Dick Sand

By

Jules Verne

DICK SAND

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

THE BRIG-SCHOONER "PILGRIM."

On February 2, 1876, the schooner "Pilgrim" was in latitude 43° 57' south, and in longitude 165° 19' west of the meridian of Greenwich.

This vessel, of four hundred tons, fitted out at San Francisco for whale-fishing in the southern seas, belonged to James W. Weldon, a rich Californian ship-owner, who had for several years intrusted the command of it to Captain Hull.

The "Pilgrim" was one of the smallest, but one of the best of that flotilla, which James W. Weldon sent each season, not only beyond Behring Strait, as far as the northern seas, but also in the quarters of Tasmania or of Cape Horn, as far as the Antarctic Ocean. She sailed in a superior manner. Her very easily managed rigging permitted her to venture, with a few men, in sight of the impenetrable fields of ice of

the southern hemisphere. Captain Hull knew how to disentangle himself, as the sailors say, from among those icebergs, which, during the summer, drift by the way of New Zealand or the Cape of Good Hope, under a much lower latitude than that which they reach in the northern seas of the globe. It is true that only icebergs of small dimensions were found there; they were already worn by collisions, eaten away by the warm waters, and the greater number of them were going to melt in the Pacific or the Atlantic.

Under the command of Captain Hull, a good seaman, and also one of the most skilful harpooners of the flotilla, was a crew composed of five sailors and a novice. It was a small number for this whale-fishing, which requires a good many persons. Men are necessary as well for the management of the boats for the attack, as for the cutting up of the captured animals. But, following the example of certain ship-owners, James W. Weldon found it much more economical to embark at San Francisco only the number of sailors necessary for the management of the vessel. New Zealand did not lack harpooners, sailors of all nationalities, deserters or others, who sought to be hired for the season, and who followed skilfully the trade of fishermen. The busy period once over, they were paid, they were put on shore, and they waited till the whalers of the following year should come to claim their services again. There was obtained by this method better work from the disposable sailors, and a much larger profit derived by their co-operation.

They had worked in this way on board the "Pilgrim."

The schooner had just finished her season on the limit of the Antarctic Circle. But she had not her full number of barrels of oil, of coarse whalebones nor of fine. Even at that period, fishing was becoming difficult. The whales, pursued to excess, were becoming rare. The "right" whale, which bears the name of "North Caper," in the Northern Ocean, and that of "Sulphur Bottom," in the South Sea, was likely to disappear. The whalers had been obliged to fall back on the finback or jubarte, a gigantic mammifer, whose attacks are not without danger.

This is what Captain Hull had done during this cruise; but on his next voyage he calculated on reaching a higher latitude, and, if necessary, going in sight of Clarie and Adelie Lands, whose discovery, contested by the American Wilkes, certainly belongs to the illustrious commander of the "Astrolabe" and the Zelee, to the Frenchman, Dumont d'Urville.

In fact, the season had not been favorable for the "Pilgrim." In the beginning of January, that is to say, toward the middle of the Southern summer, and even when the time for the whalers to return had not yet arrived Captain Hull had been obliged to abandon the fishing places. His additional crew--a collection of pretty sad subjects--gave him an excuse, as they say, and he determined to separate from them.

The "Pilgrim" then steered to the northwest, for New Zealand, which she sighted on the 15th of January. She arrived at Waitemata, port of Auckland, situated at the lowest end of the Gulf of Chouraki, on the east coast of the northern island, and landed the fishermen who had

been engaged for the season.

The crew was not satisfied. The cargo of the "Pilgrim" was at least two hundred barrels of oil short. There had never been worse fishing. Captain Hull felt the disappointment of a hunter who, for the first time, returns as he went away--or nearly so. His self-love, greatly excited, was at stake, and he did not pardon those scoundrels whose insubordination had compromised the results of his cruise.

It was in vain that he endeavored to recruit a new fishing crew at Auckland. All the disposable seamen were embarked on the other whaling vessels. He was thus obliged to give up the hope of completing the "Pilgrim's" cargo, and Captain Hull was preparing to leave Auckland definitely, when a request for a passage was made which he could not refuse.

Mrs. Weldon, wife of the "Pilgrim's" owner, was then at Auckland with her young son Jack, aged about five years, and one of her relatives, her Cousin Benedict. James W. Weldon, whom his business operations sometimes obliged to visit New Zealand, had brought the three there, and intended to bring them back to San Francisco.

But, just as the whole family was going to depart, little Jack became seriously ill, and his father, imperatively recalled by his business, was obliged to leave Auckland, leaving his wife, his son, and Cousin Benedict there.

Three months had passed away--three long months of separation, which were extremely painful to Mrs. Weldon. Meanwhile her young child was restored to health, and she was at liberty to depart, when she was informed of the arrival of the "Pilgrim."

Now, at that period, in order to return to San Francisco, Mrs. Weldon found herself under the necessity of going to Australia by one of the vessels of the Golden Age Trans-oceanic Company, which ply between Melbourne and the Isthmus of Panama by Papeiti. Then, once arrived at Panama, it would be necessary for her to await the departure of the American steamer, which establishes a regular communication between the Isthmus and California. Thence, delays, trans-shipments, always disagreeable for a woman and a child. It was just at this time that the "Pilgrim" came into port at Auckland. Mrs. Weldon did not hesitate, but asked Captain Hull to take her on board to bring her back to San Francisco--she, her son, Cousin Benedict, and Nan, an old negress who had served her since her infancy. Three thousand marine leagues to travel on a sailing vessel! But Captain Hull's ship was so well managed, and the season still so fine on both sides of the Equator! Captain Hull consented, and immediately put his own cabin at the disposal of his passenger. He wished that, during a voyage which might last forty or fifty days, Mrs. Weldon should be installed as well as possible on board the whaler.

There were then certain advantages for Mrs. Weldon in making the voyage under these conditions. The only disadvantage was that this voyage would be necessarily prolonged in consequence of this circumstance--the

"Pilgrim" would go to Valparaiso, in Chili, to effect her unloading. That done, there would be nothing but to ascend the American coast, with land breezes, which make these parts very agreeable.

Besides, Mrs. Weldon was a courageous woman, whom the sea did not frighten. Then thirty years of age, she was of robust health, being accustomed to long voyages, for, having shared with her husband the fatigues of several passages, she did not fear the chances more or less contingent, of shipping on board a ship of moderate tonnage. She knew Captain Hull to be an excellent seaman, in whom James W. Weldon had every confidence. The "Pilgrim" was a strong vessel, capital sailer, well quoted in the flotilla of American whalers. The opportunity presented itself. It was necessary to profit by it. Mrs. Weldon did profit by it.

Cousin Benedict--it need not be said--would accompany her.

This cousin was a worthy man, about fifty years of age. But, notwithstanding his fifty years, it would not have been prudent to let him go out alone. Long, rather than tall, narrow, rather than thin, his figure bony, his skull enormous and very hairy, one recognized in his whole interminable person one of those worthy savants, with gold spectacles, good and inoffensive beings, destined to remain great children all their lives, and to finish very old, like centenaries who would die at nurse.

"Cousin Benedict"--he was called so invariably, even outside of the

family, and, in truth, he was indeed one of those good men who seem to be the born cousins of all the world--Cousin Benedict, always impeded by his long arms and his long limbs, would be absolutely incapable of attending to matters alone, even in the most ordinary circumstances of life. He was not troublesome, oh! no, but rather embarrassing for others, and embarrassed for himself. Easily satisfied, besides being very accommodating, forgetting to eat or drink, if some one did not bring him something to eat or drink, insensible to the cold as to the heat, he seemed to belong less to the animal kingdom than to the vegetable kingdom. One must conceive a very useless tree, without fruit and almost without leaves, incapable of giving nourishment or shelter, but with a good heart.

Such was Cousin Benedict. He would very willingly render service to people if, as Mr. Prudhomme would say, he were capable of rendering it.

Finally, his friends loved him for his very feebleness. Mrs. Weldon regarded him as her child--a large elder brother of her little Jack.

It is proper to add here that Cousin Benedict was, meanwhile, neither idle nor unoccupied. On the contrary, he was a worker. His only passion--natural history--absorbed him entirely.

To say "Natural History" is to say a great deal.

We know that the different parts of which this science is composed are zoology, botany, mineralogy, and geology.

Now Cousin Benedict was, in no sense, a botanist, nor a mineralogist, nor a geologist.

Was he, then, a zoologist in the entire acceptation of the word, a kind of Cuvier of the New World, decomposing an animal by analysis, or putting it together again by synthesis, one of those profound connoisseurs, versed in the study of the four types to which modern science refers all animal existence, vertebrates, mollusks, articulates, and radiates? Of these four divisions, had the artless but studious savant observed the different classes, and sought the orders, the families, the tribes, the genera, the species, and the varieties which distinguish them?

No.

Had Cousin Benedict devoted himself to the study of the vertebrates, mammals, birds, reptiles, and fishes?

No.

Was it to the mollusks, from the cephalopodes to the bryozoans, that he had given his preference, and had malacology no more secrets for him?

Not at all.

Then it was on the radiates, echinoderms, acalephes, polypes,

entozoons, sponges, and infusoria, that he had for such a long time burned the midnight oil?

It must, indeed, be confessed that it was not on the radiates.

Now, in zoology there only remains to be mentioned the division of the articulates, so it must be that it was on this division that Cousin Benedict's only passion was expended.

Yes, and still it is necessary to select.

This branch of the articulates counts six classes: insects, myriapodes, arachnides, crustaceans, cirrhopodes, and annelides.

Now, Cousin Benedict, scientifically speaking, would not know how to distinguish an earth-worm from a medicinal leech, a sand-fly from a glans-marinus, a common spider from a false scorpion, a shrimp from a frog, a gally-worm from a scolopendra.

But, then, what was Cousin Benedict? Simply an entomologist--nothing more.

To that, doubtless, it may be said that in its etymological acceptation, entomology is that part of the natural sciences which includes all the articulates. That is true, in a general way; but it is the custom to give this word a more restricted sense. It is then only applied, properly speaking, to the study of insects, that is to say:

"All the articulate animals of which the body, composed of rings placed end to end, forms three distinct segments, and which possesses three pairs of legs, which have given them the name of hexapodes."

Now, as Cousin Benedict had confined himself to the study of the articulates of this class, he was only an entomologist.

But, let us not be mistaken about it. In this class of the insects are counted not less than ten orders:

1. Orthopterans as grasshoppers, crickets, etc.
2. Neuropters as ant-eaters, dragon-flies or libellula.
3. Hymenopters as bees, wasps, ants.
4. Lepidopters as butterflies, etc.
5. Hemipters as cicada, plant-lice, fleas, etc.
6. Coleopters as cockchafers, fire-flies, etc.
7. Dipters as gnats, musquitoes, flies.
8. Rhipipters as stylops.
9. Parasites as acara, etc.
10. Thysanurans as lepidotus, flying-lice, etc.

Now, in certain of these orders, the coleopters, for example, there are recognized thirty thousand species, and sixty thousand in the dipters; so subjects for study are not wanting, and it will be conceded that there is sufficient in this class alone to occupy a man!

Thus, Cousin Benedict's life was entirely and solely consecrated to

entomology.

To this science he gave all his hours--all, without exception, even the hours of sleep, because he invariably dreamt "hexapodes." That he carried pins stuck in his sleeves and in the collar of his coat, in the bottom of his hat, and in the facings of his vest, need not be mentioned.

When Cousin Benedict returned from some scientific promenade his precious head-covering in particular was no more than a box of natural history, being bristling inside and outside with pierced insects.

And now all will be told about this original when it is stated, that it was on account of his passion for entomology that he had accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Weldon to New Zealand. There his collection was enriched by some rare subjects, and it will be readily understood that he was in haste to return to classify them in the cases of his cabinet in San Francisco.

So, as Mrs. Weldon and her child were returning to America by the "Pilgrim," nothing more natural than for Cousin Benedict to accompany them during that passage.

But it was not on him that Mrs. Weldon could rely, if she should ever find herself in any critical situation. Very fortunately, the prospect was only that of a voyage easily made during the fine season, and on board of a ship whose captain merited all her confidence.

During the three days that the "Pilgrim" was in port at Waitemata, Mrs. Weldon made her preparations in great haste, for she did not wish to delay the departure of the schooner. The native servants whom she employed in her dwelling in Auckland were dismissed, and, on the 22d January, she embarked on board the "Pilgrim," bringing only her son Jack, Cousin Benedict, and Nan, her old negress.

Cousin Benedict carried all his curious collection of insects in a special box. In this collection figured, among others, some specimens of those new staphylins, species of carnivorous coleopters, whose eyes are placed above the head, and which, till then, seemed to be peculiar to New Caledonia. A certain venomous spider, the "katipo," of the Maoris, whose bite is often fatal to the natives, had been very highly recommended to him. But a spider does not belong to the order of insects properly so called; it is placed in that of the arachnida, and, consequently, was valueless in Cousin Benedict's eyes. Thus he scorned it, and the most beautiful jewel of his collection was a remarkable staphylin from New Zealand.

It is needless to say that Cousin Benedict, by paying a heavy premium, had insured his cargo, which to him seemed much more precious than all the freight of oil and bones stowed away in the hold of the "Pilgrim."

Just as the "Pilgrim" was getting under sail, when Mrs. Weldon and her companion for the voyage found themselves on the deck of the schooner, Captain Hull approached his passenger:

"It is understood, Mrs. Weldon," he said to her, "that, if you take passage on board the 'Pilgrim,' it is on your own responsibility."

"Why do you make that observation to me, Mr. Hull?" asked Mrs. Weldon.

"Because I have not received an order from your husband in regard to it, and, all things considered, a schooner cannot offer you the guarantees of a good passage, like a packet-boat, specially intended to carry travelers."

"If my husband were here," replied Mrs. Weldon, "do you think, Mr. Hull, that he would hesitate to embark on the 'Pilgrim,' in company with his wife and child?"

"No, Mrs. Weldon, he would not hesitate," said Captain Hull; "no, indeed! no more than I should hesitate myself! The 'Pilgrim' is a good ship after all, even though she has made but a sad cruise, and I am sure of her, as much so as a seaman can be of the ship which he has commanded for several years. The reason I speak, Mrs. Weldon, is to get rid of personal responsibility, and to repeat that you will not find on board the comfort to which you have been accustomed."

"As it is only a question of comfort, Mr. Hull," replied Mrs. Weldon, "that should not stop me. I am not one of those troublesome passengers who complain incessantly of the narrowness of the cabins, and the insufficiency of the table."

Then, after looking for a few moments at her little Jack, whom she held by the hand, Mrs. Weldon said:

"Let us go, Mr. Hull!"

The orders were given to get under way at once, the sails were set, and the "Pilgrim," working to get out to sea in the shortest time possible, steered for the American coast.

But, three days after her departure, the schooner, thwarted by strong breezes from the east, was obliged to tack to larboard to make headway against the wind. So, at the date of February 2d, Captain Hull still found himself in a higher latitude than he would have wished, and in the situation of a sailor who wanted to double Cape Horn rather than reach the New Continent by the shortest course.

CHAPTER II.

DICK SAND.

Meanwhile the sea was favorable, and, except the delays, navigation would be accomplished under very supportable conditions.

Mrs. Weldon had been installed on board the "Pilgrim" as comfortably as possible.

Neither poop nor "roufle" was at the end of the deck. There was no stern cabin, then, to receive the passengers. She was obliged to be contented with Captain Hull's cabin, situated aft, which constituted his modest sea lodging. And still it had been necessary for the captain to insist, in order to make her accept it. There, in that narrow lodging, was installed Mrs. Weldon, with her child and old Nan. She took her meals there, in company with the captain and Cousin Benedict, for whom they had fitted up a kind of cabin on board.

As to the commander of the "Pilgrim," he had settled himself in a cabin belonging to the ship's crew--a cabin which would be occupied by the second officer, if there were a second one on board. But the brig-schooner was navigated, we know, under conditions which enabled her to dispense with the services of a second officer.

The men of the "Pilgrim," good and strong seamen, were very much united

by common ideas and habits. This fishing season was the fourth which they had passed together. All Americans of the West, they were acquainted for a long period, and belonged to the same coast of the State of California.

These brave men showed themselves very thoughtful towards Mrs. Weldon, the wife of the owner of their ship, for whom they professed boundless devotion. It must be said that, largely interested in the profits of the ship, they had navigated till then with great gain. If, by reason of their small number, they did not spare themselves, it was because every labor increased their earnings in the settling of accounts at the end of each season. This time, it is true, the profit would be almost nothing, and that gave them just cause to curse and swear against those New Zealand scoundrels.

One man on board, alone among all, was not of American origin. Portuguese by birth, but speaking English fluently, he was called Negoro, and filled the humble position of cook on the schooner.

The "Pilgrim's" cook having deserted at Auckland, this Negoro, then out of employment, offered himself for the place. He was a taciturn man, not at all communicative, who kept to himself, but did his work satisfactorily. In engaging him, Captain Hull seemed to be rather fortunate, and since embarking, the master cook had merited no reproach.

Meanwhile, Captain Hull regretted not having had the time to inform himself sufficiently about Negoro's antecedents. His face, or rather

his look, was only half in his favor, and when it is necessary to bring an unknown into the life on board, so confined, so intimate, his antecedents should be carefully inquired into.

Negoro might be forty years old. Thin, nervous, of medium height, with very brown hair, skin somewhat swarthy, he ought to be strong. Had he received any instruction? Yes; that appeared in certain observations which escaped him sometimes. Besides, he never spoke of his past life, he said not a word about his family. Whence he came, where he had lived, no one could tell. What would his future be? No one knew any more about that. He only announced his intention of going on shore at Valparaiso. He was certainly a singular man. At all events, he did not seem to be a sailor. He seemed to be even more strange to marine things than is usual with a master cook, part of whose existence is passed at sea.

Meanwhile, as to being incommoded by the rolling and pitching of the ship, like men who have never navigated, he was not in the least, and that is something for a cook on board a vessel.

Finally, he was little seen. During the day, he most generally remained confined in his narrow kitchen, before the stove for melting, which occupied the greater part of it. When night came and the fire in the stove was out, Negoro went to the cabin which was assigned to him at the end of the crew's quarters. Then he went to bed at once and went to sleep.

It has been already said that the "Pilgrim's" crew was composed of five sailors and a novice.

This young novice, aged fifteen, was the child of an unknown father and mother. This poor being, abandoned from his birth, had been received and brought up by public charity.

Dick Sand--that was his name--must have been originally from the State of New York, and doubtless from the capital of that State.

If the name of Dick--an abbreviation of Richard--had been given to the little orphan, it was because it was the name of the charitable passer-by who had picked him up two or three hours after his birth. As to the name of Sand, it was attributed to him in remembrance of the place where he had been found; that is to say, on that point of land called Sandy-Hook, which forms the entrance of the port of New York, at the mouth of the Hudson.

Dick Sand, when he should reach his full growth, would not exceed middle height, but he was well built. One could not doubt that he was of Anglo-Saxon origin. He was brown, however, with blue eyes, in which the crystalline sparkled with ardent fire. His seaman's craft had already prepared him well for the conflicts of life. His intelligent physiognomy breathed forth energy. It was not that of an audacious person, it was that of a darer. These three words from an unfinished verse of Virgil are often cited:

"Audaces fortuna juvat"....

but they are quoted incorrectly. The poet said:

"Audentes fortuna juvat"....

It is on the darers, not on the audacious, that Fortune almost always smiled. The audacious may be unguarded. The darer thinks first, acts afterwards. There is the difference!

Dick Sand was audens.

At fifteen he already knew how to take a part, and to carry out to the end whatever his resolute spirit had decided upon. His manner, at once spirited and serious, attracted attention. He did not squander himself in words and gestures, as boys of his age generally do. Early, at a period of life when they seldom discuss the problems of existence, he had looked his miserable condition in the face, and he had promised "to make" himself.

And he had made himself--being already almost a man at an age when others are still only children.

At the same time, very nimble, very skilful in all physical exercises, Dick Sand was one of those privileged beings, of whom it may be said that they were born with two left feet and two right hands. In that way, they do everything with the right hand, and always set out with

the left foot.

Public charity, it has been said, had brought up the little orphan. He had been put first in one of those houses for children, where there is always, in America, a place for the little waifs. Then at four, Dick learned to read, write and count in one of those State of New York schools, which charitable subscriptions maintain so generously.

At eight, the taste for the sea, which Dick had from birth, caused him to embark as cabin-boy on a packet ship of the South Sea. There he learned the seaman's trade, and as one ought to learn it, from the earliest age. Little by little he instructed himself under the direction of officers who were interested in this little old man. So the cabin-boy soon became the novice, expecting something better, of course. The child who understands, from the beginning, that work is the law of life, the one who knows, from an early age, that he will gain his bread only by the sweat of his brow--a Bible precept which is the rule of humanity--that one is probably intended for great things; for some day he will have, with the will, the strength to accomplish them.

It was, when he was a cabin-boy on board a merchant vessel, that Dick Sand was remarked by Captain Hull. This honest seaman immediately formed a friendship with this honest young boy, and later he made him known to the ship-owner, James W. Weldon. The latter felt a lively interest in this orphan, whose education he completed at San Francisco, and he had him brought up in the Catholic religion, to which his family adhered.

