden in gorges of Klock-Klock. That would explain why half-breed had not come across them, and also why survivors of the Jane had had nothing to fear during eleven years of their sojourn in the island. On the

other hand, since Patterson had left them there seven previously, if we did not find them, that must have been because they had been obliged to leave Tsalal, the being rendered uninhabitable by the earthquake.

“So that,” resumed Captain Len Guy, “on the return of Dirk Peters, there was no longer an inhabitant on the island?”

“No one,” repeated Hunt, “no one. The half-breed did not meet a single native.”

“And what did Dirk Peters do?”

“Understand me. A forsaken boat lay there, at the back of the bay, containing some dried meat and several casks of water. The half-breed got into it, and a south wind--yes, south, very strong, the same that had driven the ice block, with the cross current, towards Tsalal Island--carried him on for weeks and weeks--to the iceberg barrier, through a passage in it--you may believe me, I am telling you only what Dirk Peters told me--and he cleared the polar circle.”

“And beyond it?” I inquired.

“Beyond it. He was picked up by an American whaler, the Sandy Hook, and taken back to America.”

Now, one thing at all events was clear. Edgar Poe had never known

Arthur Pym. This was the reason why, to leave his readers in exciting uncertainty, he had brought Pym to an end “as sudden as it was deplorable,” without indicating the manner or the cause of his death.

“And yet, although Arthur Pym did not return, could it be reasonably admitted that he had survived his companion for any length of time, that he was still living, eleven years having elapsed since his disappearance?”

“Yes, yes,” replied Hunt.

And this he affirmed with the strong conviction that Dirk Peters had infused into his mind while the two were living together in Vandalia, in Illinois.

Now the question arose, was Hunt sane? Was it not he who had stolen into my cabin in a fit of insanity--of this I had no doubt--and murmured in my ear the words: “And Pym--poor Pym?”

Yes, and I had not been dreaming! In short, if all that Hunt had just said was true, if he was but the faithful reporter of secrets which had been entrusted to him by Dirk Peters, ought he to be believed when he repeated in a tone of mingled command and entreaty,--

“Pym is not dead. Pym is there. Poor Pym must not be forsaken!”

When I had made an end of questioning Hunt, Captain Len Guy came out of his meditative mood, profoundly troubled, and gave the word, "All hands forward!"

When the men were assembled around him, he said,--

"Listen to me, Hunt, and seriously consider the gravity of the questions I am about to put to you."

Hunt held his head up, and ran his eyes over the crew of the Halbrane.

"You assert, Hunt, that all you have told us concerning Arthur Pym is true?"

"Yes."

"You knew Dirk Peters?"

"Yes."

"You lived some years with him in Illinois?"

"Nine years."

"And he often related these things to you?"

“Yes.”

“And, for your own part, you have no doubt that he told you the exact truth?”

“None.”

“Well, then, did it never occur to him that some of the crew of the Jane might have remained on Tsalal Island?”

“No.”

“He believed that William Guy and his companions must all have perished in the landslip of the hill of Klock-Klock?”

“Yes, and from what he often repeated to me, Pym believed it also.”

“Where did you see Dirk Peters for the last time?”

“At Vandalia.”

“How long ago?”

“Over two years.”

“And which of you two was the first to leave Vandalia?”

I thought I detected a slight hesitation in Hunt before he answered,--

“We left the place together.”

“You, to go to?”

“The Falklands.”

“And he--”

“He?” repeated Hunt.

And then his wandering gaze fixed itself on Martin Holt, our sailing-master, whose life he had saved at the risk of his own during the tempest.

“Well!” resumed the captain, “do you not understand what I am asking you?”

“Yes.”

“Then answer me. When Dirk Peters left Illinois, did he finally give up America?”

“Yes.”

“To go whither? Speak!”

“To the Falklands.”

“And where is he now?”

“He stands before you.”