During the course of his studies, Dick Sand showed a particular liking for geography, for voyages, while waiting till he was old enough to learn that branch of mathematics which relates to navigation. Then to this theoretical portion of his instruction, he did not neglect to join the practical. It was as novice that he was able to embark for the first time on the "Pilgrim." A good seaman ought to understand fishing as well as navigation. It is a good preparation for all the contingencies which the maritime career admits of. Besides, Dick Sand set out on a vessel of James W. Weldon's, his benefactor, commanded by his protector, Captain Hull. Thus he found himself in the most favorable circumstances.

To speak of the extent of his devotion to the Weldon family, to whom he owed everything, would be superfluous. Better let the facts speak for themselves. But it will be understood how happy the young novice was when he learned that Mrs. Weldon was going to take passage on board the "Pilgrim." Mrs. Weldon for several years had been a mother to him, and in Jack he saw a little brother, all the time keeping in remembrance his position in respect to the son of the rich ship-owner. But--his protectors knew it well--this good seed which they had sown had fallen on good soil. The orphan's heart was filled with gratitude, and some day, if it should be necessary to give his life for those who had taught him to instruct himself and to love God, the young novice would not hesitate to give it. Finally, to be only fifteen, but to act and think as if he were thirty, that was Dick Sand.

Mrs. Weldon knew what her protégé was worth. She could trust little Jack with him without any anxiety. Dick Sand cherished this child, who, feeling himself loved by this "large brother," sought his company. During those long leisure hours, which are frequent in a voyage, when the sea is smooth, when the well set up sails require no management, Dick and Jack were almost always together. The young novice showed the little boy everything in his craft which seemed amusing.

Without fear Mrs. Weldon saw Jack, in company with Dick Sand, spring out on the shrouds, climb to the top of the mizzen-mast, or to the booms of the mizzen-topmast, and come down again like an arrow the whole length of the backstays. Dick Sand went before or followed him, always ready to hold him up or keep him back, if his six-year-old arms grew feeble during those exercises. All that benefited little Jack, whom sickness had made somewhat pale; but his color soon came back on board the "Pilgrim," thanks to this gymnastic, and to the bracing sea-breezes.

So passed the time. Under these conditions the passage was being accomplished, and only the weather was not very favorable, neither the passengers nor the crew of the "Pilgrim" would have had cause to complain.

Meanwhile this continuance of east winds made Captain Hull anxious. He did not succeed in getting the vessel into the right course. Later, near the Tropic of Capricorn, he feared finding calms which would delay him again, without speaking of the equatorial current, which would

irresistibly throw him back to the west. He was troubled then, above all, for Mrs. Weldon, by the delays for which, meanwhile, he was not responsible. So, if he should meet, on his course, some transatlantic steamer on the way toward America, he already thought of advising his passenger to embark on it. Unfortunately, he was detained in latitudes too high to cross a steamer running to Panama; and, besides, at that period communication across the Pacific, between Australia and the New World, was not as frequent as it has since become.

It then was necessary to leave everything to the grace of God, and it seemed as if nothing would trouble this monotonous passage, when the first incident occurred precisely on that day, February 2d, in the latitude and longitude indicated at the beginning of this history.

Dick Sand and Jack, toward nine o'clock in the morning, in very clear weather, were installed on the booms of the mizzen-topmast. Thence they looked down on the whole ship and a portion of the ocean in a largo circumference. Behind, the perimeter of the horizon was broken to their eyes, only by the mainmast, carrying brigantine and fore-staff. That beacon hid from them a part of the sea and the sky. In the front, they saw the bowsprit stretching over the waves, with its three jibs, which were hauled tightly, spread out like three great unequal wings. Underneath rounded the foremast, and above, the little top-sail and the little gallant-sail, whose bolt-rope quivered with the pranks of the breeze. The schooner was then running on the larboard tack, and hugging the wind as much as possible.

Dick Sand explained to Jack how the "Pilgrim," ballasted properly, well balanced in all her parts, could not capsize, even if she gave a pretty strong heel to starboard, when the little boy interrupted him.

"What do I see there?" said he.

"You see something, Jack?" demanded Dick Sand, who stood up straight on the booms.

"Yes--there!" replied little Jack, showing a point of the sea, left open by the interval between the stays of the standing-jib and the flying-jib.

Dick Sand looked at the point indicated attentively, and forthwith, with a loud voice, he cried;

"A wreck to windward, over against starboard!"

* * * * *

CHAPTER III.

THE WRECK.

Dick Sand's cry brought all the crew to their feet. The men who were not on watch came on deck. Captain Hull, leaving his cabin, went toward the bow.

Mrs. Weldon, Nan, even the indifferent Cousin Benedict himself, came to lean over the starboard rail, so as to see the wreck signaled by the young novice.

Negoro, alone, did not leave the cabin, which served him for a kitchen; and as usual, of all the crew, he was the only one whom the encounter with a wreck did not appear to interest.

Then all regarded attentively the floating object which the waves were rocking, three miles from the "Pilgrim."

"Ah! what can that be?" said a sailor.

"Some abandoned raft," replied another.

"Perhaps there are some unhappy shipwrecked ones on that raft," said Mrs. Weldon.

"We shall find out," replied Captain Hull. "But that wreck is not a raft. It is a hull thrown over on the side."

"Ah! is it not more likely to be some marine animal--some mammifer of great size?" observed Cousin Benedict.

"I do not think so," replied the novice.

"Then what is your idea, Dick?" asked Mrs. Weldon.

"An overturned hull, as the captain has said, Mrs. Weldon. It even seems to me that I see its copper keel glistening in the sun."

"Yes--indeed," replied Captain Hull. Then addressing the helmsman: "Steer to the windward, Bolton. Let her go a quarter, so as to come alongside the wreck."

"Yes, sir," replied the helmsman.

"But," continued Cousin Benedict, "I keep to what I have said. Positively it is an animal."

"Then this would be a whale in copper," replied Captain Hull, "for, positively, also, I see it shine in the sun!"

"At all events, Cousin Benedict," added Mrs. Weldon, "you will agree with us that this whale must be dead, for it is certain that it does

not make the least movement."

"Ah! Cousin Weldon," replied Cousin Benedict, who was obstinate, "this would not be the first time that one has met a whale sleeping on the surface of the waves."

"That is a fact," replied Captain Hull; "but to-day, the thing is not a whale, but a ship."

"We shall soon see," replied Cousin Benedict, who, after all, would give all the mammifers of the Arctic or Antarctic seas for an insect of a rare species.

"Steer, Bolton, steer!" cried Captain Hull again, "and do not board the wreck. Keep a cable's length. If we cannot do much harm to this hull, it might cause us some damage, and I do not care to hurt the sides of the 'Pilgrim' with it. Tack a little, Bolton, tack!"

The "Pilgrim's" prow, which had been directed toward the wreck, was turned aside by a slight movement of the helm.

The schooner was still a mile from the capsized hull. The sailors were eagerly looking at it. Perhaps it held a valuable cargo, which it would be possible to transfer to the "Pilgrim." We know that, in these salvages, the third of the value belongs to the rescuers, and, in this case, if the cargo was not damaged, the crew, as they say, would make "a good haul." This would be a fish of consolation for their incomplete

fishing.

A quarter of an hour later the wreck was less than a mile from the "Pilgrim."

It was indeed a ship, which presented itself on its side, to the starboard. Capsized as far as the nettings, she heeled so much that it would be almost impossible to stand upon her deck. Nothing could be seen beyond her masts. From the port-shrouds were banging only some ends of broken rope, and the chains broken by the cloaks of white-crested waves. On the starboard side opened a large hole between the timbers of the frame-work and the damaged planks.

"This ship has been run into," cried Dick Sand.

"There is no doubt of that," replied Captain Hull; "and it is a miracle that she did not sink immediately."

"If there has been a collision," observed Mrs. Weldon, "we must hope that the crew of this ship has been picked up by those who struck her."

"It is to be hoped so, Mrs. Weldon," replied Captain, Hull, "unless this crew sought refuge in their own boats after the collision, in case the colliding vessel should sail right on--which, alas! sometimes happens."

"Is it possible? That would be a proof of very great inhumanity, Mr.

Hull."

"Yes, Mrs. Weldon. Yes! and instances are not wanting. As to the crew of this ship, what makes me believe that it is more likely they have left it, is that I do not see a single boat; and, unless the men on board have been picked up, I should be more inclined to think that they have tried to roach the land. But, at this distance from the American continent, or from the islands of Oceanica, it is to be feared that they have not succeeded."

"Perhaps," said Mrs. Weldon, "we shall never know the secret of this catastrophe. Meanwhile, it might be possible that some man of the crew is still on board."

"That is not probable, Mrs. Weldon," replied Captain Hull. "Our approach would be already known, and they would make some signals to us. But we shall make sure of it.--Luff a little, Bolton, luff," cried Captain Hull, while indicating with his hand what course to take.

The "Pilgrim" was now only three cables' length from the wreck, and they could no longer doubt that this hull had been completely abandoned by all its crew.

But, at that moment, Dick Sand made a gesture which imperiously demanded silence.

"Listen, listen!" said he.

Each listened.

"I hear something like a bark!" cried Dick Sand. In fact, a distant barking resounded from the interior of the hull. Certainly there was a living dog there, imprisoned perhaps, for it was possible that the hatches were hermetically closed. But they could not see it, the deck of the capsized vessel being still invisible.

"If there be only a dog there, Mr. Hull," said Mrs. "Weldon," we shall save it."

"Yes, yes!" cried little Jack, "we shall save it. I shall give it something to eat! It will love us well! Mama, I am going to bring it a piece of sugar!"

"Stay still, my child," replied Mrs. Weldon smiling. "I believe that the poor animal is dying of hunger, and it will prefer a good mess to your morsel of sugar."

"Well, then, let it have my soup," cried little Jack. "I can do without it very well."

At that moment the barking was more distinctly heard. Three hundred feet, at the most, separated the two ships. Almost immediately a dog of great height appeared on the starboard netting, and clung there, barking more despairingly than ever.

"Howik," said Captain Hull, turning toward the master of the "Pilgrim's" crew, "heave to, and lower the small boat."

"Hold on, my dog, hold on!" cried little Jack to the animal, which seemed to answer him with a half-stifled bark.

The "Pilgrim's" sails were rapidly furled, so that the ship should remain almost motionless, less than half a cable's length from the wreck.

The boat was brought alongside. Captain Hull, Dick Sand and two sailors got into it at once.

The dog barked all the time. It tried to hold on to the netting, but every moment it fell back on the deck. One would say that its barks were no longer addressed to those who were coming to him. Were they then addressed to some sailors or passengers imprisoned in this ship?

"Is there, then, on board some shipwrecked one who has survived?" Mrs. Weldon asked herself.

A few strokes of the oars and the "Pilgrim's" boat would reach the capsized hull.

But, suddenly, the dog's manner changed. Furious barks succeeded its first barks inviting the rescuers to come. The most violent anger

excited the singular animal.

"What can be the matter with that dog?" said Captain Hull, while the boat was turning the stern of the vessel, so as to come alongside of the part of the deck lying under the water.

What Captain Hull could not then observe, what could not be noticed even on board the "Pilgrim," was that the dog's fury manifested itself just at the moment when Negoro, leaving his kitchen, had just come toward the forecastle.

Did the dog then know and recognize the master cook? It was very improbable.

However that may be, after looking at the dog, without showing any surprise, Negoro, who, however, frowned for an instant, returned to the crew's quarters.

Meanwhile the boat had rounded the stern of the ship. Her aftboard carried this single name: "Waldeck."

"Waldeck," and no designation of the port attached. But, by the form of the hull, by certain details which a sailor seizes at the first glance, Captain Hull had, indeed, discovered that this ship was of American construction. Besides, her name confirmed it. And now, this hull, it was all that remained of a large brig of five hundred tons.

At the "Waldeck's" prow a large opening indicated the place where the collision had occurred. In consequence of the capsizing of the hull, this opening was then five or six feet above the water--which explained why the brig had not yet foundered.

On the deck, which Captain Hull saw in its whole extent, there was nobody.

The dog, having left the netting, had just let itself slip as far as the central hatch, which was open; and it barked partly toward the interior, partly toward the exterior.

"It is very certain that this animal is not alone on board!" observed Dick Sand.

"No, in truth!" replied Captain Hull.

The boat then skirted the larboard netting, which was half under water. A somewhat strong swell of the sea would certainly submerge the "Waldeck" in a few moments.

The brig's deck had been swept from one end to the other. There was nothing left except the stumps of the mainmast and of the mizzen-mast, both broken off two feet above the scuttles, and which had fallen in the collision, carrying away shrouds, back-stays, and rigging. Meanwhile, as far as the eye could see, no wreck was visible around the "Waldeck"--which seemed to indicate that the catastrophe was already

several days old.

"If some unhappy creatures have survived the collision," said Captain Hull, "it is probable that either hunger or thirst has finished them, for the water must have gained the store-room. There are only dead bodies on board!"

"No," cried Dick Sand, "no! The dog would not bark that way. There are living beings on board!"

At that moment the animal, responding to the call of the novice, slid to the sea, and swam painfully toward the boat, for it seemed to be exhausted.

They took it in, and it rushed eagerly, not for a piece of bread that Dick Sand offered it first, but to a half-tub which contained a little fresh water.

"This poor animal is dying of thirst!" cried Dick Sand.

The boat then sought a favorable place to board the "Waldeck" more easily, and for that purpose it drew away a few strokes. The dog evidently thought that its rescuers did not wish to go on board, for he seized Dick Sand by his jacket, and his lamentable barks commenced again with new strength.

They understood it. Its pantomime and its language were as clear as a

man's language could be. The boat was brought immediately as far as the larboard cat-head. There the two sailors moored it firmly, while Captain Hull and Dick Sand, setting foot on the deck at the same time as the dog, raised themselves, not without difficulty, to the hatch which opened between the stumps of the two masts.

By this hatch the two made their way into the hold.

The "Waldeck's" hold, half full of water, contained no goods. The brig sailed with ballast--a ballast of sand which had slid to larboard and which helped to keep the ship on her side. On that head, then, there was no salvage to effect.

"Nobody here," said Captain Hull.

"Nobody," replied the novice, after having gone to the foremost part of the hold.

But the dog, which was on the deck, kept on barking and seemed to call the captain's attention more imperatively.

"Let us go up again," said Captain Hull to the novice.

Both appeared again on the deck.

The dog, running to them, sought to draw them to the poop.

They followed it.

There, in the square, five bodies--undoubtedly five corpses--were lying on the floor.

By the daylight which entered in waves by the opening, Captain Hull discovered the bodies of five negroes.

Dick Sand, going from one to the other, thought he felt that the unfortunates were still breathing.

"On board! on board!" cried Captain Hull.

The two sailors who took care of the boat were called, and helped to carry the shipwrecked men out of the poop.

This was not without difficulty, but two minutes after, the five blacks were laid in the boat, without being at all conscious that any one was trying to save them. A few drops of cordial, then a little fresh water prudently administered, might, perhaps, recall them to life.

The "Pilgrim" remained a half cable's length from the wreck, and the boat would soon reach her.

A girt-line was let down from the main-yard, and each of the blacks drawn up separately reposed at last on the "Pilgrim's" deck.

The dog had accompanied them.

"The unhappy creatures!" cried Mrs. Weldon, on perceiving those poor men, who were only inert bodies.

"They are alive, Mrs. Weldon. We shall save them. Yes, we shall save them," cried Dick Sand.

"What has happened to them?" demanded Cousin Benedict.

"Wait till they can speak," replied Captain Hull, "and they will tell us their history. But first of all, let us make them drink a little water, in which we shall mix a few drops of rum." Then, turning round: "Negoro!" he called.

At that name the dog stood up as if it knew the sound, its hair bristling, its mouth open.

Meanwhile, the cook did not appear.

"Negoro!" repeated Captain Hull.

The dog again gave signs of extreme fury.

Negoro left the kitchen.

Hardly had he shown himself on the deck, than the dog sprang on him and

wanted to jump at his throat.

With a blow from the poker with which he was armed, the cook drove away the animal, which some of the sailors succeeded in holding.

"Do you know this dog?" Captain Hull asked the master cook.

"I?" replied Negoro. "I have never seen it."

"That is singular," murmured Dick Sand.

* * * * *

CHAPTER IV.

THE SURVIVORS OF THE "WALDECK."

The slave trade was still carried on, on a large scale, in all equinoctial Africa. Notwithstanding the English and French cruisers, ships loaded with slaves leave the coasts of Angola and Mozambique every year to transport negroes to various parts of the world, and, it must be said, of the civilized world.

Captain Hull was not ignorant of it. Though these parts were not ordinarily frequented by slave-ships, he asked himself if these blacks, whose salvage he had just effected, were not the survivors of a cargo of slaves that the "Waldeck" was going to sell to some Pacific colony. At all events, if that was so, the blacks became free again by the sole act of setting foot on his deck, and he longed to tell it to them.

Meanwhile the most earnest care had been lavished on the shipwrecked men from the "Waldeck." Mrs. Weldon, aided by Nan and Dick Sand, had administered to them a little of that good fresh water of which they must have been deprived for several days, and that, with some nourishment, sufficed to restore them to life.

The eldest of these blacks--he might be about sixty years old--was soon able to speak, and he could answer in English the questions which were addressed to him.

"The ship which carried you was run into?" asked Captain Hull, first of all.

"Yes," replied the old black. "Ten days ago our ship was struck, during a very dark night. We were asleep----"

"But the men of the 'Waldeck'--what has become of them?"

"They were no longer there, sir, when my companions and I reached the deck."

"Then, was the crew able to jump on board the ship which struck the 'Waldeck'?" demanded Captain Hull.

"Perhaps, and we must indeed hope so for their sakes."

"And that ship, after the collision, did it not return to pick you up?"

"No."

"Did she then go down herself?"

"She did not founder," replied the old black, shaking his head, "for we could see her running away in the night."

This fact, which was attested by all the survivors of the "Waldeck,"

may appear incredible. It is only too true, however, that captains, after some terrible collision, due to their imprudence, have often taken flight without troubling themselves about the unfortunate ones whom they had put in danger, and without endeavoring to carry assistance to them.

That drivers do as much and leave to others, on the public way, the trouble of repairing the misfortune which they have caused, that is indeed to be condemned. Still, their victims are assured of finding immediate help. But, that men to men, abandon each other thus at sea, it is not to be believed, it is a shame!

Meanwhile, Captain Hull knew several examples of such inhumanity, and he was obliged to tell Mrs. Weldon that such facts, monstrous as they might be, were unhappily not rare.

Then, continuing:

"Whence came the 'Waldeck?'" he asked.

"From Melbourne."

"Then you are not slaves?"

"No, sir!" the old black answered quickly, as he stood up straight. "We are subjects of the State of Pennsylvania, and citizens of free America!"

"My friends," replied Captain Hull, "believe me that you have not compromised your liberty in coming on board of the American brig, the 'Pilgrim.'"

In fact, the five blacks which the "Waldeck" carried belonged to the State of Pennsylvania. The oldest, sold in Africa as a slave at the age of six years, then brought to the United States, had been freed already many years ago by the Emancipation Proclamation. As to his companions, much younger than he, sons of slaves liberated before their birth, they were born free; no white had ever had the right of property over them. They did not even speak that "negro" language, which does not use the article, and only knows the infinitive of the verbs--a language which has disappeared little by little, indeed, since the anti-slavery war. These blacks had, then, freely left the United States, and they were returning to it freely.

As they told Captain Hull, they were engaged as laborers at an Englishman's who owned a vast mine near Melbourne, in Southern Australia. There they had passed three years, with great profit to themselves; their engagement ended, they had wished to return to America.

They then had embarked on the "Waldeck," paying their passage like ordinary passengers. On the 5th of December they left Melbourne, and seventeen days after, during a very black night, the "Waldeck" had been struck by a large steamer.

The blacks were in bed. A few seconds after the collision, which was terrible, they rushed on the deck.

Already the ship's masts had fallen, and the "Waldeck" was lying on the side; but she would not sink, the water not having invaded the hold sufficiently to cause it.

As to the captain and crew of the "Waldeck," all had disappeared, whether some had been precipitated into the sea, whether others were caught on the rigging of the colliding ship, which, after the collision, had fled to return no more.

The five blacks were left alone on board, on a half-capsized hull, twelve hundred miles from any land.

Then oldest of the negroes was named Tom. His age, as well as his energetic character, and his experience, often put to the proof during a long life of labor, made him the natural head of the companions who were engaged with him.

The other blacks were young men from twenty-five to thirty years old, whose names were Bat (abbreviation of Bartholomew), son of old Tom, Austin, Acteon, and Hercules, all four well made and vigorous, and who would bring a high price in the markets of Central Africa. Even though they had suffered terribly, one could easily recognize in them magnificent specimens of that strong race, on which a liberal

education, drawn from the numerous schools of North America, had already impressed its seal.

Tom and his companions then found themselves alone on the "Waldeck" after the collision, having no means of raising that inert hull, without even power to leave it, because the two boats on board had been shattered in the boarding. They were reduced to waiting for the passage of a ship, while the wreck drifted little by little under the action of the currents. This action explained why she had been encountered so far out of her course, for the "Waldeck," having left Melbourne, ought to be found in much lower latitude.

During the ten days which elapsed between the collision and the moment when the "Pilgrim" arrived in sight of the shipwrecked vessel the five blacks were sustained by some food which they had found in the office of the landing-place. But, not being able to penetrate into the steward's room, which the water entirely covered, they had had no spirits to quench their thirst, and they had suffered cruelly, the water casks fastened to the deck having been stove in by the collision. Since the night before, Tom and his companions, tortured by thirst, had become unconscious.

Such was the recital which Tom gave, in a few words, to Captain Hull. There was no reason to doubt the veracity of the old black. His companions confirmed all that he had said; besides, the facts pleaded for the poor men.

Another living being, saved on the wreck, would doubtless have spoken with the same sincerity if it had been gifted with speech.

It was that dog, that the sight of Negoro seemed to affect in such a disagreeable manner. There was in that some truly inexplicable antipathy.

Dingo--that was the name of the dog--belonged to that race of mastiffs which is peculiar to New Holland. It was not in Australia, however, that the captain of the "Waldeck" had found it. Two years before Dingo, wandering half dead of hunger, had been met on the western coast of Africa, near the mouth of the Congo. The captain of the "Waldeck" had picked up this fine animal, who, being not very sociable, seemed to be always regretting some old master, from whom he had been violently separated, and whom it would be impossible to find again in that desert country. S. V.--those two letters engraved on his collar--were all that linked this animal to a past, whose mystery one would seek in vain to solve.

Dingo, a magnificent and robust beast, larger than the dogs of the Pyrenees, was then a superb specimen of the New Holland variety of mastiffs. When it stood up, throwing its head back, it equaled the height of a man. Its agility--its muscular strength, would be sufficient for one of those animals which without hesitation attack jaguars and panthers, and do not fear to face a bear. Its long tail of thick hair, well stocked and stiff like a lion's tail, its general hue dark fawn-color, was only varied at the nose by some whitish streaks.

This animal, under the influence of anger, might become formidable, and it will be understood that Negoro was not satisfied with the reception given him by this vigorous specimen of the canine race.

Meanwhile, Dingo, if it was not sociable, was not bad. It seemed rather to be sad. An observation which had been made by old Tom on board the "Waldeck" was that this dog did not seem to like blacks. It did not seek to harm them, but certainly it shunned them. May be, on that African coast where it wandered, it had suffered some bad treatment from the natives. So, though Tom and his companions were honest men, Dingo was never drawn toward them. During the ten days that the shipwrecked dog had passed on the "Waldeck," it had kept at a distance, feeding itself, they knew not how, but having also suffered cruelly from thirst.

Such, then, were the survivors of this wreck, which the first surge of the sea would submerge. No doubt it would have carried only dead bodies into the depths of the ocean if the unexpected arrival of the "Pilgrim," herself kept back by calms and contrary winds, had not permitted Captain Hull to do a work of humanity.

This work had only to be completed by bringing back to their country the shipwrecked men from the "Waldeck," who, in this shipwreck, had lost their savings of three years of labor. This is what was going to be done. The "Pilgrim," after having effected her unloading at Valparaiso, would ascend the American coast as far as California. There Tom and his companions would be well received by James W. Weldon--his

generous wife assured them of it--and they would be provided with all that would be necessary for them to return to the State of Pennsylvania.

These honest men, reassured about the future, had only to thank Mrs. Weldon and Captain Hull. Certainly they owed them a great deal, and although they were only poor negroes, perhaps, they did not despair of some day paying this debt of gratitude.

CHAPTER V.

S. V.

Meanwhile, the "Pilgrim" had continued her course, making for the east as much as possible. This lamentable continuance of calms did not cease to trouble Captain Hull--not that he was uneasy about two or three weeks' delay in a passage from New Zealand to Valparaiso, but because of the extra fatigue which this delay might bring to his lady passenger.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Weldon did not complain, and philosophically took her misfortune in patience.

That same day, February 2d, toward evening, the wreck was lost sight of.

Captain Hull was troubled, in the first place, to accommodate Tom and his companions as conveniently as possible. The crew's quarters on the "Pilgrim," built on the deck in the form of a "roufle," would be too small to hold them. An arrangement was then made to lodge them under the forecastle. Besides, these honest men, accustomed to rude labors, could not be hard to please, and with fine weather, warm and salubrious, this sleeping-place ought to suffice for the whole passage.

The life on board, shaken for a moment from its monotony by this incident, then went on as usual.

Tom, Austin, Bat, Acteon, and Hercules would indeed wish to make themselves useful. But with these constant winds, the sails once set, there was nothing more to do. Meanwhile, when there was a veering about, the old black and his companions hastened to give a hand to the crew, and it must be confessed that when the colossal Hercules hauled some rope, they were aware of it. This vigorous negro, six feet high, brought in a tackle all by himself.

It was joy for little Jack to look at this giant. He was not afraid of him, and when Hercules hoisted him up in his arms, as if he were only a cork baby, there were cries of joy to go on.

"Lift me very high," said little Jack.

"There, Master Jack!" replied Hercules.

"Am I very heavy?"

"I do not even feel you."

"Well, higher still! To the end of your arm!" And Hercules, holding the child's two little feet in his large hand, walked him about like a gymnast in a circus. Jack saw himself, tall, taller, which amused him very much. He even tried to make himself heavy--which the colossus did not perceive at all.

Dick Sand and Hercules, they were two friends for little Jack. He was

not slow in making himself a third--that was Dingo.

It has been said that Dingo was not a sociable dog. Doubtless that held good, because the society of the "Waldeck" did not suit it. On board the "Pilgrim" it was quite another thing. Jack probably knew how to touch the fine animal's heart. The latter soon took pleasure in playing with the little boy, whom this play pleased. It was soon discovered that Dingo was one of those dogs who have a particular taste for children. Besides, Jack did it no harm. His greatest pleasure was to transform Dingo into a swift steed, and it is safe to affirm that a horse of this kind is much superior to a pasteboard quadruped, even when it has wheels to its feet. So Jack galloped bare-back on the dog, which let him do it willingly, and, in truth, Jack was no heavier to it than the half of a jockey to a race-horse.

But what a break each day in the stock of sugar in the store-room!

Dingo soon became a favorite with the whole crew. Alone, Negoro continued to avoid any encounter with the animal, whose antipathy was always as strong as it was inexplicable.

Meanwhile, little Jack had not neglected Dick Sand, his friend of old, for Dingo. All the time that was unclaimed by his duties on board, the novice passed with the little boy.

Mrs. Weldon, it is needless to say, always regarded this intimacy with the most complete satisfaction.

One day, February 6th, she spoke of Dick to Captain Hull, and the captain praised the young novice in the highest terms.

"That boy," he said to Mrs. Weldon, "will be a good seaman some day, I'll guarantee. He has truly a passion for the sea, and by this passion he makes up for the theoretical parts of the calling which he has not yet learned. What he already knows is astonishing, when we think of the short time he has had to learn."

"It must be added," replied Mrs. Weldon, "that he is also an excellent person, a true boy, very superior to his age, and who has never merited any blame since we have known him."

"Yes, he is a good young man," continued the captain, "justly loved and appreciated by all."

"This cruise finished," said Mrs. Weldon, "I know that my husband's intention is to have him follow a course of navigation, so that, he may afterwards obtain a captain's commission."

"And Mr. Weldon is right," replied Captain Hull. "Dick Sand will one day do honor to the American marine."

"This poor orphan commenced life sadly," observed Mrs. Weldon. "He has been in a hard school!"

"Doubtless, Mrs. Weldon; but the lessons have not been lost on him. He has learned that he must make his own way in this world, and he is in a fair way to do it."

"Yes, the way of duty!"

"Look at him now, Mrs. Weldon," continued Captain Hull. "He is at the helm, his eye fixed on the point of the foresail. No distraction on the part of this young novice, as well as no lurch to the ship. Dick Sand has already the confidence of an old steersman. A good beginning for a seaman. Our craft, Mrs. Weldon, is one of those in which it is necessary to begin very young. He who has not been a cabin-boy will never arrive at being a perfect seaman, at least in the merchant marine. Everything must be learned, and, consequently, everything must be at the same time instinctive and rational with the sailor--the resolution to grasp, as well as the skill to execute."

"Meanwhile, Captain Hull," replied Mrs. Weldon, "good officers are not lacking in the navy."

"No," replied Captain Hull; "but, in my opinion, the best have almost all begun their career as children, and, without speaking of Nelson and a few others, the worst are not those who began by being cabin-boys."

At that moment they saw Cousin Benedict springing up from the rear companion-way. As usual he was absorbed, and as little conscious of this world as the Prophet Elias will be when he returns to the earth.

Cousin Benedict began to walk about on the deck like an uneasy spirit, examining closely the interstices of the netting, rummaging under the hen-cages, putting his hand between the seams of the deck, there, where the pitch had scaled off.

"Ah! Cousin Benedict," asked Mrs. Weldon, "do you keep well?"

"Yes--Cousin Weldon--I am well, certainly--but I am in a hurry to get on land."

"What are you looking for under that bench, Mr. Benedict?" asked Captain Hull.

"Insects, sir," returned Cousin Benedict. "What do you expect me to look for, if not insects?"

"Insects! Faith, I must agree with you; but it is not at sea that you will enrich your collection."

"And why not, sir? It is not impossible to find on board some specimen of----"

"Cousin Benedict," said Mrs. Weldon, "do you then slander Captain Hull? His ship is so well kept, that you will return empty-handed from your hunt."

Captain Hull began to laugh.

"Mrs. Weldon exaggerates," replied he. "However, Mr. Benedict, I believe you will lose your time rummaging in our cabins."

"Ah! I know it well," cried Cousin Benedict, shrugging his shoulders. "I have had a good search----"

"But, in the 'Pilgrim's' hold," continued Captain Hull, "perhaps you will find some cockroaches--subjects of little interest, however."

"Of little interest, those nocturnal orthopters which have incurred the maledictions of Virgil and Horace!" retorted Cousin Benedict, standing up straight. "Of little interest, those near relations of the 'periplaneta orientalis' and of the American kakerlac, which inhabit----"

"Which infest!" said Captain Hull.

"Which reign on board!" retorted Cousin Benedict, fiercely.

"Amiable sovereignty!"

"Ah! you are not an entomologist, sir?"

Never at my own expense."

"Now, Cousin Benedict," said Mrs. Weldon, smiling, "do not wish us to be devoured for love of science."

"I wish, nothing, Cousin Weldon," replied, the fiery entomologist, "except to be able to add to my collection some rare subject which might do it honor."

"Are you not satisfied, then, with the conquests that you have made in New Zealand?"

"Yes, truly, Cousin Weldon. I have been rather fortunate in conquering one of those new staphylins which till now had only been found some hundreds of miles further, in New Caledonia."

At that moment Dingo, who was playing with Jack, approached Cousin Benedict, gamboling.

"Go away! go away!" said the latter, pushing off the animal.

"To love cockroaches and detest dogs!" cried Captain Hull. "Oh! Mr. Benedict!"

"A good dog, notwithstanding," said little Jack, taking Dingo's great head in his small hands.

"Yes. I do not say no," replied Cousin Benedict. "But what do you want? This devil of an animal has not realized the hopes I conceived on

meeting it."

"Ah! my goodness!" cried Mrs. Weldon, "did you, then, hope to be able to classify it in the order of the dipters or the hymenopters?"

"No," replied Cousin Benedict, seriously. "But is it not true that this Dingo, though it be of the New Zealand race, was picked up on the western coast of Africa?"

"Nothing is more true," replied Mrs. Weldon, "and Tom had often heard the captain of the 'Waldeck' say so."

"Well, I had thought--I had hoped--that this dog would have brought away some specimens of hemipteras peculiar to the African fauna."

"Merciful heavens!" cried Mrs. Weldon.

"And that perhaps," added Cousin Benedict, "some penetrating or irritating flea--of a new species----"

"Do you understand, Dingo?" said Captain Hull. "Do you understand, my dog? You have failed in all your duties!"

"But I have examined it well," added the entomologist, with an accent of deep regret. "I have not been able to find a single insect."

"Which you would have immediately and mercilessly put to death, I

hope!" cried Captain Hull.

"Sir," replied Cousin Benedict, dryly, "learn that Sir John Franklin made a scruple of killing the smallest insect, be it a mosquito, whose attacks are otherwise formidable as those of a flea; and meanwhile you will not hesitate to allow, that Sir John Franklin was a seaman who was as good as the next."

"Surely," said Captain Hull, bowing.

"And one day, after being frightfully devoured by a dipter, he blew and sent it away, saying to it, without even using thou or thee: 'Go! the world is large enough for you and for me!'"

"Ah!" ejaculated Captain Hull.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, Mr. Benedict," retorted Captain Hull, "another had said that long before Sir John Franklin."

"Another?"

"Yes; and that other was Uncle Toby."

"An entomologist?" asked Cousin Benedict, quickly.

"No! Sterne's Uncle Toby, and that worthy uncle pronounced precisely the same words, while setting free a mosquito that annoyed him, but which he thought himself at liberty to thee and thou: 'Go, poor devil,' he said to it, 'the world is large enough to contain us, thee and me!'"

"An honest man, that Uncle Toby!" replied Cousin Benedict. "Is he dead?"

"I believe so, indeed," retorted Captain Hull, gravely, "as he has never existed!"

And each began to laugh, looking at Cousin Benedict.

Thus, then, in these conversations, and many others, which invariably bore on some point of entomological science, whenever Cousin Benedict took part, passed away long hours of this navigation against contrary winds. The sea always fine, but winds which obliged the schooner to tack often. The "Pilgrim" made very little headway toward the east--the breeze was so feeble; and they longed to reach those parts where the prevailing winds would be more favorable.

It must be stated here that Cousin Benedict had endeavored to initiate the young novice into the mysteries of entomology. But Dick Sand had shown himself rather refractory to these advances. For want of better company the savant had fallen back on the negroes, who comprehended nothing about it. Tom, Acteon, Bat, and Austin had even finished by deserting the class, and the professor found himself reduced to

Hercules alone, who seemed to him to have some natural disposition to distinguish a parasite from a thysanuran.

So the gigantic black lived in the world of coleopteras, carnivorous insects, hunters, gunners, ditchers, cicindelles, carabes, sylphides, moles, cockchafers, horn-beetles, tenebrions, mites, lady-birds, studying all Cousin Benedict's collection, not but the latter trembled on seeing his frail specimens in Hercules' great hands, which were hard and strong as a vise. But the colossal pupil listened so quietly to the professor's lessons that it was worth risking something to give them.

While Cousin Benedict worked in that manner, Mrs. Weldon did not leave little Jack entirely unoccupied; She taught him to read and to write. As to arithmetic, it was his friend Dick Sand who inculcated the first elements.

At the age of five, one is still only a little child, and is perhaps better instructed by practical games than by theoretical lessons necessarily a little arduous.

Jack learned to read, not in a primer, but by means of movable letters, printed in red on cubes of wood. He amused himself by arranging the blocks so as to form words. Sometimes Mrs. Weldon took these cubes and composed a word; then she disarranged them, and it was for Jack to replace them in the order required.

The little boy liked this manner of learning to read very much. Each

day he passed some hours, sometimes in the cabin, sometimes on the deck, in arranging and disarranging the letters of his alphabet.

Now, one day this led to an incident so extraordinary, so unexpected, that it is necessary to relate with some detail.

It was on the morning of February 9th, Jack, half-lying on the deck, was amusing himself forming a word which old Tom was to put together again, after the letters had been mixed. Tom, with his hand over his eyes so as not to cheat, as he agreed, would see nothing, and did see nothing of the work of the little boy.

Of these different letters, about fifty in number, some were large, others small. Besides, some of these cubes carried a figure, which taught the child to form numbers as well as to form words.

These cubes were arranged on the deck, and little Jack was taking sometimes one, sometimes another, to make a word--a truly great labor.

Now, for same moments, Dingo was moving round the young child, when suddenly it stopped. Its eyes became fixed, its right paw was raised, its tail wagged convulsively. Then, suddenly throwing itself on one of the cubes, it seized it in its mouth and laid it on the deck a few steps from Jack.

This cube bore a large letter--the letter S.

"Dingo, well Dingo!" cried the little boy, who at first was afraid that his S was swallowed by the dog.

But Dingo had returned, and, beginning the same performance again, it seized another cube, and went to lay it near the first.

This second cube was a large V.

This time Jack gave a cry.

At this cry, Mrs. Weldon, Captain Hull, and the young novice, who were walking on the deck, assembled. Little Jack then told them what had just passed.

Dingo knew its letters; Dingo knew how to read! That was very certain, that! Jack had seen it!

Dick Sand wanted to go and take the two cubes, to restore them to his friend Jack, but Dingo showed him its teeth.

However, the novice succeeded in gaining possession of the two cubes, and he replaced them in the set.

Dingo advanced again, seized again the same two letters, and carried them to a distance. This time its two paws lay on them; it seemed decided to guard them at all hazards. As to the other letters of the alphabet, it did not seem as if it had any knowledge of them.

"That is a curious thing," said Mrs. Weldon.

"It is, in fact, very singular," replied Captain Hull, who was looking attentively at the two letters.

"S. V.," said Mrs. Weldon.

"S. V.," repeated Captain Hull. "But those are precisely the letters which are on Dingo's collar!"

Then, all at once, turning to the old black: "Tom," he asked, "have you not told me that this dog only belonged to the captain of the 'Waldeck' for a short time?"

"In fact, sir," replied Tom, "Dingo was only on board two years at the most."

"And have you not added that the captain of the 'Waldeck' had picked up this dog on the western coast of Africa?"

"Yes, sir, in the neighborhood of the mouth of the Congo. I have often heard the captain say so."

"So," asked Captain Hull, "it has never been known to whom this dog had belonged, nor whence it came?"

"Never, sir. A dog found is worse than a child! That has no papers, and, more, it cannot explain."

Captain Hull was silent, and reflected.

"Do those two letters, then, awake some remembrance?" Mrs. Weldon asked Captain Hull, after leaving him to his reflections for some moments.

"Yes, Mrs. Weldon, a remembrance, or rather a coincidence at least singular."

What?"

"Those two letters might well have a meaning, and fix for us the fate of an intrepid traveler."

"What do you mean?" demanded Mrs. Weldon.

"Here is what I mean, Mrs. Weldon. In 1871--consequently two years ago--a French traveler set out, under the auspices of the Paris Geographical Society, with the intention of crossing Africa from the west to the east. His point of departure was precisely the mouth of the Congo. His point of arrival would be as near as possible to Cape Deldago, at the mouths of the Rovuma, whose course he would descend. Now, this French traveler was named Samuel Vernon."

"Samuel Vernon!" repeated Mrs. Weldon.

"Yes, Mrs. Weldon; and those two names begin precisely by those two letters which Dingo has chosen among all the others, and which are engraved on its collar."

"Exactly," replied Mrs. Weldon. "And that traveler----"

"That traveler set out," replied Captain Hull, "and has not been heard of since his departure."

"Never?" said the novice.

"Never," repeated Captain Hull.

"What do you conclude from it?" asked Mrs. Weldon.

"That, evidently, Samuel Vernon has not been able to reach the eastern coast of Africa, whether he may have been made prisoner by the natives, whether death may have struck him on the way."

"And then this dog?"

"This dog would have belonged to him; and, more fortunate than its master, if my hypothesis is true, it would have been able to return to the Congo coast, because it was there, at the time when these events must have taken place, that it was picked up by the captain of the 'Waldeck.'"

"But," observed Mrs. Weldon, "do you know if this French traveler was accompanied on his departure by a dog? Is it not a mere supposition on your part?"

"It is only a supposition, indeed, Mrs. Weldon," replied Captain Hull. "But what is certain is, that Dingo knows these two letters S and V, which are precisely the initials of the two names of the French traveler. Now, under what circumstances this animal would learn to distinguish them is what I cannot explain; but, I repeat it, it very certainly knows them; and look, it pushes them with its paw, and seems to invite us to read them with it."

In fact, they could not misunderstand Dingo's intention.

"Then was Samuel Vernon alone when he left the sea-coast of the Congo?" ask Dick Sand.

"That I know not," replied Captain Hull. "However, it is probable that he would take a native escort."

At that moment Negoro, leaving his post, showed himself on the deck. At first no one remarked his presence, and could not observe the singular look he cast on the dog when he perceived the two letters over which the animal seem to mount guard. But Dingo, having perceived the master-cook, began to show signs of the most extreme fury.

Negoro returned immediately to the crew's quarters, not without a menacing gesture at the dog's skill having escaped him.

"There is some mystery there," murmured Captain Hull, who had lost none of this little scene.

"But, sir," said the novice, "is it not very astonishing that a dog should know the letters of the alphabet?"

"No!" cried little Jack. "Mama has often told me the story of a dog which knew how to read and write, and even play dominoes, like a real schoolmaster!"

"My dear child," replied Mrs. Weldon, smiling, "that dog, whose name was Munito, was not a savant, as you suppose. If I may believe what has been told me about it, Munito would not have been able to distinguish the letters which served to compose the words. But its master, a clever American, having remarked what fine hearing Munito had, applied himself to cultivating that sense, and to draw from it some very curious effects."

"How did he set to work, Mrs. Weldon?" asked Dick Sand, whom the history interested almost as much as little Jack.

"In this way, my friend." When Munito was 'to appear' before the public, letters similar to these were displayed on a table. On that table the poodle walked about, waiting till a word was proposed,

whether in a loud voice or in a low voice. Only, one essential condition was that its master should know the word."

"And, in the absence of its master--" said the novice.

"The dog could have done nothing," replied Mrs. Weldon, "and here is the reason. The letters spread out on the table, Munito walked about through this alphabet. When it arrived before the letter which it should choose to form the word required, it stopped; but if it stopped it was because it heard the noise--imperceptible to all others--of a toothpick that the American snapped in his pocket. That noise was the signal for Munito to take the letter and arrange it in suitable order."

"And that was all the secret?" cried Dick Sand.