Dirk Peters! Hunt was the half-breed Dirk Peters, the devoted companion of Arthur Pym, he whom Captain Guy had so long sought for in the United States, and whose presence was probably to furnish us with a fresh reason for pursuing our daring campaign.

I shall not be at all surprised if my readers have already recognized Dirk Peters in Hunt; indeed, I shall be astonished if they have failed to do so. The extraordinary thing is that Captain Len Guy and myself, who had read Edgar Poe’s book over and over again, did not see at once, when Hunt came on the ship at the Falklands, that he and the half-breed were identical! I can only admit that we were both blindfolded by some hidden action of Fate, just when certain pages of that book ought to have effectually cleared our vision.

There was no doubt whatever that Hunt really was Dirk Peters. Although he was eleven years older, he answered in every particular

to the description of him given by Arthur Pym, except that he was no longer “of fierce aspect.” In fact, the half-breed had changed with age and the experience of terrible scenes through which he had passed; nevertheless, he was still the faithful companion to whom Arthur Pym had often owed his safety, that same Dirk Peters who loved him as his own son, and who had never--no, never--lost the hope of finding him again one day amid the awful Antarctic wastes.

Now, why had Dirk Peters hidden himself in the Falklands under the name of Hunt? Why, since his embarkation on the Halbrane, had he kept up that incognito? Why had he not told who he was, since he was aware of the intentions of the captain, who was about to make every effort to save his countrymen by following the course of the Jane?

Why? No doubt because he feared that his name would inspire horror. Was it not the name of one who had shared in the horrible scenes of the Grampus, who had killed Parker, the sailor, who had fed upon the man’s flesh, and quenched his thirst in the man’s blood? To induce him to reveal his name he must needs be assured that the Halbrane would attempt to discover and rescue Arthur Pym!

And as to the existence of Arthur Pym? I confess that my reason did not rebel against the admission of it as a possibility. The imploring cry of the half-breed, “Pym, poor Pym! he must not be forsaken!” troubled me profoundly.

Assuredly, since I had resolved to take part in the expedition of

the Halbrane, I was no longer the same man!

A long silence had followed the astounding declaration of the half-breed. None dreamed of doubting his veracity. He had said, "I am Dirk Peters." He was Dirk Peters.

At length, moved by irresistible impulse, I said:

"My friends, before any decision is made, let us carefully consider the situation. Should we not lay up everlasting regret for ourselves if we were to abandon our expedition at the very moment when it promises to succeed? Reflect upon this, captain, and you, my companions. It is less than seven months since Patterson left your countrymen alive on Tsalal Island. If they were there then, the fact proves that for eleven years they had been enabled to exist on the resources provided by the island, having nothing to fear from the islanders, some of whom had fallen victims to circumstances unknown to us, and others had probably transferred themselves to some neighbouring island. This is quite plain, and I do not see how any objection can be raised to my reasoning."

No one made answer: there was none to be made.

"If we have not come across the captain of the Jane and his people," I resumed, "it is because they have been obliged to abandon Tsalal Island since Patterson's departure. Why? In my belief, it was because the earthquake had rendered the island

uninhabitable. Now, they would only have required a native boat to gain either another island or some point of the Antarctic continent by the aid of the southern current. I hardly hesitate to assert that all this has occurred; but in any case, I know, and I repeat, that we shall have done nothing if we do not persevere in the search on which the safety of your countrymen depends.”

I questioned my audience by a searching look. No answer.

Captain Len Guy, whose emotion was unrestrained, bowed his head, for he felt that I was right, that by invoking the duties of humanity I was prescribing the only course open to men with feeling hearts.

“And what is in question?” I continued, after the silent pause.

“To accomplish a few degrees of latitude, and that while the sea is open, while we have two months of good weather to look for, and nothing to fear from the southern winter. I certainly should not ask you to brave its severity. And shall we hesitate, when the Halbrane is abundantly furnished, her crew complete and in good health? Shall we take fright at imaginary dangers? Shall we not have courage to go on, on, thither?”