"That was the whole secret," replied Mrs. Weldon. "It is very simple, like all that is done in the matter of prestidigitation. In case of the American's absence, Munito would be no longer Munito. I am, then, astonished, his master not being there--if, indeed, the traveler, Samuel Vernon, has ever been its master--that Dingo could have recognized those two letters."

"In fact," replied Captain Hull, "it is very astonishing. But, take notice, there are only two letters in question here, two particular letters, and not a word chosen by chance. After all, that dog which rang at the door of a convent to take possession of the plate intended for the poor passers-by, that other which commissioned at the same time

with one of its kind, to turn the spit for two days each, and which refused to fill that office when its turn had not come, those two dogs, I say, advanced farther than Dingo into that domain of intelligence reserved for man. Besides, we are in the presence of an inscrutable fact. Of all the letters of that alphabet, Dingo has only chosen these two: S and V. The others it does not even seem to know. Therefore we must conclude that, for a reason which escapes us, its attention has been especially drawn to those two letters."

"Ah! Captain Hull," replied the young novice, "if Dingo could speak! Perhaps he would tell us what those two letters signify, and why it has kept a tooth ready for our head cook."

"And what a tooth!" replied Captain Hull, as Dingo, opening its mouth, showed its formidable fangs.

* * * * *

CHAPTER VI.

A WHALE IN SIGHT.

It will be remembered that this singular incident was made, more than once, the subject of conversation held in the stern of the "Pilgrim" between Mrs. Weldon, Captain Hull, and the young novice. The latter, more particularly, experienced an instinctive mistrust with regard to Negoro, whose conduct, meanwhile, merited no reproach.

In the prow they talked of it also, but they did not draw from it the same conclusions. There, among the ship's crew, Dingo passed merely for a dog that knew how to read, and perhaps even write, better than more than one sailor on board. As for talking, if he did not do it, it was probably for good reasons that he kept silent.

"But, one of these fine days," says the steersman, Bolton, "one fine day that dog will come and ask us how we are heading; if the wind is to the west-north-west-half-north, and we will have to answer him! There are animals that speak! Well, why should not a dog do as much if he took it into his head? It is more difficult to talk with a beak than with a mouth!"

"No doubt," replied the boatswain, Howik. "Only it has never been known."

It would have astonished these brave men to tell them that, on the contrary, it had been known, and that a certain Danish servant possessed a dog which pronounced distinctly twenty words. But whether this animal comprehended what he said was a mystery. Very evidently this dog, whose glottis was organized in a manner to enable him to emit regular sounds, attached no more sense to his words than do the paroquets, parrots, jackdaws, and magpies to theirs. A phrase with animals is nothing more than a kind of song or spoken cry, borrowed from a strange language of which they do not know the meaning.

However that might be, Dingo had become the hero of the deck, of which fact he took no proud advantage. Several times Captain Hull repeated the experiment. The wooden cubes of the alphabet were placed before Dingo, and invariably, without an error, without hesitation, the two letters, S and V, were chosen from among all by the singular animal, while the others never attracted his attention.

As for Cousin Benedict, this experiment was often renewed before him, without seeming to interest him.

"Meanwhile," he condescended to say one day, "we must not believe that the dogs alone have the privilege of being intelligent in this manner. Other animals equal them, simply in following their instinct. Look at the rats, who abandon the ship destined to founder at sea; the beavers, who know how to foresee the rising of the waters, and build their dams higher in consequence; those horses of Nicomedes, of Scanderberg, and of Oppien, whose grief was such that they died when their masters did;

those asses, so remarkable for their memory, and many other beasts which have done honor to the animal kingdom. Have we not seen birds, marvelously erect, that correctly write words dictated by their professors; cockatoos that count, as well as a reckoner in the Longitude Office, the number of persons present in a parlor? Has there not existed a parrot, worth a hundred gold crowns, that recited the Apostle's Creed to the cardinal, his master, without missing a word? Finally, the legitimate pride of an entomologist should be raised to the highest point, when he sees simple insects give proofs of a superior intelligence, and affirm eloquently the axiom:

"'In minimis maximus Deus,'

those ants which, represent the inspectors of public works in the largest cities, those aquatic argyronetes which manufacture diving-bells, without having ever learned the mechanism; those fleas which draw carriages like veritable coachmen, which go through the exercise as well as riflemen, which fire off cannon better than the commissioned artillerymen of West Point? No! this Dingo does not merit so many eulogies, and if he is so strong on the alphabet, it is, without doubt, because he belongs to a species of mastiff, not yet classified in zoological science, the canis alphabeticus of New Zealand."

In spite of these discourses and others of the envious entomologist, Dingo lost nothing in the public estimation, and continued to be treated as a phenomenon in the conversations of the forecastle.

All this time, it is probable that Negoro did not share the enthusiasm of the ship in regard to the animal. Perhaps he found it too intelligent. However, the dog always showed the same animosity against the head cook, and, doubtless, would have brought upon itself some misfortune, if it had not been, for one thing, "a dog to defend itself," and for another, protected by the sympathy of the whole crew.

So Negoro avoided coming into Dingo's presence more than ever. But Dick Sand had observed that since the incident of the two letters, the reciprocal antipathy between the man and the dog was increased. That was truly inexplicable.

On February 10th, the wind from the northeast, which, till then, had always succeeded those long and overwhelming calms, during which the "Pilgrim" was stationary, began to abate perceptibly. Captain Hull then could hope that a change in the direction of the atmospheric currents was going to take place. Perhaps the schooner would finally sail with the wind. It was still only nineteen days since her departure from the port of Auckland. The delay was not yet of much account, and, with a favorable wind, the "Pilgrim," well rigged, would easily make up for lost time. But several days must still elapse before the breezes would blow right from the west.

This part of the Pacific was always deserted. No vessel showed itself in these parts. It was a latitude truly forsaken by navigators. The whalers of the southern seas were not yet prepared to go beyond the

tropic. On the "Pilgrim," which peculiar circumstances had obliged to leave the fishing grounds before the end of the season, they must not expect to cross any ship bound for the same destination.

As to the trans-pacific packet-boats, it has been already said that they did not follow so high a parallel in their passages between Australia and the American continent.

However, even if the sea is deserted, one must not give up observing it to the extreme limits of the horizon. Monotonous as it may appear to heedless minds, it is none the less infinitely varied for him who knows how to comprehend it. Its slightest changes charm the imagination of one who feels the poetry of the ocean. A marine herb which floats up and down on the waves, a branch of sargasso whose light track zebras, the surface of the waters, and end of a board, whose history he would wish to guess, he would need nothing more. Facing this infinite, the mind is no longer stopped by anything. Imagination runs riot. Each of those molecules of water, that evaporation is continually changing from the sea to the sky, contains perhaps the secret of some catastrophe. So, those are to be envied, whose inner consciousness knows how to interrogate the mysteries of the ocean, those spirits who rise from its moving surface to the heights of heaven.

Besides, life always manifests itself above as well as below the seas. The "Pilgrim's" passengers could see flights of birds excited in the pursuit of the smallest fishes, birds which, before winter, fly from the cold climate of the poles. And more than once, Dick Sand, a scholar

of Mrs. Weldon's in that branch as in others, gave proofs of marvelous skill with the gun and pistol, in bringing down some of those rapid-winged creatures.

There were white petrels here; there, other petrels, whose wings were embroidered with brown. Sometimes, also, companies of damiers passed, or some of those penquins whose gait on land is so heavy and so ridiculous. However, as Captain Hull remarked, these penquins, using their stumps like true fins, can challenge the most rapid fishes in swimming, to such an extent even, that sailors have often confounded them with bonitoes.

Higher, gigantic albatrosses beat the air with great strokes, displaying an extent of ten feet between the extremities of their wings, and then came to light on the surface of the waters, which they searched with their beaks to get their food.

All these scenes made a varied spectacle, that only souls closed to the charms of nature would have found monotonous.

That day Mrs. Weldon was walking aft on the "Pilgrim," when a rather curious phenomenon attracted her attention. The waters of the sea had become reddish quite suddenly. One might have believed that they had just been stained with blood; and this inexplicable tinge extended as far as the eye could reach.

Dick Sand. was then with little Jack near Mrs. Weldon.

"Dick," she said to the young novice, "Do you see that singular color of the waters of the Pacific? Is it due to the presence of a marine herb?"

"No, Mrs. Weldon," replied Dick Sand, "that tinge is produced by myriads of little crustaceans, which generally serve to nourish the great mammifers. Fishermen call that, not without reason, 'whales' food.'"

"Crustaceans!" said Mrs. Weldon. "But they are so small that we might almost call them sea insects. Perhaps Cousin Benedict would be very much enchanted to make a collection of them." Then calling: "Cousin Benedict!" cried she.

Cousin Benedict appeared out of the companion-way almost at the same time as Captain Hull.

"Cousin Benedict," said Mrs. Weldon, "see that immense reddish field which extends as far as we can see."

"Hold!" said Captain Hull. "That is whales' food. Mr. Benedict, a fine occasion to study this curious species of crustacea."

"Phew!" from the entomologist.

"How--phew!" cried the captain. "But you have no right to profess such

indifference. These crustaceans form one of the six classes of the articulates, if I am not mistaken, and as such----"

"Phew!" said Cousin Benedict again, shaking his lead.

"For instance----I find you passably disdainful for an entomologist!"

"Entomologist, it may be," replied Cousin Benedict, "but more particularly hexapodist, Captain Hull, please remember."

"At all events," replied Captain Hull, "if these crustaceans do not interest you, it can't be helped; but it would be otherwise if you possessed a whale's stomach. Then what a regale! Do you see, Mrs. Weldon, when we whalers, during the fishing season, arrive in sight of a shoal of these crustaceans, we have only time to prepare our harpoons and our lines. We are certain that the game is not distant."

"Is it possible that such little beasts can feed such large ones?" cried Jack.

"Ah! my boy," replied Captain Hull, "little grains of vermicelli, of flour, of fecula powder, do they not make very good porridge? Yes; and nature has willed that it should be so. When a whale floats in the midst of these red waters, its soup is served; it has only to open its immense mouth. Myriads of crustaceans enter it. The numerous plates of those whalebones with which the animal's palate is furnished serve to strain like fishermen's nets; nothing can get out of them again, and

the mass of crustaceans is ingulfed in the whale's vast stomach, as the soup of your dinner in yours."

"You think right, Jack," observed Dick Sand, "that Madam Whale does not lose time in picking these crustaceans one by one, as you pick shrimps."

"I may add," said Captain Hull, "that it is just when the enormous gourmand is occupied in this way, that it is easiest to approach it without exciting its suspicion. That is the favorable moment to harpoon it with some success."

At that instant, and as if to corroborate Captain Hull, a sailor's voice was heard from the front of the ship:

"A whale to larboard!"

Captain Hull strode up.

"A whale!" cried he.

And his fisherman's instinct urging him, he hastened to the "Pilgrim's" forecastle.

Mrs. Weldon, Jack, Dick Sand, Cousin Benedict himself, followed him at once.

In fact, four miles to windward a certain bubbling indicated that a

huge marine mammifer was moving in the midst of the red waters. Whalers could not be mistaken in it. But the distance was still too considerable to make it possible to recognize the species to which this mammifer belonged. These species, in fact, are quite distinct.

Was it one of those "right" whales, which the fishermen of the Northern Ocean seek most particularly? Those cetaceans, which lack the dorsal fin, but whose skin covers a thick stratum of lard, may attain a length of eighty feet, though the average does not exceed sixty, and then a single one of those monsters furnishes as much as a hundred barrels of oil.

Was it, on the contrary, a "humpback," belonging to the species of baloenopters, a designation whose termination should at least gain it the entomologist's esteem? These possess dorsal fins, white in color, and as long as half the body, which resemble a pair of wings--something like a flying whale.

Had they not in view, more likely, a "finback" mammifer, as well known by the name "jubarte," which is provided with a dorsal fin, and whose length may equal that of the "right" whale?

Captain Hull and his crew could not yet decide, but they regarded the animal with more desire than admiration.

If it is true that a clockmaker cannot find himself in a room in the presence of a clock without experiencing the irresistible wish to wind

it up, how much more must the whaler, before a whale, be seized with the imperative desire to take possession of it? The hunters of large game, they say, are more eager than the hunters of small game. Then, the larger the animal, the more it excites covetousness. Then, how should hunters of elephants and fishers of whalers feel? And then there was that disappointment, felt by all the "Pilgrim's" crew, of returning with an incomplete cargo.

Meanwhile, Captain Hull tried to distinguish the animal which had been signaled in the offing. It was not very visible from that distance. Nevertheless, the trained eye of a whaler could not be deceived in certain details easier to discern at a distance.

In fact, the water-spout, that is, that column of vapor and water which the whale throws back by its rents, would attract Captain Hull's attention, and fix it on the species to which this cetacean belonged.

"That is not a 'right' whale," cried he. "Its water-spout would be at once higher and of a smaller volume. On the other hand, if the noise made by that spout in escaping could be compared to the distant noise of a cannon, I should be led to believe that that whale belongs to the species of 'humpbacks;' but there is nothing of the kind, and, on listening, we are assured that this noise is of quite a different nature. What is your opinion on this subject, Dick?" asked Captain Hull, turning toward the novice.

"I am ready to believe, captain," replied Dick Sand, "that we have to

do with a jubarte. See how his rents throw that column of liquid violently into the air. Does it not seem to you also--which would confirm my idea--that that spout contains more water than condensed vapor? And, if I am not mistaken, it is a special peculiarity of the jubarte."

"In fact, Dick," replied Captain Hull, "there is no longer any doubt possible! It is a jubarte which floats on the surface of these red waters."

"That's fine," cried little Jack.

"Yes, my boy! and when we think that the great beast is there, in process of breakfasting, and little suspecting that the whalers are watching it."

"I would dare to affirm that it is a jubarte of great size," observed Dick Sand.

"Truly," replied Captain Hull, who was gradually becoming more excited. "I think it is at least seventy feet long!"

"Good!" added the boatswain. "Half a dozen whales of that size would suffice to fill a ship as large as ours!"

"Yes, that would be sufficient," replied Captain Hull, who mounted on the bowsprit to see better.

"And with this one," added the boatswain, "we should take on board in a few hours the half of the two hundred barrels of oil which we lack."

"Yes!--truly--yes!" murmured Captain Hull.

"That is true," continued Dick Sand; "but it is sometimes a hard matter to attack those enormous jubartes!"

"Very hard, very hard!" returned Captain Hull. "Those baloenopters have formidable tails, which must not be approached without distrust. The strongest pirogue would not resist a well-given blow. But, then, the profit is worth the trouble!"

"Bah!" said one of the sailors, "a fine jubarte is all the same a fine capture!"

"And profitable!" replied another.

"It would be a pity not to salute this one on the way!"

It was evident that these brave sailors were growing excited in looking at the whale. It was a whole cargo of barrels of oil that was floating within reach of their hands. To hear them, without doubt there was nothing more to be done, except to stow those barrels in the "Pilgrim's" hold to complete her lading. Some of the sailors, mounted on the ratlines of the fore-shrouds, uttered longing cries. Captain

Hull, who no longer spoke, was in a dilemma. There was something there, like an irresistible magnet, which attracted the "Pilgrim" and all her crew.

"Mama, mama!" then cried little Jack, "I should like to have the whale, to see how it is made."

"Ah! you wish to have this whale, my boy? Ah! why not, my friends?" replied Captain Hull, finally yielding to his secret desire. "Our additional fishermen are lacking, it is true, but we alone----"

"Yes! yes!" cried the sailors, with a single voice.

"This will not be the first time that I have followed the trade of harpooner," added Captain Hull, "and you will see if I still know how to throw the harpoon!"

"Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!" responded the crew.

* * * * *

CHAPTER VII.

PREPARATIONS.

It will be understood that the sight of this prodigious mammifer was necessary to produce such excitement on board the "Pilgrim."

The whale, which floated in the middle of the red waters, appeared enormous. To capture it, and thus complete the cargo, that was very tempting. Could fishermen let such an occasion escape them?

However, Mrs. Weldon believed she ought to ask Captain Hull if it was not dangerous for his men and for him to attack a whale under those circumstances.

"No, Mrs. Weldon," replied Captain Hull. "More than once it has been my lot to hunt the whale with a single boat, and I have always finished by taking possession of it. I repeat it, there is no danger for us, nor, consequently, for yourself."

Mrs. Weldon, reassured, did not persist.

Captain Hull at once made his preparations for capturing the jubarte. He knew by experience that the pursuit of that baloenopter was not free from difficulties, and he wished to parry all.

What rendered this capture less easy was that the schooner's crew could only work by means of a single boat, while the "Pilgrim" possessed a long-boat, placed on its stocks between the mainmast and the mizzen-mast, besides three whale-boats, of which two were suspended on the larboard and starboard pegs, and the third aft, outside the crown-work.

Generally these three whale-boats were employed simultaneously in the pursuit of cetaceans. But during the fishing season, we know, an additional crew, hired at the stations of New Zealand, came to the assistance of the "Pilgrim's" sailors.

Now, in the present circumstances, the "Pilgrim" could only furnish the five sailors on board--that is, enough to arm a single whale-boat. To utilize the group of Tom and his friends, who had offered themselves at once, was impossible. In fact, the working of a fishing pirogue requires very well trained seamen. A false move of the helm, or a false stroke of an oar, would be enough to compromise the safety of the whale-boat during an attack.

On the other hand, Captain Hull did not wish to leave his ship without leaving on board at least one man from the crew, in whom he had confidence. It was necessary to provide for all eventualities.

Now Captain Hull, obliged to choose strong seamen to man the whale-boat, was forced to put on Dick Sand the care of guarding the "Pilgrim."

"Dick," said he to him, "I shall charge you to remain on board during my absence, which I hope will be short."

"Well, sir," replied the young novice.

Dick Sand would have wished to take part in this fishing, which had a great attraction for him, but he understood that, for one reason, a man's arms were worth more than his for service in a whale-boat, and that for another, he alone could replace Captain Hull. So he was satisfied. The whale-boat's crew must be composed of the five men, including the master, Howik, which formed the whole crew of the "Pilgrim." The four sailors were going to take their places at the oars, and Howik would hold the stern oar, which serves to guide a boat of this kind. A simple rudder, in fact, would not have a prompt enough action, and in case the side oars should be disabled, the stern oar, well handled, could put the whale-boat beyond the reach of the monster's blows.

There was only Captain Hull besides. He had reserved to himself the post of harpooner, and, as he had said, this would not be his first attempt. It was he who must first throw the harpoon, then watch the unrolling of the long line fastened at its end; then, finally finish the animal with spears, when it should return to the surface of the ocean.

Whalers sometimes employ firearms for this kind of fishing. By means of

a special instrument, a sort of small cannon, stationed either on board the ship or at the front of the boat, they throw either a harpoon, which draws with it the rope fastened to its end, or explosive balls, which produce great ravages in the body of the animal.

But the "Pilgrim" was not furnished with apparatus of this kind. This was, besides, an instrument of high price, rather difficult to manage, and fishermen, but little friendly to innovations, seem to prefer the employment of primitive weapons, which they use skilfully--that is to say,--the harpoon and spear.

It was then by the usual method, attacking the whale with the sword, that Captain Hull was going to attempt to capture the jubarte signaled five miles from his ship.

Besides, the weather would favor this expedition. The sea, being very calm, was propitious for the working of a whale-boat. The wind was going down, and the "Pilgrim" would only drift in an insensible manner while her crew were occupied in the offing.

So the starboard whale-boat was immediately lowered, and the four sailors went into it.

Howik passed them two of those long spears which serve as harpoons, then two long lances with sharp points. To those offensive arms he added five coils of those strong flexible ropes that the whalers call "lines," and which measure six hundred feet in length. Less would not

do, for it sometimes happens that these cords, fastened end to end, are not enough for the "demand," the whale plunges down so deep.

Such were the different weapons which were carefully disposed in the front of the boat.

Howik and the four sailors only waited for the order to let go the rope.

A single place was vacant in the prow of the whale-boat--that which Captain Hull would occupy.

It is needless to say that the "Pilgrim's" crew, before quitting her, had brought the ship's sails aback. In other words, the yards were braced in such a manner that the sails, counteracting their action, kept the vessel almost stationary.

Just as he was about to embark, Captain Hull gave a last glance at his ship. He was sure that all was in order, the halliards well turned, the sails suitably trimmed. As he was leaving the young novice on board during an absence which might last several hours, he wished, with a good reason, that unless for some urgent cause, Dick Sand would not have to execute a single maneuver.

At the moment of departing he gave the young man some last words of advice.

"Dick," said he, "I leave you alone. Watch over everything. If, as is

possible, it should become necessary to get the ship under way, in case we should be led too far in pursuit of this jubarte, Tom and his companions could come to your aid perfectly well. After telling them clearly what they would have to do, I am assured that they would do it."

"Yes, Captain Hull," replied old Tom, "and Mr. Dick can count on us."

"Command! command!" cried Bat. "We have such a strong desire to make ourselves useful."

"On what must we pull?" asked Hercules, turning up the large sleeves of his jacket.

"On nothing just now," replied Dick Sand, smiling.

"At your service," continued the colossus.

"Dick," continued Captain Hull, "the weather is beautiful. The wind has gone down. There is no indication that it will freshen again. Above all, whatever may happen, do not put a boat to sea, and do not leave the ship."

"That is understood."

"If it should become necessary for the 'Pilgrim' to come to us, I shall make a signal to you, by hoisting a flag at the end of a boat-hook."

"Rest assured, captain, I shall not lose sight of the whale-boat," replied Dick Sand.

"Good, my boy," replied Captain Hull. "Courage and coolness. Behold yourself assistant captain. Do honor to your grade. No one has been such at your age!"

Dick Sand did not reply, but he blushed while smiling. Captain Hull understood that blush and that smile.

"The honest boy!" he said to himself; "modesty and good humor, in truth, it is just like him!"

Meanwhile, by these urgent recommendations, it was plain that, even though there would be no danger in doing it, Captain Hull did not leave his ship willingly, even for a few hours. But an irresistible fisherman's instinct, above all, the strong desire to complete his cargo of oil, and not fall short of the engagements made by James W. Weldon in Valparaiso, all that told him to attempt the adventure. Besides, that sea, so fine, was marvelously conducive to the pursuit of a cetacean. Neither his crew nor he could resist such a temptation. The fishing cruise would be finally complete, and this last consideration touched Captain Hull's heart above everything.

Captain Hull went toward the ladder.

"I wish you success," said Mrs. Weldon to him.

"Thank you, Mrs. Weldon."

"I beg you, do not do too much harm to the poor whale," cried little Jack.

"No, my boy," replied Captain Hull.

"Take it very gently, sir."

"Yes--with gloves, little Jack."

"Sometimes," observed Cousin Benedict, "we find rather curious insects on the back of these large mammals."

"Well, Mr. Benedict," replied Captain Hull, laughing, "you shall have the right to 'entomologize' when our jubarte will be alongside of the 'Pilgrim.'"

Then turning to Tom:

"Tom, I count on your companions and you," said he, "to assist us in cutting up the whale, when it is lashed to the ship's hull--which will not be long."

"At your disposal, sir," replied the old black.

"Good!" replied Captain Hull.

"Dick, these honest men will aid you in preparing the empty barrels. During our absence they will bring them on deck, and by this means the work will go fast on our return."

"That shall be done, captain."

For the benefit of those who do not know, it is necessary to say that the jubarte, once dead, must be towed as far as the "Pilgrim," and firmly lashed to her starboard side. Then the sailors, shod in boots, with cramp-hooks would take their places on the back of the enormous cetacean, and cut it up methodically in parallel bands marked off from the head to the tail. These bands would be then cut across in slices of a foot and a half, then divided into pieces, which, after being stowed in the barrels, would be sent to the bottom of the hold.

Generally the whaling ship, when the fishing is over, manages to land as soon as possible, so as to finish her manipulations. The crew lands, and then proceeds to melt the lard, which, under the action of the heat, gives up all its useful part--that is, the oil. In this operation, the whale's lard weighs about a third of its weight.

But, under present circumstances, Captain Hull could not dream of putting back to finish that operation. He only counted on melting this quantity of lard at Valparaiso. Besides, with winds which could not fail to hail from the west, he hoped to make the American coast before

twenty days, and that lapse of time could not compromise the results of his fishing.

The moment for setting out had come. Before the "Pilgrim's" sails had been brought aback, she had drawn a little nearer to the place where the jubarte continued to signal its presence by jets of vapor and water.

The jubarte was all this time swimming in the middle of the vast red field of crustaceans, opening its large mouth automatically, and absorbing at each draught myriads of animalcules.

According to the experienced ones on board, there was no fear that the whale dreamt of escaping. It was, doubtless, what the whalers call a "fighting" whale.

Captain Hull strode over the netting, and, descending the rope ladder, he reached the prow of the whale-boat.

Mrs. Weldon, Jack, Cousin Benedict, Tom, and his companions, for a last time wished the captain success.

Dingo itself, rising on its paws and passing its head above the railing, seemed to wish to say good-by to the crew.

Then all returned to the prow, so as to lose none of the very attractive movements of such a fishing.

The whale-boat put off, and, under the impetus of its four oars, vigorously handled, it began to distance itself from the "Pilgrim."

"Watch well, Dick, watch well!" cried Captain Hull to the young novice for the last time.

"Count on me, sir."

"One eye for the ship, one eye for the whale-boat, my boy. Do not forget it."

"That shall be done, captain," replied Dick Sand, who went to take his place near the helm.

Already the light boat was several hundred feet from the ship. Captain Hull, standing at the prow, no longer able to make himself heard, renewed his injunctions by the most expressive gestures.

It was then that Dingo, its paws still resting on the railing, gave a sort of lamentable bark, which would have an unfavorable effect upon men somewhat given to superstition.

That bark even made Mrs. Weldon shudder.

"Dingo," said she, "Dingo, is that the way you encourage your friends? Come, now, a fine bark, very clear, very sonorous, very joyful."

But the dog barked no more, and, letting itself fall back on its paws, it came slowly to Mrs. Weldon, whose hand it licked affectionately.

"It does not wag its tail," murmured Tom in a low tone. "Bad sign--bad sign."

But almost at once Dingo stood up, and a howl of anger escaped it.

Mrs. Weldon turned round.

Negoro had just left his quarters, and was going toward the forecastle, with the intention, no doubt, of looking for himself at the movements of the whale-boat.

Dingo rushed at the head cook, a prey to the strongest as well as to the most inexplicable fury.

Negoro seized a hand-spike and took an attitude of defense.

The dog was going to spring at his throat.

"Here, Dingo, here!" cried Dick Sand, who, leaving his post of observation for an instant, ran to the prow of the ship.

Mrs. Weldon on her side, sought to calm the dog.

Dingo obeyed, not without repugnance, and returned to the young novice,

growling secretly.

Negoro had not pronounced a single word, but his face had grown pale for a moment. Letting go of his hand-spike, he regained his cabin.

"Hercules," then said Dick Sand, "I charge you especially to watch over that man."

"I shall watch," simply replied Hercules, clenching his two enormous fists in sign of assent.

Mrs. Weldon and Dick Sand then turned their eyes again on the whale-boat, which the four oarsmen bore rapidly away.

It was nothing but a speck on the sea.

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE JUBARTE.

Captain Hull, an experienced whaler, would leave nothing to chance. The capture of a jubarte is a difficult thing. No precaution ought to be neglected. None was in this case.

And, first of all, Captain Hull sailed so as to come up to the whale on the leeward, so that no noise might disclose the boat's approach.

Howik then steered the whale-boat, following the rather elongated curve of that reddish shoal, in the midst of which floated the jubarte. They would thus turn the curve.

The boatswain, set over this work, was a seaman of great coolness, who inspired Captain Hull with every confidence. He had not to fear either hesitation or distraction from Howik.

"Attention to the steering, Howik," said Captain Hull. "We are going to try to surprise the jubarte. We will only show ourselves when we are near enough to harpoon it."

"That is understood, sir," replied the boatswain.

"I am going to follow the contour of these reddish waters, so as to

keep to the leeward."

"Good!" said Captain Hull. "Boys, as little noise as possible in rowing."

The oars, carefully muffled with straw, worked silently. The boat, skilfully steered by the boatswain, had reached the large shoal of crustaceans. The starboard oars still sank in the green and limpid water, while those to larboard, raising the reddish liquid, seemed to rain drops of blood.

"Wine and water!" said one of the sailors.

"Yes," replied Captain Hull, "but water that we cannot drink, and wine that we cannot swallow. Come, boys, let us not speak any more, and heave closer!"

The whale-boat, steered by the boatswain, glided noiselessly on the surface of those half-greased waters, as if it were floating on a bed of oil.

The jubarte did not budge, and did not seem to have yet perceived the boat, which described a circle around it.

Captain Hull, in making the circuit, necessarily went farther than the "Pilgrim," which gradually grew smaller in the distance. This rapidity with which objects diminish at sea has always an odd effect. It seems

as if we look at them shortened through the large end of a telescope. This optical illusion evidently takes place because there are no points of comparison on these large spaces. It was thus with the "Pilgrim," which decreased to the eye and seemed already much more distant than she really was.

Half an hour after leaving her, Captain Hull and his companions found themselves exactly to the leeward of the whale, so that the latter occupied an intermediate point between the ship and the boat.

So the moment had come to approach, while making as little noise as possible. It was not impossible for them to get beside the animal and harpoon it at good range, before its attention would be attracted.

"Row more slowly, boys," said Captain Hull, in a low voice.

"It seems to me," replied Howik, "that the gudgeon suspects something. It breathes less violently than it did just now!"

"Silence! silence!" repeated Captain Hull.

Five minutes later the whale-boat was at a cable's length from the jubarte. A cable's length, a measure peculiar to the sea, comprises a length of one hundred and twenty fathoms, that is to say, two hundred meters.

The boatswain, standing aft, steered in such a manner as to approach

the left side of the mammal, but avoiding, with the greatest care, passing within reach of the formidable tail, a single blow of which would be enough to crush the boat.

At the prow Captain Hull, his legs a little apart to maintain his equilibrium, held the weapon with which he was going to give the first blow. They could count on his skill to fix that harpoon in the thick mass which emerged from the waters.

Near the captain, in a pail, was coiled the first of the five lines, firmly fastened to the harpoon, and to which they would successively join the other four if the whale plunged to great depths.

"Are we ready, boys?" murmured Captain Hull.

"Yes," replied Howik, grasping his oar firmly in his large hands.

"Alongside! alongside!"

The boatswain obeyed the order, and the whale-boat came within less than ten feet of the animal.

The latter no longer moved, and seemed asleep.

Whales thus surprised while asleep offer an easier prize, and it often happens that the first blow which is given wounds them mortally.

"This immovableness is quite astonishing!" thought Captain Hull. "The rascal ought not to be asleep, and nevertheless----there is something there!"

The boatswain thought the same, and he tried to see the opposite side of the animal.

But it was not the moment to reflect, but to attack.

Captain Hull, holding his harpoon by the middle of the handle, balanced it several times, to make sure of good aim, while he examined the jubarte's side. Then he threw it with all the strength of his arm.

"Back, back!" cried he at once.

And the sailors, pulling together, made the boat recoil rapidly, with the intention of prudently putting it in safety from the blows of the cetacean's tail.

But at that moment a cry from the boatswain made them understand why the whale was so extraordinarily motionless for so long a time on the surface of the sea.

"A young whale!" said he.

In fact, the jubarte, after having been struck by the harpoon, was almost entirely overturned on the side, thus discovering a young whale,

which she was in process of suckling.

This circumstance, as Captain Hull well knew, would render the capture of the jubarte much more difficult. The mother was evidently going to defend herself with greater fury, as much for herself as to protect her "little one "--if, indeed, we can apply that epithet to an animal which did not measure less than twenty feet.

Meanwhile, the jubarte did not rush at the boat, as there was reason to fear, and there was no necessity, before taking flight, to quickly cut the line which connected the boat with the harpoon. On the contrary, and as generally happens, the whale, followed by the young one, dived, at first in a very oblique line; then rising again with an immense bound, she commenced to cleave the waters with extreme rapidity.

But before she had made her first plunge, Captain Hull and the boatswain, both standing, had had time to see her, and consequently to estimate her at her true value.

This jubarte was, in reality, a whale of the largest size. From the head to the tail, she measured at least eighty feet. Her skin, of a yellowish brown, was much varied with numerous spots of a darker brown.

It would indeed be a pity, after an attack so happily begun, to be under the necessity of abandoning so rich a prey.

The pursuit, or rather the towing, had commenced. The whale-boat, whose

oars had been raised, darted like an arrow while swinging on the tops of the waves.

Howik kept it steady, notwithstanding those rapid and frightful oscillations. Captain Hull, his eye on his prey, did not cease making his eternal refrain:

"Be watchful, Howik, be watchful!"

And they could be sure that the boatswain's vigilance would not be at fault for an instant.

Meanwhile, as the whale-boat did not fly nearly as fast as the whale, the line of the harpoon spun out with such rapidity that it was to be feared that it would take fire in rubbing against the edge of the whale-boat. So Captain Hull took care to keep it damp, by filling with water the pail at the bottom of which the line was coiled.

All this time the jubarte did not seem inclined to stop her flight, nor willing to moderate it. The second line was then lashed to the end of the first, and it was not long before it was played out with the same velocity.

At the end of five minutes it was necessary to join on the third line, which ran off under the water.

The jubarte did not stop. The harpoon had evidently not penetrated into

any vital part of the body. They could even observe, by the increased obliquity of the line, that the animal, instead of returning to the surface, was sinking into lower depths.

"The devil!" cried Captain Hull, "but that rascal will use up our five lines!"

"And lead us to a good distance from the 'Pilgrim,'" replied the boatswain.

"Nevertheless, she must return to the surface to breathe," replied Captain Hull. "She is not a fish, and she must have the provision of air like a common individual."

"She has held her breath to run better," said one of the sailors, laughing.

In fact, the line was unrolling all the time with equal rapidity.

To the third line, it was soon necessary to join the fourth, and that was not done without making the sailors somewhat anxious touching their future part of the prize.

"The devil! the devil!" murmured Captain Hull. "I have never seen anything like that! Devilish jubarte!"

Finally the fifth line had to be let out, and it was already half

unrolled when it seemed to slacken.

"Good! good!" cried Captain Hull. "The line is less stiff. The jubarte is getting tired."

At that moment, the "Pilgrim" was more than five miles to the leeward of the whale-boat. Captain Hull, hoisting a flag at the end of a boat-hook, gave the signal to come nearer.

And almost at once, he could see that Dick Sand, aided by Tom and his companions, commenced to brace the yards in such a manner as to trim them close to the wind.

But the breeze was feeble and irregular. It only came in short puffs. Most certainly, the "Pilgrim" would have some trouble in joining the whale-boat, if indeed she could reach it. Meanwhile, as they had foreseen, the jubarte had returned to the surface of the water to breathe, with the harpoon fixed in her side all the time. She then remained almost motionless, seeming to wait for her young whale, which this furious course must have left behind.

Captain Hull made use of the oars so as to join her again, and soon he was only a short distance from her.

Two oars were laid down and two sailors armed themselves, as the captain had done, with long lances, intended to strike the enemy.

Howik worked skilfully then, and held himself ready to make the boat turn rapidly, in case the whale should turn suddenly on it.

"Attention!" cried Captain Hull. "Do not lose a blow! Aim well, boys! Are we ready, Howik?"

"I am prepared, sir," replied the boatswain, "but one thing troubles me. It is that the beast, after having fled so rapidly, is very quiet now."

"In fact, Howik, that seems to me suspicious. Let us be careful!"

"Yes, but let us go forward."

Captain Hull grew more and more animated.

The boat drew still nearer. The jubarte only turned in her place. Her young one was no longer near her; perhaps she was trying to find it again.

Suddenly she made a movement with her tail, which took her thirty feet away.

Was she then going to take flight again, and must they take up this interminable pursuit again on the surface of the waters?

"Attention!" cried Captain Hull. "The beast is going to take a spring

and throw herself on us. Steer, Howik, steer!"

The jubarte, in fact, had turned in such a manner as to present herself in front of the whale-boat. Then, beating the sea violently with her enormous fins, she rushed forward.

The boatswain, who expected this direct blow, turned in such a fashion that the jubarte passed by the boat, but without reaching it.

Captain Hull and the two sailors gave her three vigorous thrusts on the passage, seeking to strike some vital organ.

The jubarte stopped, and, throwing to a great height two columns of water mingled with blood, she turned anew on the boat, bounding, so to say, in a manner frightful to witness.

These seamen must have been expert fishermen, not to lose their presence of mind on this occasion.

Howik again skilfully avoided the jubarte's attack, by darting the boat aside.

Three new blows, well aimed, again gave the animal three new wounds. But, in passing, she struck the water so roughly with her formidable tail, that an enormous wave arose, as if the sea were suddenly opened.

The whale-boat almost capsized, and, the water rushing in over the

side, it was half filled.

"The bucket, the bucket!" cried Captain Hull.

The two sailors, letting go their oars, began to bale out the boat rapidly, while the captain cut the line, now become useless.

No! the animal, rendered furious by grief, no longer dreamt of flight. It was her turn to attack, and her agony threatened to be terrible.

A third time she turned round, "head to head," a seaman would say, and threw herself anew on the boat.

But the whale-boat, half full of water, could no longer move with the same facility. In this condition, how could it avoid the shock which threatened it? If it could be no longer steered, there was still less power to escape.

And besides, no matter how quickly the boat might be propelled, the swift jubarte would have always overtaken it with a few bounds. It was no longer a question of attack, but of defense.

Captain Hull understood it all.

The third attack of the animal could not be entirely kept off. In passing she grazed the whale-boat with her enormous dorsal fin, but with so much force that Howik was thrown down from his bench.

The three lances, unfortunately affected by the oscillation, this time missed their aim.

"Howik! Howik!" cried Captain Hull, who himself had been hardly able to keep his place.

"Present!" replied the boatswain, as he got up. But he then perceived that in his fall his stern oar had broken in the middle.

"Another oar!" said Captain Hull.

"I have one," replied Howik.

At that moment, a bubbling took place under the waters only a few fathoms from the boat.

The young whale had just reappeared. The jubarte saw it, and rushed towards it.

This circumstance could only give a more terrible character to the contest. The whale was going to fight for two.

Captain Hull looked toward the "Pilgrim." His hand shook the boat-hook, which bore the flag, frantically.

What could Dick Sand do that had not been already done at the first

signal from the captain? The "Pilgrim's" sails were trimmed, and the wind commenced to fill them. Unhappily the schooner did not possess a helix, by which the action could be increased to sail faster.

To lower one of the boats, and, with the aid of the blacks, row to the assistance of the captain, would be a considerable loss of time; besides, the novice had orders not to quit the ship, no matter what happened. However, he had the stern-boat lowered from its pegs, and towed it along, so that the captain and his companions might take refuge in it, in case of need.

At that moment the jubarte, covering the young whale with her body, had returned to the charge. This time she turned in such a manner as to reach the boat exactly.

"Attention, Howik!" cried Captain Hull, for the last time.

But the boatswain was, so to speak, disarmed. Instead of a lever, whose length gave force, he only held in his hand an oar relatively short. He tried to put about; it was impossible.

The sailors knew that they were lost. All rose, giving a terrible cry, which was perhaps heard on the "Pilgrim."

A terrible blow from the monster's tail had just struck the whale-boat underneath. The boat, thrown into the air with irresistible violence, fell back, broken in three pieces, in the midst of waves furiously

lashed by the whale's bounds.

The unfortunate sailors, although grievously wounded, would have had, perhaps, the strength to keep up still, either by swimming or by hanging on to some of the floating wreck. That is what Captain Hull did, for he was seen for a moment hoisting the boatswain on a wreck.

But the jubarte, in the last degree of fury, turned round, sprang up, perhaps in the last pangs of a terrible agony, and with her tail she beat the troubled waters frightfully, where the unfortunate sailors were still swimming.

For some minutes one saw nothing but a liquid water-spout scattering itself in sheafs on all sides.

A quarter of an hour after, when Dick Sand, who, followed by the blacks, had rushed into the boat, had reached the scene of the catastrophe, every living creature had disappeared. There was nothing left but some pieces of the whale-boat on the surface of the waters, red with blood.

* * * * *

CHAPTER IX.

CAPTAIN SAND.

The first impression felt by the passengers of the "Pilgrim" in presence of this terrible catastrophe was a combination of pity and horror. They only thought of this frightful death of Captain Hull and the five sailors. This fearful scene had just taken place almost under their eyes, while they could do nothing to save the poor men. They had not even been able to arrive in time to pick up the whale-boat's crew, their unfortunate companions, wounded, but still living, and to oppose the "Pilgrim's" hull to the jubarte's formidable blows. Captain Hull and his men had forever disappeared.

When the schooner arrived at the fatal place, Mrs. Weldon fell on her knees, her hands raised toward Heaven.

"Let us pray!" said the pious woman.

She was joined by her little Jack, who threw himself on his knees, weeping, near his mother. The poor child understood it all. Dick Sand, Nan, Tom, and the other blacks remained standing, their heads bowed. All repeated the prayer that Mrs. Weldon addressed to God, recommending to His infinite goodness those who had just appeared before Him.

Then Mrs. Weldon, turning to her companions, "And now, my friends,"

said she, "let us ask Heaven for strength and courage for ourselves."

Yes! They could not too earnestly implore the aid of Him who can do all things, for their situation was one of the gravest!

This ship which carried them had no longer a captain to command her, no longer a crew to work her. She was in the middle of that immense Pacific Ocean, hundreds of miles from any land, at the mercy of the winds and waves.

What fatality then had brought that whale in the "Pilgrim's" course? What still greater fatality had urged the unfortunate Captain Hull, generally so wise, to risk everything in order to complete his cargo? And what a catastrophe to count among the rarest of the annals of whale-fishing was this one, which did not allow of the saving of one of the whale-boat's sailors!

Yes, it was a terrible fatality! In fact, there was no longer a seaman on board the "Pilgrim." Yes, one--Dick Sand--and he was only a beginner, a young man of fifteen. Captain, boatswain, sailors, it may be said that the whole crew was now concentrated in him.

On board there was one lady passenger, a mother and her son, whose presence would render the situation much more difficult. Then there were also some blacks, honest men, courageous and zealous without a doubt, ready to obey whoever should undertake to command them, but ignorant of the simplest notions of the sailor's craft.

Dick Sand stood motionless, his arms crossed, looking at the place where Captain Hull had just been swallowed up--Captain Hull, his protector, for whom he felt a filial affection. Then his eyes searched the horizon, seeking to discover some ship, from which he would demand aid and assistance, to which he might be able at least to confide Mrs. Weldon. He would not abandon the "Pilgrim," no, indeed, without having tried his best to bring her into port. But Mrs. Weldon and her little boy would be in safety. He would have had nothing more to fear for those two beings, to whom he was devoted body and soul.