And I pointed to the southern horizon. Dirk Peters pointed to it also, with an imperative gesture which spoke for him.

Still, the eyes of all were fixed upon us, but there was no response. I continued to urge every argument, and to quote every

example in favour of the safety of pursuing our voyage, but the silence was unbroken and now the men stood with eyes cast down.

And yet I had not once pronounced the name of Dirk Peters, nor alluded to Dirk Peters' proposal.

I was asking myself whether I had or had not succeeded in inspiring my companions with my own belief, when Captain Len Guy spoke:

"Dirk Peters," he said, "do you assert that Arthur Pym and you after your departure from Tsalal Island saw land in the direction of the south?"

"Yes, land," answered the half-breed. "Islands or continent--understand me--and I believe that Pym, poor Pym, is waiting there until aid comes to him."

"There, where perhaps William Guy and his companions are also waiting," said I, to bring back the discussion to more practical points.

Captain Len Guy reflected for a little while, and then spoke:

"Is it true, Dirk Peters," he asked, "that beyond the eighty-fourth parallel the horizon is shut in by that curtain of vapour which is described in the narrative? Have you seen--seen with your own eyes--those cataracts in the air, that gulf in which

Arthur Pym's boat was lost?"

The half-breed looked from one to the other of us, and shook his big head.

"I don't know," he said. "What are you asking me about, captain? A curtain of vapour? Yes, perhaps, and also appearances of land towards the south."

Evidently Dirk Peters had never read Edgar Poe's book, and very likely did not know how to read. After having handed over Pym's journal, he had not troubled himself about its publication. Having retired to Illinois at first and to the Falklands afterwards, he had no notion of the stir that the work had made, or of the fantastic and baseless climax to which our great poet had brought those strange adventures.

And, besides, might not Arthur Pym himself, with his tendency to the supernatural, have fancied that he saw these wondrous things, due solely to his imaginative brain?

Then, for the first time in the course of this discussion, West's voice made itself heard. I had no idea which side he would take. The first words he uttered were:

"Captain, your orders?"

Captain Len Guy turned towards his crew, who surrounded him, both the old and the new. Hearne remained in the background, ready to intervene if he should think it necessary.

The captain questioned the boatswain and his comrades, whose devotion was unreservedly his, by a long and anxious look, and I heard him mutter between his teeth,--

“Ah! if it depended only on me! if I were sure of the assent and the help of them all!

“Then Hearne spoke roughly:

“Captain,” said he, “it’s two months since we left the Falklands. Now, my companions were engaged for a voyage which was not to take them farther beyond the icebergs than Tsalal Island.”

“That is not so,” exclaimed Captain Len Guy. “No! That is not so. I recruited you all for an enterprise which I have a right to pursue, so far as I please.”

“Beg pardon,” said Hearne, coolly, “but we have come to a point which no navigator has ever yet reached, in a sea, no ship except the Jane has ever ventured into before us, and therefore my comrades and I mean to return to the Falklands before the bad season. From there you can return to Tsalal Island, and even go on to the Pole, if you so please.”

A murmur of approbation greeted his words; no doubt the sealing-master justly interpreted the sentiments of the majority, composed of the new recruits. To go against their opinion, to exact the obedience of these ill-disposed men, and under such conditions to risk the unknown Antarctic waters, would have been an act of temerity--or, rather, an act of madness--that would have brought about some catastrophe.

Nevertheless, West, advancing upon Hearne, said to him in a threatening tone, "Who gave you leave to speak?"

"The captain questioned us," replied Hearne. "I had a right to reply."

The man uttered these words with such insolence that West, who was generally so self-restrained, was about to give free vent to his wrath, when Captain Len Guy, stopping him by a motion of his hand, said quietly,--

"Be calm, Jem. Nothing can be done unless we are all agreed. What is your opinion, Hurtiguerly?"