The ocean was deserted. Since the disappearance of the jubarte, not a speck came to alter the surface. All was sky and water around the "Pilgrim." The young novice knew only too well that he was beyond the routes followed by the ships of commerce, and that the other whalers were cruising still farther away at the fishing-grounds.

However, the question was, to look the situation in the face, to see things as they were. That is what Dick Sand did, asking God, from the depths of his heart, for aid and succor. What resolution was he going to take?

At that moment Negoro appeared on the deck, which he had left after the catastrophe. What had been felt in the presence of this irreparable misfortune by a being so enigmatical, no one could tell. He had contemplated the disaster without making a gesture, without departing from his speechlessness. His eye had evidently seized all the details

of it. But if at such a moment one could think of observing him, he would be astonished at least, because not a muscle of his impassible face had moved. At any rate, and as if he had not heard it, he had not responded to the pious appeal of Mrs. Weldon, praying for the engulfed crew. Negoro walked aft, there even where Dick Sand was standing motionless. He stopped three steps from the novice.

"You wish to speak to me?" asked Dick Sand.

"I wish to speak to Captain Hull," replied Negoro, coolly, "or, in his absence, to boatswain Howik."

"You know well that both have perished!" cried the novice.

"Then who commands on board now?" asked Negoro, very insolently.

"I," replied Dick Sand, without hesitation.

"You!" said Negoro, shrugging his shoulders. "A captain of fifteen years?"

"A captain of fifteen years!" replied the novice, advancing toward the cook.

The latter drew back.

"Do not forget it," then said Mrs. Weldon. "There is but one captain

here--Captain Sand, and it is well for all to remember that he will know how to make himself obeyed."

Negoro bowed, murmuring in an ironical tone a few words that they could not understand, and he returned to his post.

We see, Dick's resolution was taken.

Meanwhile the schooner, under the action of the breeze, which commenced to freshen, had already passed beyond the vast shoal of crustaceans.

Dick Sand examined the condition of the sails; then his eyes were cast on the deck. He had then this sentiment, that, if a frightful responsibility fell upon him in the future, it was for him to have the strength to accept it. He dared to look at the survivors of the "Pilgrim," whose eyes were now fixed on him. And, reading in their faces that he could count on them, he said to them in two words, that they could in their turn count on him.

Dick Sand had, in all sincerity, examined his conscience.

If he was capable of taking in or setting the sails of the schooner, according to circumstances, by employing the arms of Tom and his companions, he evidently did not yet possess all the knowledge necessary to determine his position by calculation.

In four or five years more, Dick Sand would know thoroughly that

beautiful and difficult sailor's craft. He would know how to use the sextant--that instrument which Captain Hull's hand had held every day, and which gave him the height of the stars. He would read on the chronometer the hour of the meridian of Greenwich, and from it would be able to deduce the longitude by the hour angle. The sun would be made his counselor each day. The moon--the planets would say to him, "There, on that point of the ocean, is thy ship!" That firmament, on which the stars move like the hands of a perfect clock, which nothing shakes nor can derange, and whose accuracy is absolute--that firmament would tell him the hours and the distances. By astronomical observations he would know, as his captain had known every day, nearly to a mile, the place occupied by the "Pilgrim," and the course followed as well as the course to follow.

And now, by reckoning, that is by the progress measured on the log, pointed out by the compass, and corrected by the drift, he must alone ask his way.

However, he did not falter.

Mrs. Weldon understood all that was passing in the young novice's resolute heart.

"Thank you, Dick," she said to him, in a voice which did not tremble. "Captain Hull is no more. All his crew have perished with him. The fate of the ship is in your hands! Dick, you will save the ship and those on board!"

"Yes, Mrs. Weldon," replied Dick Sand, "yes! I shall attempt it, with the aid of God!"

"Tom and his companions are honest men on whom you can depend entirely."

"I know it, and I shall make sailors of them, and we shall work together. With fine weather that will be easy. With bad weather--well, with bad weather, we shall strive, and we shall save you yet, Mrs. Weldon--you and your little Jack, both! Yes, I feel that I shall do it."

And he repeated:

"With the aid of God!"

"Now, Dick, can you tell where the 'Pilgrim' is?" asked Mrs. Weldon.

"Easily," replied the novice. "I have only to consult the chart on board, on which her position was marked yesterday by Captain Hull."

"And will you be able to put the ship in the right direction?"

"Yes, I shall be able to put her prow to the east, nearly at the point of the American coast that we must reach."

"But, Dick," returned Mrs. Weldon, "you well understand, do you not, that this catastrophe may, and indeed must, modify our first projects?

It is no longer a question of taking the 'Pilgrim' to Valparaiso. The nearest port of the American coast is now her port of destination."

"Certainly, Mrs. Weldon," replied the novice. "So fear nothing! We cannot fail to reach that American coast which stretches so far to the south."

"Where is it situated?" asked Mrs. Weldon.

"There, in that direction," replied Dick Sand, pointing to the east, which he knew by means of the compass.

"Well, Dick, we may reach Valparaiso, or any other part of the coast. What matter? What we want is to land."

"And we shall do it, Mrs. Weldon, and I shall land you on a good place," replied the young man, in a firm voice. "Besides, in standing in for the land, I do not renounce the hope of encountering some of those vessels which do the coasting trade on that shore. Ah! Mrs. Weldon, the wind begins to blow steadily from the northwest! God grant that it may keep on; we shall make progress, and good progress. We shall drive in the offing with all our sails set, from the brigantine to the flying-jib!"

Dick Sand had spoken with the confidence of the seaman, who feels that he stands on a good ship, a ship of whose every movement he is master. He was going to take the helm and call his companions to set the sails

properly, when Mrs. Weldon reminded him that he ought first to know the "Pilgrim's" position.

It was, indeed, the first thing to do. Dick Sand went into the captain's cabin for the chart on which the position of the day before was indicated. He could then show Mrs. Weldon that the schooner was in latitude 43° 35', and in longitude 164° 13', for, in the last twenty-four hours, she had not, so to say, made any progress.

Mrs. Weldon leaned over this chart. She looked at the brown color which represented the land on the right of the ocean. It was the coast of South America, an immense barrier thrown between the Pacific and the Atlantic from Cape Horn to the shores of Columbia. To consider it in that way, that chart, which, was then spread out under her eyes, on which was drawn a whole ocean, gave the impression that it would be easy to restore the "Pilgrim's" passengers to their country. It is an illusion which is invariably produced on one who is not familiar with the scale on which marine charts are drawn. And, in fact, it seemed to Mrs. Weldon that the land ought to be in sight, as it was on that piece of paper!

And, meanwhile, on that white page, the "Pilgrim" drawn on an exact scale, would be smaller than the most microscopic of infusoria! That mathematical point, without appreciable dimensions, would appear lost, as it was in reality in the immensity of the Pacific!

Dick Sand himself had not experienced the same impression as Mrs.

Weldon. He knew how far off the land was, and that many hundreds of miles would not suffice to measure the distance from it. But he had taken his part; he had become a man under the responsibility which had fallen upon him.

The moment to act had come. He must profit by this northwest breeze which was blowing up. Contrary winds had given place to favorable winds, and some clouds scattered in the zenith under the cirrous form, indicated that they would blow steadily for at least a certain time.

Dick called Tom and his companions.

"My friends," he said to them, "our ship has no longer any crew but you. I cannot work without your aid. You are not sailors, but you have good arms. Place them, then, at the 'Pilgrim's' service and we can steer her. Every one's salvation depends on the good work of every one on board."

"Mr. Dick," replied Tom, "my companions and I, we are your sailors. Our good will shall not be wanting. All that men can do, commanded by you, we shall do it."

"Well spoken, old Tom," said Mrs. Weldon.

"Yes, well spoken," continued Dick Sand; "but we must be prudent, and I shall not carry too much canvas, so as not to run any risk. Circumstances require a little less speed, but more security. I will

show you, my friends, what each will have to do in the work. As to me, I shall remain at the helm, as long as fatigue does not oblige me to leave it. From time to time a few hours' sleep will be sufficient to restore me. But, during those few hours, it will be very necessary for one of you to take my place. Tom, I shall show you how we steer by means of the mariner's compass. It is not difficult, and, with a little attention, you will soon learn to keep the ship's head in the right direction."

"Whenever you like, Mr. Dick," replied the old black.

"Well," replied the novice, "stay near me at the helm till the end of the day, and if fatigue overcomes me, you will then be able to replace me for a few hours."

"And I," said little Jack, "will I not be able to help my friend, Dick, a little?"

"Yes, dear child," replied Mrs. Weldon, clasping Jack in her arms, "you shall learn to steer, and I am sure that while you are at the helm we shall have good winds."

"Very sure--very sure. Mother, I promise it to you," replied the little boy, clapping his hands.

"Yes," said the young novice, smiling, "good cabin-boys know how to maintain good winds. That is well known by old sailors." Then,

addressing Tom, and the other blacks: "My friends," he said to them, "we are going to put the 'Pilgrim' under full sail. You will only have to do what I shall tell you."

"At your orders," replied Tom, "at your orders, Captain Sand."

* * * * *

CHAPTER X.

THE FOUR DAYS WHICH FOLLOW.

Dick Sand was then captain of the "Pilgrim," and, without losing an instant, he took the necessary measures for putting the ship under full sail.

It was well understood that the passengers could have only one hope--that of reaching some part of the American coast, if not Valparaiso. What Dick Sand counted on doing was to ascertain the direction and speed of the "Pilgrim," so as to get an average. For that, it was sufficient to make each day on the chart the way made, as it has been said, by the log and the compass. There was then on board one of those "patent logs," with an index and helix, which give the speed very exactly for a fixed time. This useful instrument, very easily handled, could render the most useful services, and the blacks were perfectly adapted to work it.

A single cause of error would interfere--the currents. To combat it, reckoning would be insufficient; astronomical observations alone would enable one to render an exact calculation from it. Now, those observations the young novice was still unable to make.

For an instant Dick Sand had thought of bringing the "Pilgrim" back to New Zealand. The passage would be shorter, and he would certainly have

done it if the wind, which, till then, had been contrary, had not become favorable. Better worth while then to steer for America.

In fact, the wind had changed almost to the contrary direction, and now it blew from the northwest with a tendency to freshen. It was then necessary to profit by it and make all the headway possible.

So Dick Sand prepared to put the "Pilgrim" under full sail.

In a schooner brig-rigged, the foremast carries four square sails; the foresail, on the lower mast; above, the top-sail, on the topmast; then, on the top-gallant mast, a top-sail and a royal.

The mainmast, on the contrary, has fewer sails. It only carries a brigantine below, and a fore-staffsail above. Between these two masts, on the stays which support them at the prow, a triple row of triangular sails may be set.

Finally, at the prow, on the bowsprit, and its extreme end, were hauled the three jibs.

The jibs, the brigantine, the fore-staff, and the stay-sails are easily managed. They can be hoisted from the deck without the necessity of climbing the masts, because they are not fastened on the yards by means of rope-bands, which must be previously loosened.

On the contrary, the working of the foremast sails demands much greater

proficiency in seamanship. In fact, when it is necessary to set them, the sailors must climb by the rigging--it may be in the foretop, it may be on the spars of the top-gallant mast, it may be to the top of the said mast--and that, as well in letting them fly as in drawing them in to diminish their surface in reefing them. Thence the necessity of running out on foot-ropes--movable ropes stretched below the yards--of working with one hand while holding on by the other--perilous work for any one who is not used to it. The oscillation from the rolling and pitching of the ship, very much increased by the length of the lever, the flapping of the sails under a stiff breeze, have often sent a man overboard. It was then a truly dangerous operation for Tom and his companions.

Very fortunately, the wind was moderate. The sea had not yet had time to become rough. The rolling and pitching kept within bounds.

When Dick Sand, at Captain Hull's signal, had steered toward the scene of the catastrophe, the "Pilgrim" only carried her jibs, her brigantine, her foresail, and her top-sail. To get the ship under way as quickly as possible, the novice had only to make use of, that is, to counter-brace, the foresail. The blacks had easily helped him in that maneuver.

The question now was to get under full sail, and, to complete the sails, to hoist the top-sails, the royal, the fore-staff, and the stay-sails.

"My friends," said the novice to the five blacks, "do as I tell you, and all will go right."

Dick Sand was standing at the wheel of the helm.

"Go!" cried he. "Tom, let go that rope quickly!"

"Let go?" said Tom, who did not understand that expression.

"Yes, loosen it! Now you, Bat--the same thing! Good! Heave--haul taut. Let us see, pull it in!"

"Like that?" said Bat.

"Yes, like that. Very good. Come, Hercules--strong. A good pull there!"

To say "strong" to Hercules was, perhaps, imprudent. The giant of course gave a pull that brought down the rope.

"Oh! not so strong, my honest fellow!" cried Dick Sand, smiling. "You are going to bring down the masts!"

"I have hardly pulled," replied Hercules.

"Well, only make believe! You will see that that will be enough! Well, slacken--cast off! Make fast--Make fast--like that! Good! All together! Heave--pull on the braces."

And the whole breadth of the foremast, whose larboard braces had been loosened, turned slowly. The wind then swelling the sails imparted a certain speed to the ship.

Dick Sand then had the jib sheet-ropes loosened. Then he called the blacks aft:

"Behold what is done, my friends, and well done. Now let us attend to the mainmast. But break nothing, Hercules."

"I shall try," replied the colossus, without being willing to promise more.

This second operation was quite easy. The main-boom sheet-rope having been let go gently, the brigantine took the wind more regularly, and added its powerful action to that of the forward sails.

The fore-staff was then set above the brigantine, and, as it is simply brailed up, there was nothing to do but bear on the rope, to haul aboard, then to secure it. But Hercules pulled so hard, along with his friend Acteon, without counting little Jack, who had joined them, that the rope broke off.

All three fell backwards--happily, without hurting themselves. Jack was enchanted.

"That's nothing! that's nothing!" cried the novice. "Fasten the two ends together for this time and hoist softly!"

That was done under Dick Sand's eyes, while he had not yet left the helm. The "Pilgrim" was already sailing rapidly, headed to the east, and there was nothing more to be done but keep it in that direction. Nothing easier, because the wind was favorable, and lurches were not to be feared.

"Good, my friends!" said the novice. "You will be good sailors before the end of the voyage!"

"We shall do our best, Captain Sand," replied Tom.

Mrs. Weldon also complimented those honest men.

Little Jack himself received his share of praise, for he had worked bravely.

"Indeed, I believe, Mr. Jack," said Hercules, smiling, "that it was you who broke the rope. What a good little fist you have. Without you we should have done nothing right."

And little Jack, very proud of himself, shook his friend Hercules' hand vigorously.

The setting of the "Pilgrim's" sails was not yet complete. She still

lacked those top-sails whose action is not to be despised under this full-sail movement. Top-sail, royal, stay-sails, would add sensibly to the schooner's speed, and Dick Sand resolved to set them.

This operation would be more difficult than the others, not for the stay-sails, which could be hoisted, hauled aboard and fastened from below, but for the cross-jacks of the foremast. It was necessary to climb to the spars to let them out, and Dick Sand, not wishing to expose any one of his improvised crew, undertook to do it himself.

He then called Tom and put him at the wheel, showing him how he should keep the ship. Then Hercules, Bat, Acteon and Austin being placed, some at the royal halyards, others at those of the top-sails, he proceeded up the mast. To climb the rattlings of the fore-shrouds, then the rattlings of the topmast-shrouds, to gain the spars, that was only play for the young novice. In a minute he was on the foot-rope of the top-sail yard, and he let go the rope-bands which kept the sail bound.

Then he stood on the spars again and climbed on the royal yard, where he let out the sail rapidly.

Dick Sand had finished his task, and seizing one of the starboard backstays, he slid to the deck.

There, under his directions, the two sails were vigorously hauled and fastened, then the two yards hoisted to the block. The stay-sails being set next between the mainmast and the foremast, the work was finished.

Hercules had broken nothing this time.

The "Pilgrim" then carried all the sails that composed her rigging. Doubtless Dick Sand could still add the foremast studding-sails to larboard, but it was difficult work under the present circumstances, and should it be necessary to take them in, in case of a squall, it could not be done fast enough. So the novice stopped there.

Tom was relieved from his post at the wheel, which Dick Sand took charge of again.

The breeze freshened. The "Pilgrim," making a slight turn to starboard, glided rapidly over the surface of the sea, leaving behind her a very flat track, which bore witness to the purity of her water-line.

"We are well under way, Mrs. Weldon," then said Dick Sand, "and, now, may God preserve this favorable wind!"

Mrs. Weldon pressed the young man's hand. Then, fatigued with all the emotions of that last hour, she sought her cabin, and fell into a sort of painful drowsiness, which was not sleep.

The new crew remained on the schooner's deck, watching on the forecastle, and ready to obey Dick Sand's orders--that is to say, to change the set of the sails according to the variations of the wind; but so long as the breeze kept both that force and that direction, there would be positively nothing to do.

During all this time what had become of Cousin Benedict?

Cousin Benedict was occupied in studying with a magnifying glass an articulate which he had at last found on board--a simple orthopter, whose head disappeared under the prothorax; an insect with flat elytrums, with round abdomen, with rather long wings, which belonged to the family of the roaches, and to the species of American cockroaches.

It was exactly while ferreting in Negoro's kitchen, that he had made that precious discovery, and at the moment when the cook was going to crush the said insect pitilessly. Thence anger, which, indeed, Negoro took no notice of.

But this Cousin Benedict, did he know what change had taken place on board since the moment when Captain Hull and his companions had commenced that fatal whale-fishing? Yes, certainly. He was even on the deck when the "Pilgrim" arrived in sight of the remains of the whale-boat. The schooner's crew had then perished before his eyes.

To pretend that this catastrophe had not affected him, would be to accuse his heart. That pity for others that all people feel, he had certainly experienced it. He was equally moved by his cousin's situation. He had come to press Mrs. Weldon's hand, as if to say to her: "Do not be afraid. I am here. I am left to you."

Then Cousin Benedict had turned toward his cabin, doubtless so as to

reflect on the consequences of this disastrous event, and on the energetic measures that he must take. But on his way he had met the cockroach in question, and his desire was--held, however, against certain entomologists--to prove the cockroaches of the phoraspe species, remarkable for their colors, have very different habits from cockroaches properly so called; he had given himself up to the study, forgetting both that there had been a Captain Hull in command of the "Pilgrim," and that that unfortunate had just perished with his crew. The cockroach absorbed him entirely. He did not admire it less, and he made as much time over it as if that horrible insect had been a golden beetle.

The life on board had then returned to its usual course, though every one would remain for a long time yet under the effects of such a keen and unforeseen catastrophe.

During this day Dick Sand was everywhere, so that everything should be in its place, and that he could be prepared for the smallest contingency. The blacks obeyed him with zeal. The most perfect order reigned on board the "Pilgrim." It might then be hoped that all would go well.

On his side, Negoro made no other attempt to resist Dick Sand's authority. He appeared to have tacitly recognized him. Occupied as usual in his narrow kitchen, he was not seen more than before. Besides, at the least infraction--at the first symptom of insubordination, Dick Sand was determined to send him to the hold for the rest of the

passage. At a sign from him, Hercules would take the head cook by the skin of the neck; that would not have taken long. In that case, Nan, who knew how to cook, would replace the cook in his functions. Negoro then could say to himself that he was indispensable, and, as he was closely watched, he seemed unwilling to give any cause of complaint.

The wind, though growing stronger till evening, did not necessitate any change in the "Pilgrim's" sails. Her solid masting, her iron rigging, which was in good condition, would enable her to bear in this condition even a stronger breeze.

During the night it is often the custom to lessen the sails, and particularly to take in the high sails, fore-staff, top-sail, royal, etc. That is prudent, in case some squall of wind should come up suddenly. But Dick Sand believed he could dispense with this precaution. The state of the atmosphere indicated nothing of the kind, and besides, the young novice determined to pass the first night on the deck, intending to have an eye to everything. Then the progress was more rapid, and he longed to be in less desolate parts.

It has been said that the log and the compass were the only instruments which Dick Sand could use, so as to estimate approximately the way made by the "Pilgrim."

During this day the novice threw the log every half-hour, and he noted the indications furnished by the instrument.

As to the instrument which bears the name of compass, there were two on board. One was placed in the binnacle, under the eyes of the man at the helm. Its dial, lighted by day by the diurnal light, by night by two side-lamps, indicated at every moment which way the ship headed--that is, the direction she followed. The other compass was an inverted one, fixed to the bars of the cabin which Captain Hull formerly occupied. By that means, without leaving his chamber, he could always know if the route given was exactly followed, if the man at the helm, from ignorance or negligence, allowed the ship to make too great lurches.

Besides, there is no ship employed in long voyages which does not possess at least two compasses, as she has two chronometers. It is necessary to compare these instruments with each other, and, consequently, control their indications.

The "Pilgrim" was then sufficiently provided for in that respect, and Dick Sand charged his men to take the greatest care of the two compasses, which were so necessary to him.

Now, unfortunately, during the night of the 12th to the 13th of February, while the novice was on watch, and holding the wheel of the helm, a sad accident took place. The inverted compass, which was fastened by a copper ferule to the woodwork of the cabin, broke off and fell on the floor. It was not seen till the next day.

How had the ferule come to break. It was inexplicable enough. It was possible, however, that it was oxydized, and that the pitching and

rolling had broken it from the woodwork. Now, indeed, the sea had been rougher during the night. However it was, the compass was broken in such a manner that it could not be repaired.

Dick Sand was much thwarted. Henceforth he was reduced to trust solely to the compass in the binnacle. Very evidently no one was responsible for the breaking of the second compass, but it might have sad consequences. The novice then took every precaution to keep the other compass beyond the reach of every accident.

Till then, with that exception, all went well on board the "Pilgrim."

Mrs. Weldon, seeing Dick Sand's calmness, had regained confidence. It was not that she had ever yielded to despair. Above all, she counted on the goodness of God. Also, as a sincere and pious Catholic, she comforted herself by prayer.

Dick Sand had arranged so as to remain at the helm during the night. He slept five or six hours in the day, and that seemed enough for him, as he did not feel too much fatigued. During this time Tom or his son Bat took his place at the wheel of the helm, and, thanks to his counsels, they were gradually becoming passable steersmen.

Often Mrs. Weldon and the novice talked to each other. Dick Sand willingly took advice from this intelligent and courageous woman. Each day he showed her on the ship's chart the course run, which he took by reckoning, taking into account only the direction and the speed of the

ship. "See, Mrs. Weldon," he often repeated to her, "with these winds blowing, we cannot fail to reach the coast of South America. I should not like to affirm it, but I verily believe that when our vessel shall arrive in sight of land, it will not be far from Valparaiso."

Mrs. Weldon could not doubt the direction of the vessel was right, favored above all by those winds from the northwest. But how far the "Pilgrim" still seemed to be from the American coast! How many dangers between her and the firm land, only counting those which might come from a change in the state of the sea and the sky!

Jack, indifferent like children of his age, had returned to his usual games, running on the deck, amusing himself with Dingo. He found, of course, that his friend Dick was less with him than formerly; but his mother had made him understand that they must leave the young novice entirely to his occupations. Little Jack had given up to these reasons, and no longer disturbed "Captain Sand."

So passed life on board. The blacks did their work intelligently, and each day became more skilful in the sailor's craft. Tom was naturally the boatswain, and it was he, indeed, whom his companions would have chosen for that office. He commanded the watch while the novice rested, and he had with him his son Bat and Austin. Acteon and Hercules formed the other watch, under Dick Sand's direction. By this means, while one steered, the others watched at the prow.

Even though these parts were deserted, and no collision was really to

be feared, the novice exacted a rigorous watch during the night. He never sailed without having his lights in position--a green light on the starboard, a red light on the larboard--and in that he acted wisely.

All the time, during those nights which Dick Sand passed entirely at the helm, he occasionally felt an irresistible heaviness over him. His hand then steered by pure instinct. It was the effect of a fatigue of which he did not wish to take account.

Now, it happened that during the night of the 13th to the 14th of February, that Dick Sand was very tired, and was obliged to take a few hours' rest. He was replaced at the helm by old Tom.

The sky was covered with thick clouds, which had gathered with the evening, under the influence of the cold air. It was then very dark, and it was impossible to distinguish the high sails lost in the darkness. Hercules and Acteon were on watch on the forecastle.

Aft, the light from the binnacle only gave a faint gleam, which the metallic apparatus of the wheel reflected softly. The ship's lanterns throwing their lights laterally, left the deck of the vessel in profound darkness.

Toward three o'clock in the morning, a kind of hypnotic phenomenon took place, of which old Tom was not even conscious. His eves, which were fixed too long on a luminous point of the binnacle, suddenly lost the power of vision, and he fell into a true anæsthetic sleep.

Not only was he incapable of seeing, but if one had touched or pinched him hard he would probably have felt nothing.

So he did not see a shadow which glided over the deck.

It was Negoro.

Arrived aft, the head cook placed under the binnacle a pretty heavy object which he held in hand.

Then, after observing for an instant the luminous index of the compass, he retired without having been seen.

If, the next day, Dick Sand had perceived that object placed by Negoro under the binnacle, he might have hastened to take it away.

In fact, it was a piece of iron, whose influence had just altered the indications of the compass. The magnetic needle had been deviated, and instead of marking the magnetic north, which differs a little from the north of the world, it marked the northeast. It was then, a deviation of four points; in other words, of half a right angle.

Tom soon recovered from his drowsiness. His eyes were fixed on the compass. He believed, he had reason to believe, that the "Pilgrim" was not in the right direction. He then moved the helm so as to head the ship to the east--at least, he thought so.

But, with the deviation of the needle, which he could not suspect, that point, changed by four points, was the southeast.

And thus, while under the action of a favorable wind, the "Pilgrim" was supposed to follow the direction wished for, she sailed with an error of forty-five degrees in her route!

CHAPTER XI.

TEMPEST.

During the week which followed that event, from the 14th of February to the 21st, no incident took place on board. The wind from the northwest freshened gradually, and the "Pilgrim" sailed rapidly, making on an average one hundred and sixty miles in twenty-four hours. It was nearly all that could be asked of a vessel of that size.

Dick Sand thought the schooner must be approaching those parts more frequented by the merchant vessels which seek to pass from one hemisphere to the other. The novice was always hoping to encounter one of those ships, and he clearly intended either to transfer his passengers, or to borrow some additional sailors, and perhaps an officer. But, though he watched vigilantly, no ship could be signaled, and the sea was always deserted.

Dick Sand continued to be somewhat astonished at that. He had crossed this part of the Pacific several times during his three fishing voyages to the Southern Seas. Now, in the latitude and longitude where his reckoning put him, it was seldom that some English or American ship did not appear, ascending from Cape Horn toward the equator, or coming toward the extreme point of South America.

But what Dick Sand was ignorant of, what he could not even discover,

was that the "Pilgrim" was already in higher latitude--that is to say, more to the south than he supposed. That was so for two reasons:

The first was, that the currents of these parts, whose swiftness the novice could only imperfectly estimate, had contributed--while he could not possibly keep account of them--to throw the ship out of her route.

The second was, that the compass, made inaccurate by Negoro's guilty hand, henceforth only gave incorrect bearings--bearings that, since the loss of the second compass, Dick Sand could not control. So that, believing, and having reason to believe, that he was sailing eastward, in reality, he was sailing southeast. The compass, it was always before his eyes. The log, it was thrown regularly. His two instruments permitted him, in a certain measure, to direct the "Pilgrim," and to estimate the number of miles sailed. But, then, was that sufficient?

However, the novice always did his best to reassure Mrs. Weldon, whom the incidents of this voyage must at times render anxious.

"We shall arrive, we shall arrive!" he repeated. "We shall reach the American coast, here or there; it matters little, on the whole, but we cannot fail to land there!"

"I do not doubt it, Dick."

"Of course, Mrs. Weldon, I should be more at ease if you were not on board--if we had only ourselves to answer for; but----"

"But if I were not on board," replied Mrs. Weldon; "if Cousin Benedict, Jack, Nan and I, had not taken passage on the 'Pilgrim,' and if, on the other hand, Tom and his companions had not been picked up at sea, Dick, there would be only two men here, you and Negoro! What would have become of you, alone with that wicked man, in whom you cannot have confidence? Yes, my child, what would have become of you?"

"I should have begun," replied Dick Sand, resolutely, "by putting Negoro where he could not injure me."

"And you would have worked alone?"

"Yes--alone--with the aid of God!"

The firmness of these words was well calculated to encourage Mrs. Weldon. But, nevertheless, while thinking of her little Jack, she often felt uneasy. If the woman would not show what she experienced as a mother, she did not always succeed in preventing some secret anguish for him to rend her heart.

Meanwhile, if the young novice was not sufficiently advanced in his hydrographic studies to make his point, he possessed a true sailor's scent, when the question was "to tell the weather." The appearance of the sky, for one thing; on the other hand, the indications of the barometer, enabled him to be on his guard. Captain Hull, a good meteorologist, had taught him to consult this instrument, whose

prognostications are remarkably sure.

Here is, in a few words, what the notices relative to the observation of the barometer contain:

1. When, after a rather long continuance of fine weather, the barometer begins to fall in a sudden and continuous manner, rain will certainly fall; but, if the fine weather has had a long duration, the mercury may fall two or three days in the tube of the barometer before any change in the state of the atmosphere may be perceived. Then, the longer the time between the falling of the mercury and the arrival of the rain, the longer will be the duration of rainy weather.

2. If, on the contrary, during a rainy period which has already had a long duration, the barometer commences to rise slowly and regularly, very certainly fine weather will come, and it will last much longer if a long interval elapses between its arrival and the rising of the barometer.

3. In the two cases given, if the change of weather follows immediately the movement of the barometrical column, that change will last only a very short time.

4. If the barometer rises with slowness and in a continuous manner for two or three days, or even more, it announces fine weather, even when the rain will not cease during those three days, and vice versa; but if the barometer rises two days or more during the rain, then, the fine

weather having come, if it commences to fall again, the fine weather will last a very short time, and vice versa.

5. In the spring and in the autumn, a sudden fall of the barometer presages wind. In the summer, if the weather is very warm, it announces a storm. In winter, after a frost of some duration, a rapid falling of the barometrical column announces a change of wind, accompanied by a thaw and rain; but a rising which happens during a frost which has already lasted a certain time, prognosticates snow.

6. Rapid oscillations of the barometer should never be interpreted as presaging dry or rainy weather of any duration. Those indications are given exclusively by the rising or the falling which takes place in a slow and continuous manner.

7. Toward the end of autumn, if after prolonged rainy and windy weather, the barometer begins to rise, that rising announces the passage of the wind to the north and the approach of the frost.

Such are the general consequences to draw from the indications of this precious instrument.

Dick Sand knew all that perfectly well, as he had ascertained for himself in different circumstances of his sailor's life, which made him very skilful in putting himself on his guard against all contingencies.

Now, just toward the 20th of February, the oscillations of the

barometrical column began to preoccupy the young novice, who noted them several times a day with much care. In fact, the barometer began to fall in a slow and continuous manner, which presages rain; but, this rain being delayed, Dick Sand concluded from that, that the bad weather would last. That is what must happen.

But the rain was the wind, and in fact, at that date, the breeze freshened so much that the air was displaced with a velocity of sixty feet a second, say thirty-one miles an hour.

Dick Sand was obliged to take some precautions so as not to risk the "Pilgrim's" masting and sails.

Already he had the royal, the fore-staff, and the flying-jib taken in, and he resolved to do the same with the top-sail, then take in two reefs in the top-sail.

This last operation must present certain difficulties with a crew of little experience. Hesitation would not do, however, and no one hesitated. Dick Sand, accompanied by Bat and Austin, climbed into the rigging of the foremast, and succeeded, not without trouble, in taking in the top-sail. In less threatening weather he would have left the two yards on the mast, but, foreseeing that he would probably be obliged to level that mast, and perhaps even to lay it down upon the deck, he unrigged the two yards and sent them to the deck. In fact, it is understood that when the wind becomes too strong, not only must the sails be diminished, but also the masting. That is a great relief to

the ship, which, carrying less weight above, is no longer so much strained with the rolling and pitching.

This first work accomplished--and it took two hours--Dick Sand and his companions were busy reducing the surface of the top-sail, by taking in two reefs. The "Pilgrim" did not carry, like the majority of modern ships, a double top-sail, which facilitates the operation. It was necessary, then, to work as formerly--that is to say, to run out on the foot-ropes, pull toward you a sail beaten by the wind, and lash it firmly with its reef-lines. It was difficult, long, perilous; but, finally, the diminished top-sail gave less surface to the wind, and the schooner was much relieved.

Dick Sand came down again with Bat and Austin. The "Pilgrim" was then in the sailing condition demanded by that state of the atmosphere which has been qualified as "very stiff."

During the three days which followed, 20th, 21st and 22d of February, the force and direction of the wind were not perceptibly changed. All the time the mercury continued to fall in the barometrical tube, and, on this last day, the novice noted that it kept continually below twenty-eight and seven-tenths inches.

Besides, there was no appearance that the barometer would rise for some time. The aspect of the sky was bad, and extremely windy. Besides, thick fogs covered it constantly. Their stratum was even so deep that the sun was no longer seen, and it would have been difficult to

indicate precisely the place of his setting and rising.

Dick Sand began to be anxious. He no longer left the deck; he hardly slept. However, his moral energy enabled him to drive back his fears to the bottom of his heart.

The next day, February 22d, the breeze appeared to decrease a little in the morning, but Dick Sand did not trust in it. He was right, for in the afternoon the wind freshened again, and the sea became rougher.

Toward four o'clock, Negoro, who was rarely seen, left his post and came up on the forecastle. Dingo, doubtless, was sleeping in some corner, for it did not bark as usual.

Negoro, always silent, remained for half an hour observing the horizon.

Long surges succeeded each other without, as yet, being dashed together. However, they were higher than the force of the wind accounted for. One must conclude from that, that there was very bad weather in the west, perhaps at a rather short distance, and that it would not be long in reaching these parts.

Negoro watched that vast extent of sea, which was greatly troubled, around the "Pilgrim." Then his eyes, always cold and dry, turned toward the sky.

The aspect of the sky was disturbing. The vapors moved with very

different velocities. The clouds of the upper zone traveled more rapidly than those of the low strata of the atmosphere. The case then must be foreseen, in which those heavy masses would fall, and might change into a tempest, perhaps a hurricane, what was yet only a very stiff breeze--that is to say, a displacement of the air at the rate of forty-three miles an hour.

Whether Negoro was not a man to be frightened, or whether he understood nothing of the threats of the weather, he did not appear to be affected. However, an evil smile glided over his lips. One would say, at the end of his observations, that this state of things was rather calculated to please him than to displease him. One moment he mounted on the bowsprit and crawled as far as the ropes, so as to extend his range of vision, as if he were seeking some indication on the horizon. Then he descended again, and tranquilly, without having pronounced a single word, without having made a gesture, he regained the crew's quarters.

Meanwhile, in the midst of all these fearful conjunctions, there remained one happy circumstance which each one on board ought to remember; it was that this wind, violent as it was or might become, was favorable, and that the "Pilgrim" seemed to be rapidly making the American coast. If, indeed, the weather did not turn to tempest, this navigation would continue to be accomplished without great danger, and the veritable perils would only spring up when the question would be to land on some badly ascertained point of the coast.

That was indeed what Dick Sand was already asking himself. When he should once make the land, how should he act, if he did not encounter some pilot, some one who knew the coast? In case the bad weather should oblige him to seek a port of refuge, what should he do, because that coast was to him absolutely unknown? Indeed, he had not yet to trouble himself with that contingency. However, when the hour should come, he would be obliged to adopt some plan. Well, Dick Sand adopted one.

During the thirteen days which elapsed, from the 24th of February to the 9th of March, the state of the atmosphere did not change in any perceptible manner. The sky was always loaded with heavy fogs. For a few hours the wind went down, then it began to blow again with the same force. Two or three times the barometer rose again, but its oscillation, comprising a dozen lines, was too sudden to announce a change of weather and a return of more manageable winds. Besides the barometrical column fell again almost immediately, and nothing could inspire any hope of the end of that bad weather within a short period.

Terrible storms burst forth also, which very seriously disturbed Dick Sand. Two or three times the lightning struck the waves only a few cable-lengths from the ship. Then the rain fell in torrents, and made those whirlpools of half condensed vapors, which surrounded the "Pilgrim" with a thick mist.

For entire hours the man at the lookout saw nothing, and the ship sailed at random.

Even though the ship, although resting firmly on the waves, was horribly shaken, Mrs. Weldon, fortunately, supported this rolling and pitching without being incommoded. But her little boy was very much tried, and she was obliged to give him all her care.

As to Cousin Benedict, he was no more sick than the American cockroaches which he made his society, and he passed his time in studying, as if he were quietly settled in his study in San Francisco.

Very fortunately, also, Tom and his companions found themselves little sensitive to sea-sickness, and they could continue to come to the young novice's aid--well accustomed, himself, to all those excessive movements of a ship which flies before the weather.

The "Pilgrim" ran rapidly under this reduced sail, and already Dick Sand foresaw that he would be obliged to reduce it again. But he wished to hold out as long as it would be possible to do so without danger. According to his reckoning, the coast ought to be no longer distant. So they watched with care. All the time the novice could hardly trust his companions' eyes to discover the first indications of land. In fact, no matter what good sight he may have, he who is not accustomed to interrogating the sea horizons is not skilful in distinguishing the first contours of a coast, above all in the middle of fogs. So Dick Sand must watch himself, and he often climbed as far as the spars to see better. But no sign yet of the American coast.

This astonished him, and Mrs. Weldon, by some words which escaped him,

understood that astonishment.

It was the 9th of March. The novice kept at the prow, sometimes observing the sea and the sky, sometimes looking at the "Pilgrim's" masting, which began to strain under the force of the wind.

"You see nothing yet, Dick?" she asked him, at a moment when he had just left the long lookout.

"Nothing, Mrs. Weldon, nothing," replied the novice; and meanwhile, the horizon seems to clear a little under this violent wind, which is going to blow still harder."

"And, according to you, Dick, the American coast ought not to be distant now."

"It cannot be, Mrs. Weldon, and if anything astonishes me, it is not having made it yet."

"Meanwhile," continued Mrs. Weldon, "the ship has always followed the right course."

"Always, since the wind settled in the northwest," replied Dick Sand; "that is to say, since the day when we lost our unfortunate captain and his crew. That was the 10th of February. We are now on the 9th of March. There have been then, twenty-seven since that."

"But at that period what distance were we from the coast?" asked Mrs. Weldon.

"About four thousand five hundred miles, Mrs. Weldon. If there are things about which I have more than a doubt, I can at least guarantee this figure within about twenty miles."

"And what has been the ship's speed?"

"On an average, a hundred and eighty miles a day since the wind freshened," replied the novice. "So, I am surprised at not being in sight of land. And, what is still more extraordinary, is that we do not meet even a single one of those vessels which generally frequent these parts!"

"Could you not be deceived, Dick," returned Mrs. Weldon, "in estimating the 'Pilgrim's' speed?"

"No, Mrs. Weldon. On that point I could not be mistaken. The log has been thrown every half hour, and I have taken its indications very accurately. Wait, I am going to have it thrown anew, and you will see that we are sailing at this moment at the rate of ten miles an hour, which would give us more than two hundred miles a day."

Dick Sand called Tom, and gave him the order to throw the log, an operation to which the old black was now quite accustomed.

The log, firmly fastened to the end of the line, was brought and sent out.

Twenty-five fathoms were hardly unrolled, when the rope suddenly slackened between Tom's hands.

"Ah! Mr. Dick!" cried he.

"Well, Tom?"

"The rope has broken!"

"Broken!" cried Dick Sand. "And the log is lost!"

Old Tom showed the end of the rope which remained in his hand.

It was only too true. It was not the fastening which had failed. The rope had broken in the middle. And, nevertheless, that rope was of the first quality. It must have been, then, that the strands of the rope at the point of rupture were singularly worn! They were, in fact, and Dick Sand could tell that when he had the end of the rope in his hands! But had they become so by use? was what the novice, become suspicious, asked himself.

However that was, the log was now lost, and Dick Sand had no longer any means of telling exactly the speed of his ship. In the way of instruments, he only possessed one compass, and he did not know that

its indications were false.

Mrs. Weldon saw him so saddened by this accident, that she did not wish to insist, and, with a very heavy heart, she retired into her cabin.

But if the "Pilgrim's" speed and consequently the way sailed over could no longer be estimated, it was easy to tell that the ship's headway was not diminishing.

In fact, the next day, March 10th, the barometer fell to twenty-eight and two-tenths inches. It was the announcement of one of those blasts of wind which travel as much as sixty miles an hour.

It became urgent to change once more the state of the sails, so as not to risk the security of the vessel.

Dick Sand resolved to bring down his top-gallant mast and his fore-staff, and to furl his low sails, so as to sail under his foretop-mast stay-sail and the low reef of his top-sail.

He called Tom and his companions to help him in that difficult operation, which, unfortunately, could not be executed with rapidity.

And meanwhile time pressed, for the tempest already declared itself with violence.

Dick Sands, Austin, Acteon, and Bat climbed into the masting, while Tom

remained at the wheel, and Hercules on the deck, so as to slacken the ropes, as soon as he was commanded.

After numerous efforts, the fore-staff and the top-gallant mast were gotten down upon the deck, not without these honest men having a hundred times risked being precipitated into the sea, the rolling shook the masting to such an extent. Then, the top-sail having been lessened and the foresail furled, the schooner carried only her foretop-mast stay-sail and the low reef of the top-sail.

Even though her sails were then extremely reduced, the "Pilgrim" continued, none the less, to sail with excessive velocity.

The 12th the weather took a still worse appearance. On that day, at dawn, Dick Sand saw, not without terror, the barometer fall to twenty-seven and nine-tenths inches. It was a real tempest which was raging, and such that the "Pilgrim" could not carry even the little sail she had left.

Dick Sand, seeing that his top-sail was going to be torn, gave the order to furl. But it was in vain. A more violent gust struck the ship at that moment, and tore off the sail. Austin, who was on the yard of the foretop-sail, was struck by the larboard sheet-rope. Wounded, but rather slightly, he could climb down again to the deck.

Dick Sand, extremely anxious, had but one thought. It was that the ship, urged with such fury, was going to be dashed to pieces every

moment; for, according to his calculation, the rocks of the coast could not be distant. He then returned to the prow, but he saw nothing which had the appearance of land, and then, came back to the wheel.

A moment after Negoro came on deck. There, suddenly, as if in spite of himself, his arm was extended toward a point of the horizon. One would say that he recognized some high land in the fogs!

Still, once more he smiled wickedly, and without saying anything of what he had been able to see, he returned to his post.

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CHAPTER XII.

ON THE HORIZON.