"It is very clear, captain," replied the boatswain. "I will obey your orders, whatever they may be! It is our duty not to forsake William Guy and the others so long as any chance of saving them remains."

The boatswain paused for a moment, while several of the sailors gave unequivocal signs of approbation.

“As for what concerns Arthur Pym--”

“There is no question of Arthur Pym,” struck in the captain,
“but only of my brother William and his companions.”

I saw at this moment that Dirk Peters was about to protest, and caught hold of his arm. He shook with anger, but kept silence.

The captain continued his questioning of the men, desiring to know by name all those upon whom he might reckon. The old crew to a man acquiesced in his proposals, and pledged themselves to obey his orders implicitly and follow him whithersoever he chose to go.

Three only of the recruits joined those faithful seamen; these were English sailors. The others were of Hearne’s opinion, holding that for them the campaign was ended at Tsalal Island. They therefore refused to go beyond that point, and formally demanded that the ship should be steered northward so as to clear the icebergs at the most favourable period of the season.

Twenty men were on their side, and to constrain them to lend a hand to the working of the ship if she were to be diverted to the south would have been to provoke them to rebel. There was but one

resource: to arouse their covetousness, to strike the chord of self-interest.

I intervened, therefore, and addressed them in a which placed the seriousness of my proposal beyond a doubt.

“Men of the Halbrane, listen to me! Just as various States have done for voyages of discovery in the Polar Regions, I offer a reward to the crew of this schooner. Two thousand dollars shall be shared among you for every degree we make beyond the eighty-fourth parallel.”

Nearly seventy dollars to each man; this was a strong temptation.

I felt that I had hit the mark.

“I will sign an agreement to that effect,” I continued, “with Captain Len Guy as your representative, and the sums gained shall be handed to you on your return, no matter under what conditions that return be accomplished.”

I waited for the effect of this promise, and, to tell the truth, I had not to wait long.

“Hurrah!” cried the boatswain, acting as fogleman to his comrades, who almost unanimously added their cheers to his. Hearne offered no farther opposition; it would always be in his power to

put in his word when the stances should be more propitious.

Thus the bargain was made, and, to gain my ends, I have made a heavier sacrifice. It is true we were within seven degrees of the South and, if the Halbrane should indeed reach that spot, it would never cost me more than fourteen thousand dollars.

Early in the morning of the 27th of December the Halbrane put out to sea, heading south-west.

After the scene of the preceding evening Captain Len Guy had taken a few hours' rest. I met him next day on deck while West was going about fore and aft, and he called us both to him.

"Mr. Jeorling," he said, "it was with a terrible pang that I came to the resolution to bring our schooner back to the north! I felt I had not done all I ought to do for our unhappy fellow-countrymen: but I knew that the majority of the crew would be against me if I insisted on going beyond Tsalal Island."

"That is true, captain; there was a beginning of indiscipline on board, and perhaps it might have ended in a revolt."

"A revolt we should have speedily put down," said West, coolly, "were it only by knocking Hearne, who is always exciting the mutinous men, on the head."

“And you would have done well, Jem,” said the captain. “Only, justice being satisfied, what would have become of the agreement together, which we must have in order to do anything?”

“Of course, captain, it is better that things passed off without violence! But for the future Hearne will have to look out for himself.”

“His companions,” observed the captain, “are now greedy for the prizes that have been promised them. The greed of gain will make them more willing and persevering. The generosity of Mr. Jeorling has succeeded where our entreaties would undoubtedly have failed. I thank him for it.”

Captain Len Guy held out a hand to me, which I grasped cordially.

After some general conversation relating to our purpose, the ship’s course, and the proposed verification of the bearings of the group of islands on the west of Tsalal which is described by Arthur Pym, the captain said,--

“As it is possible that the ravages of the earthquake did not extend to this group, and that it may still be inhabited, we must be on our guard in approaching the bearings.”

“Which cannot be very far off,” I added. “And then, captain, who knows but that your brother and his sailors might have taken

refuge on one of these islands!”

This was admissible, but not a consoling eventuality, for in that case the poor fellows would have fallen into the hands of those savages of whom they were rid while they remained at Tsalal.

“Jem,” resumed Captain Len Guy, “we are making good way, and no doubt land will be signalled in a few hours. Give orders for the watch to be careful.”

“It’s done, captain.”

“There is a man in the crow’s-nest?”

“Dirk Peters himself, at his own request.” “All right, Jem; we may trust his vigilance.”

“And also his eyes,” I added, “for he is gifted with amazing sight.”

For two hours of very quick sailing not the smallest indication of the group of eight islands was visible.

“It is incomprehensible that we have not come in sight of them,” said the captain. “I reckon that the Halbrane has made sixty miles since this morning, and the islands in question are tolerably close together.”

“Then, captain, we must conclude--and it is not unlikely--that the group to which Tsalal belonged has entirely disappeared in the earthquake.”

“Land ahead!” cried Dirk Peters.

We looked, but could discern nothing on the sea, nor was it until a quarter of an hour had elapsed that our glasses enabled us to recognize the tops of a few scattered islets shining in the oblique rays of the sun, two or three miles to the westward.

What a change! How had it come about? Arthur Pym described spacious islands, but only a small number of tiny islets, half a dozen at most, protruded from the waters.

At this moment the half-breed came sliding down from his lofty perch and jumped to the deck.

“Well, Dirk Peters! Have you recognized the group?” asked the captain.

“The group?” replied the half-breed, shaking his head. “No, I have only seen the tops of five or six islets. There is nothing but stone heaps there--not a single island!”

As the schooner approached we easily recognized these fragments of

the group, which had been almost entirely destroyed on its western side. The scattered remains formed dangerous reefs which might seriously injure the keel or the sides of the Halbrane, and there was no intention of risking the ship's safety among them. We accordingly cast anchor at a safe distance, and a boat was lowered for the reception of Captain Len Guy, the boatswain, Dirk Peters, Holt, two men and myself. The still, transparent water, as Peters steered us skilfully between the projecting edges of the little reefs, allowed us to see, not a bed of sand strewn with shells, but heaps which were overgrown by land vegetation, tufts plants not belonging to the marine flora that floated the surface of the sea. Presently we landed on one of the larger islets which rose to about thirty feet above the sea.

"Do the tides rise sometimes to that height?" I inquired of the captain.

"Never," he replied, "and perhaps we shall discover some remains of the vegetable kingdom, of habitations, or of an encampment."

"The best thing we can do," said the boatswain, "is to follow Dirk Peters, who has already distanced us. The half-breed's lynx eyes will see what we can't."

Peters had indeed scaled the eminence in a moment, and we presently joined him on the top.

The islet was strewn with remains (probably of those domestic animals mentioned in Arthur Pym's journal), but these bones differed from the bones on Tsalal Island by the fact that the heaps dated from a few months only. This then agreed with the recent period at which we placed the earthquake. Besides, plants and tufts of flowers were growing here and there.

"And these are this year's," I cried, "no southern winter has passed over them."

These facts having been ascertained, no doubt could remain respecting the date of the cataclysm after the departure of Patterson. The destruction of the population of Tsalal whose bones lay about the village was not attributable to that catastrophe. William Guy and the five sailors of the *Jane* had been able to fly in time, since no bones that could be theirs had been found on the island.

Where had they taken refuge? This was the everpressing question. What answer were we to obtain? Must we conclude that having reached one of these islets they had perished in the swallowing-up of the archipelago? We debated this point, as may be supposed, at a length and with detail which I can only indicate here. Suffice it to say that a decision was arrived at to the following effect. Our sole chance of discovering the unfortunate castaways was to continue our voyage for two or three parallels farther; the goal was there, and

which of us would not sacrifice even his life to attain it?

“God is guiding us, Mr. Jeorling,” said Captain Len Guy.