At that date the tempest took its most terrible form, that of the hurricane. The wind had set in from the southwest. The air moved with a velocity of ninety miles an hour. It was indeed a hurricane, in fact, one of those terrible windstorms which wrecks all the ships of a roadstead, and which, even on land, the most solid structures cannot resist. Such was the one which, on the 25th of July, 1825, devastated Guadaloupe. When heavy cannons, carrying balls of twenty-four pounds, are raised from their carriages, one may imagine what would become of a ship which has no other point of support than an unsteady sea? And meanwhile, it is to its mobility alone that she may owe her salvation. She yields to the wind, and, provided she is strongly built, she is in a condition to brave the most violent surges. That was the case with the "Pilgrim."

A few minutes after the top-sail had been torn in pieces, the foretop-mast stay-sail was in its turn torn off. Dick Sand must then give up the idea of setting even a storm-jib--a small sail of strong linen, which would make the ship easier to govern.

The "Pilgrim" then ran without canvas, but the wind took effect on her hull, her masts, her rigging, and nothing more was needed to impart to her an excessive velocity. Sometimes even she seemed to emerge from the

waves, and it was to be believed that she hardly grazed them. Under these circumstances, the rolling of the ship, tossed about on the enormous billows raised by the tempest, was frightful. There was danger of receiving some monstrous surge aft. Those mountains of water ran faster than the schooner, threatening to strike her stern if she did not rise pretty fast. That is extreme danger for every ship which scuds before the tempest. But what could be done to ward off that contingency? Greater speed could not be imparted to the "Pilgrim," because she would not have kept the smallest piece of canvas. She must then be managed as much as possible by means of the helm, whose action was often powerless.

Dick Sand no longer left the helm. He was lashed by the waist, so as not to be carried away by some surge. Tom and Bat, fastened also, stood near to help him. Hercules and Acteon, bound to the bitts, watched forward. As to Mrs. Weldon, to Little Jack, to Cousin Benedict, to Nan, they remained, by order of the novice, in the aft cabins. Mrs. Weldon would have preferred to have remained on deck, but Dick Sand was strongly opposed to it; it would be exposing herself uselessly.

All the scuttles had been hermetically nailed up. It was hoped that they would resist if some formidable billow should fall on the ship. If, by any mischance, they should yield under the weight of these avalanches, the ship might fill and sink. Very fortunately, also, the stowage had been well attended to, so that, notwithstanding the terrible tossing of the vessel, her cargo was not moved about.

Dick Sand had again reduced the number of hours which he gave to sleep. So Mrs. Weldon began to fear that he would take sick. She made him consent to take some repose.

Now, it was while he was still lying down, during the night of the 13th to the 14th of March, that a new incident took place.

Tom and Bat were aft, when Negoro, who rarely appeared on that part of the deck, drew near, and even seemed to wish to enter into conversation with them; but Tom and his son did not reply to him.

Suddenly, in a violent rolling of the ship, Negoro fell, and he would, doubtless, have been thrown into the sea if he had not held on to the binnacle.

Tom gave a cry, fearing the compass would be broken.

Dick Sand, in a moment of wakefulness, heard that cry, and rushing out of his quarters, he ran aft.

Negoro had already risen, but he held in his hand the piece of iron which he had just taken from under the binnacle, and he hid it before Dick Sand could see it.

Was it, then, Negoro's interest for the magnetic needle to return to its true direction? Yes, for these southwest winds served him now!

"What's the matter?" asked the novice.

"It's that cook of misfortune, who has just fallen on the compass!" replied Tom.

At those words Dick Sand, in the greatest anxiety, leaned over the binnacle. It was in good condition; the compass, lighted by two lamps, rested as usual on its concentric circles.

The young novice was greatly affected. The breaking of the only compass on board would be an irreparable misfortune.

But what Dick Sand could not observe was that, since the taking away of the piece of iron, the needle had returned to its normal position, and indicated exactly the magnetic north as it ought to be under that meridian.

Meanwhile, if Negoro could not be made responsible for a fall which seemed to be involuntary, Dick Sand had reason to be astonished that he was, at that hour, aft in the ship.

"What are you doing there?" he asked him.

"What I please," replied Negoro.

"You say----" cried Dick Sand, who could not restrain his anger.

"I say," replied the head cook, "that there is no rule which forbids walking aft."

"Well, I make that the rule," replied Dick Sand, "and I forbid you, remember, to come aft."

"Indeed!" replied Negoro.

That man, so entirely under self-control, then made a menacing gesture.

The novice drew a revolver from his pocket, and pointed it at the head cook.

"Negoro," said he, "recollect that I am never without this revolver, and that on the first act of insubordination I shall blow out your brains!"

At that moment Negoro felt himself irresistibly bent to the deck.

It was Hercules, who had just simply laid his heavy hand on Negoro's shoulder.

"Captain Sand," said the giant, "do you want me to throw this rascal overboard? He will regale the fishes, who are not hard to please!"

"Not yet," replied Dick Sand.

Negoro rose as soon as the black's hand no longer weighed upon him. But, in passing Hercules:

"Accursed negro," murmured he, "I'll pay you back!"

Meanwhile, the wind had just changed; at least, it seemed to have veered round forty-five degrees. And, notwithstanding, a singular thing, which struck the novice, nothing in the condition of the sea indicated that change. The ship headed the same way all the time, but the wind and the waves, instead of taking her directly aft, now struck her by the larboard quarter--a very dangerous situation, which exposes a ship to receive bad surges. So Dick Sand was obliged to veer round four points to continue to scud before the tempest.

But, on the other hand, his attention was awakened more than ever. He asked himself if there was not some connection between Negoro's fall and the breaking of the first compass. What did the head cook intend to do there? Had he some interest in putting the second compass out of service also? What could that interest be? There was no explanation of that. Must not Negoro desire, as they all desired, to land on the American coast as soon as possible?

When Dick Sand spoke of this incident to Mrs. Weldon, the latter, though she shared his distrust in a certain measure, could find no plausible motive for what would be criminal premeditation on the part of the head cook.

However, as a matter of prudence, Negoro was well watched. Thereafter he attended to the novice's orders and he did not risk coming aft in the ship, where his duties never called him. Besides, Dingo having been installed there permanently, the cook took earn to keep away.

During all that week the tempest did not abate. The barometer fell again. From the 14th to the 26th of March it was impossible to profit by a single calm to set a few sails. The "Pilgrim" scudded to the northeast with a speed which could not be less than two hundred miles in twenty-four hours, and still the land did not appear!--that land, America, which is thrown like an immense barrier between the Atlantic and the Pacific, over an extent of more than a hundred and twenty degrees!

Dick Sand asked himself if he was not a fool, if he was still in his right mind, if, for so many days, unknown to him, he was not sailing in a false direction. No, he could not find fault with himself on that point. The sun, even though he could not perceive it in the fogs, always rose before him to set behind him. But, then, that land, had it disappeared? That America, on which his vessel would go to pieces, perhaps, where was it, if it was not there? Be it the Southern Continent or the Northern Continent--for anything way possible in that chaos--the "Pilgrim" could not miss either one or the other. What had happened since the beginning of this frightful tempest? What was still going on, as that coast, whether it should prove salvation or destruction, did not appear? Must Dick Sand suppose, then, that he was deceived by his compass, whose indications he could no longer control,

because the second compass was lacking to make that control? Truly, he had that fear which the absence of all land might justify.

So, when he was at the helm, Dick Sand did not cease to devour the chart with his eyes. But he interrogated it in vain; it could not give him the solution of an enigma which, in the situation in which Negoro had placed him, was incomprehensible for him, as it would have been for any one else.

On this day, however, the 26th of March, towards eight o'clock in the morning, an incident of the greatest importance took place.

Hercules, on watch forward, gave this cry:

"Land! land!"

Dick Sand sprang to the forecastle. Hercules could not have eyes like a seaman. Was he not mistaken?

"Land?" cried Dick Sand.

"There," replied Hercules, showing an almost imperceptible point on the horizon in the northeast.

They hardly heard each other speak in the midst of the roaring of the sea and the sky.

"You have seen the land?" said the novice.

"Yes," replied Hercules.

And his hand was still stretched out to larboard forward.

The novice looked. He saw nothing.

At that moment, Mrs. Weldon, who had heard the cry given by Hercules, came up on deck, notwithstanding her promise not to come there.

"Madam!" cried Dick Sand.

Mrs. Weldon, unable to make herself heard, tried, for herself, to perceive that land signaled by the black, and she seemed to have concentrated all her life in her eyes.

It must be believed that Hercules's hand indicated badly the point of the horizon which he wished to show: neither Mrs. Weldon nor the novice could see anything.

But, suddenly, Dick Sand in turn stretched out his hand.

"Yes! yes! land!" said he.

A kind of summit had just appeared in an opening in the fog. His sailor's eyes could not deceive him.

"At last!" cried he; "at last!"

He clang feverishly to the netting. Mrs. Weldon, sustained by Hercules, continued to watch that land almost despaired of.

The coast, formed by that high summit, rose at a distance of ten miles to leeward.

The opening being completely made in a breaking of the clouds, they saw it again more distinctly. Doubtless it was some promontory of the American continent. The "Pilgrim," without sails, was not in a condition to head toward it, but it could not fail to make the land there.

That could be only a question of a few hours. Now, it was eight o'clock in the morning. Then, very certainly, before noon the "Pilgrim" would be near the land.

At a sign from Dick Sand, Hercules led Mrs. Weldon aft again, for she could not bear up against the violence of the pitching.

The novice remained forward for another instant, then he returned to the helm, near old Tom.

At last, then, he saw that coast, so slowly made, so ardently desired! but it was now with a feeling of terror.

In fact, in the "Pilgrim's" present condition, that is to say, scudding before the tempest, land to leeward, was shipwreck with all its terrible contingencies.

Two hours passed away. The promontory was then seen off from the ship.

At that moment they saw Negoro come on deck. This time he regarded the coast with extreme attention, shook his head like a man who would know what to believe, and went down again, after pronouncing a name that nobody could hear.

Dick Sand himself sought to perceive the coast, which ought to round off behind the promontory.

Two hours rolled by. The promontory was standing on the larboard stern, but the coast was not yet to be traced.

Meanwhile the sky cleared at the horizon, and a high coast, like the American land, bordered by the immense chain of the Andes, should be visible for more than twenty miles.

Dick Sand took his telescope and moved it slowly over the whole eastern horizon.

Nothing! He could see nothing!

At two o'clock in the afternoon every trace of land had disappeared behind the "Pilgrim." Forward, the telescope could not seize any outline whatsoever of a coast, high or low.

Then a cry escaped Dick Sand. Immediately leaving the deck, he rushed into the cabin, where Mrs. Weldon was with little Jack, Nan, and Cousin Benedict.

"An island! That was only an island!" said he.

"An island, Dick! but what?" asked Mrs. Weldon.

"The chart will tell us," replied the novice.

And running to his berth, he brought the ship's chart.

"There, Mrs. Weldon, there!" said he. "That land which we have seen, it can only be this point, lost in the middle of the Pacific! It can only be the Isle of Paques; there is no other in these parts."

"And we have already left it behind?" asked Mrs. Weldon.

"Yes, well to the windward of us."

Mrs. Weldon looked attentively at the Isle of Paques, which only formed an imperceptible point on the chart.

"And at what distance is it from the American coast?"

"Thirty-five degrees."

"Which makes----"

"About two thousand miles."

"But then the 'Pilgrim' has not sailed, if we are still so far from the continent?"

"Mrs. Weldon," replied Dick Sand, who passed his hand over his forehead for a moment, as if to concentrate his ideas, "I do not know--I cannot explain this incredible delay! No! I cannot--unless the indications of the compass have been false? But that island can only be the Isle of Paques, because we have been obliged to scud before the wind to the northeast, and we must thank Heaven, which has permitted me to mark our position! Yes, it is still two thousand miles from the coast! I know, at last, where the tempest has blown us, and, if it abates, we shall be able to land on the American continent with some chance of safety. Now, at least, our ship is no longer lost on the immensity of the Pacific!"

This confidence, shown by the young novice, was shared by all those who heard him speak. Mrs. Weldon, herself, gave way to it. It seemed, indeed, that these poor people were at the end of their troubles, and that the "Pilgrim," being to the windward of her port, had only to wait for the open sea to enter it! The Isle of Paques--by its true name

Vai-Hon--discovered by David in 1686, visited by Cook and Laperouse, is situated 27° south latitude and 112° east longitude. If the schooner had been thus led more than fifteen degrees to the north, that was evidently due to that tempest from the southwest, before which it had been obliged to scud.

Then the "Pilgrim" was still two thousand miles from the coast. However, under the impetus of that wind which blew like thunder, it must, in less than ten days, reach some point of the coast of South America.

But could they not hope, as the novice had said, that the weather would become more manageable, and that it would be possible to set some sail, when they should make the land?

It was still Dick Sand's hope. He said to himself that this hurricane, which had lasted so many days, would end perhaps by "killing itself." And now that, thanks to the appearance of the Isle of Paques, he knew exactly his position, he had reason to believe that, once master of his vessel again, he would know how to lead her to a safe place.

Yes! to have had knowledge of that isolated point in the middle of the sea, as by a providential favor, that had restored confidence to Dick Sand; if he was going all the time at the caprice of a hurricane, which he could not subdue, at least, he was no longer going quite blindfold.

Besides, the "Pilgrim," well-built and rigged, had suffered little

during those rude attacks of the tempest. Her damages reduced themselves to the loss of the top-sail and the foretop-mast stay-sail--a loss which it would be easy to repair. Not a drop of water had penetrated through the well-stanched seams of the hull and the deck. The pumps were perfectly free. In this respect there was nothing to fear.

There was, then, this interminable hurricane, whose fury nothing seemed able to moderate. If, in a certain measure, Dick Sand could put his ship in a condition to struggle against the violent storm, he could not order that wind to moderate, those waves to be still, that sky to become serene again. On board, if he was "master after God," outside the ship, God alone commanded the winds and the waves.

* * * * *

CHAPTER XIII.

LAND! LAND!

Meanwhile, that confidence with which Dick Sand's heart filled instinctively, was going to be partly justified.

The next day, March 27th, the column of mercury rose in the barometrical tube. The oscillation was neither sudden nor considerable--a few lines only--but the progression seemed likely to continue. The tempest was evidently going to enter its decreasing period, and, if the sea did remain excessively rough, they could tell that the wind was going down, veering slightly to the west.

Dick Sand could not yet think of using any sail. The smallest sail would be carried away. However, he hoped that twenty-four hours would not elapse before it would be possible for him to rig a storm-jib.

During the night, in fact, the wind went down quite noticeably, if they compared it to what it had been till then, and the ship was less tossed by those violent rollings which had threatened to break her in pieces.

The passengers began to appear on deck again. They no longer ran the risk of being carried away by some surge from the sea.

Mrs. Weldon was the first to leave the hatchway where Dick Sand, from

prudent motives, had obliged them to shut themselves up during the whole duration of that long tempest. She came to talk with the novice, whom a truly superhuman will had rendered capable of resisting so much fatigue. Thin, pale under his sunburnt complexion, he might well be weakened by the loss of that sleep so necessary at his age. No, his valiant nature resisted everything. Perhaps he would pay dearly some day for that period of trial. But that was not the moment to allow himself to be cast down. Dick Sand had said all that to himself. Mrs. Weldon found him as energetic as he had ever been.

And then he had confidence, that brave Sand, and if confidence does not command itself, at least it commands.

"Dick, my dear child, my captain," said Mrs. Weldon, holding out her hand to the young novice.

"Ah! Mrs. Weldon," exclaimed Dick Sand, smiling, "you disobey your captain. You return on deck, you leave your cabin in spite of his--prayers."

"Yes, I disobey you," replied Mrs. Weldon; "but I have, as it were, a presentiment that the tempest is going down or is going to become calm."

"It is becoming calm, in fact, Mrs. Weldon," replied the novice. "You are not mistaken. The barometer has not fallen since yesterday. The wind has moderated, and I have reason to believe that our hardest trials are over."

"Heaven hears you, Dick. All! you have suffered much, my poor child! You have done there----"

"Only my duty, Mrs. Weldon."

"But at last will you be able to take some rest?"

"Rest!" replied the novice; "I have no need of rest, Mrs. Weldon. I am well, thank God, and it is necessary for me to keep up to the end. You have called me captain, and I shall remain captain till the moment when all the 'Pilgrim's' passengers shall be in safety."

"Dick," returned Mrs. Weldon, "my husband and I, we shall never forget what you have just done."

"God has done all," replied Dick Sand; "all!"

"My child, I repeat it, that by your moral and physical energy, you have shown yourself a man--a man fit to command, and before long, as soon as your studies are finished--my husband will not contradict me--you will command for the house of James W. Weldon!"

"I--I----" exclaimed Dick Sand, whose eyes filled with tears.

"Dick," replied Mrs. Weldon, "you are already our child by adoption, and now, you are our son, the deliverer of your mother, and of your

little brother Jack. My dear Dick, I embrace you for my husband and for myself!"

The courageous woman did not wish to give way while clasping the young novice in her arms, but her heart overflowed. As to Dick Sand's feelings, what pen could do them justice? He asked himself if he could not do more than give his life for his benefactors, and he accepted in advance all the trials which might come upon him in the future.

After this conversation Dick Sand felt stronger. If the wind should become so moderate that he should be able to hoist some canvas, he did not doubt being able to steer his ship to a port where all those which it carried would at last be in safety.

On the 29th, the wind having moderated a little, Dick Sand thought of setting the foresail and the top-sail, consequently to increase the speed of the "Pilgrim" while directing her course.

"Come, Tom; come, my friends!" cried he, when he went on deck at daybreak; "come, I need your arms!"

"We are ready, Captain Sand," replied old Tom.

"Ready for everything," added Hercules. "There was nothing to do during that tempest, and I begin to grow rusty."

"You should have blown with your big mouth," said little Jack; "I bet

you would have been as strong as the wind!"

"That is an idea, Jack," replied Dick Sand, laughing. "When there is a calm we shall make Hercules blow on the sails."

"At your service, Mister Dick!" replied the brave black, inflating his cheeks like a gigantic Boreas.

"Now, my friends," continued the novice, we are to begin by binding a spare sail to the yard, because our top-sail was carried away in the hurricane. It will be difficult, perhaps, but it must be done."

"It shall be done!" replied Acteon.

"Can I help you?" asked little Jack, always ready to work.

"Yes, my Jack," replied the novice. "You will take your place at the wheel, with our friend Bat, and you will help him to steer."

If little Jack was proud of being assistant helmsman on the "Pilgrim," it is superfluous to say so.

"Now to work," continued Dick Sand, "and we must expose ourselves as little as possible."

The blacks, guided by the novice, went to work at once. To fasten a top-sail to its yard presented some difficulties for Tom and his

companions. First the rolled up sail must be hoisted, then fastened to the yard.

However, Dick Sand commanded so well, and was so well obeyed, that after an hour's work the sail was fastened to its yard, the yard hoisted, and the top-sail properly set with two reefs.

As to the foresail and the second jib, which had been furled before the tempest, those sails were set without a great deal of trouble, in spite of the force of the wind.

At last, on that day, at ten o'clock in the morning, the "Pilgrim" was sailing under her foresail, her top-sail, and her jib.

Dick Sand had not judged it prudent to set more sail. The canvas which he carried ought to assure him, as long as the wind did not moderate, a speed of at least two hundred miles in twenty-four hours, and he did not need any greater to reach the American coast before ten days.

The novice was indeed satisfied when, returning to the wheel, he again took his post, after thanking Master Jack, assistant helmsman of the "Pilgrim." He was no longer at the mercy of the waves. He was making headway. His joy will be understood by all those who are somewhat familiar with the things of the sea.

The next day the clouds still ran with the same velocity, but they left large openings between them, through which the rays of the sun made

their way to the surface of the waters. The "Pilgrim" was at times overspread with them. A good thing is that vivifying light! Sometimes it was extinguished behind a large mass of vapors which came up in the east, then it reappeared, to disappear again, but the weather was becoming fine again.

The scuttles had been opened to ventilate the interior of the ship. A salubrious air penetrated the hold, the rear hatchway, the crew's quarters. They put the wet sails to dry, stretching them out in the sun. The deck was also cleaned. Dick Sand did not wish his ship to arrive in port without having made a bit of toilet. Without overworking the crew, a few hours spent each day at that work would bring it to a good end.

Though the novice could no longer throw the log, he was so accustomed to estimating the headway of a ship that he could take a close account of her speed. He had then no doubt of reaching land before seven days, and he gave that opinion to Mrs. Weldon, after showing her, on the chart, the probable position of the ship.

"Well, at what point of the coast shall we arrive, my dear Dick?" she asked him.

"Here, Mrs. Weldon," replied the novice, indicating that long coast line which extends from Peru to Chili. "I do not know how to be more exact. Here is the Isle of Paques, that we have left behind in the west, and, by the direction of the wind, which has been constant, I

conclude that we shall reach land in the east. Ports are quite numerous on that coast, but to name the one we shall have in view when we make the land is impossible at this moment."

"Well, Dick, whichever it may be, that port will be welcome."

"Yes, Mrs. Weldon, and you will certainly find there the means to return promptly to San Francisco. The Pacific Navigation Company has a very well organized service on this coast. Its steamers touch at the principal points of the coast; nothing will be easier than to take passage for California."

"Then you do not count on bringing the 'Pilgrim' to San Francisco?" asked Mrs. Weldon.

"Yes, after having put you on shore, Mrs. Weldon. If we can procure an officer and a crew, we are going to discharge our cargo at Valparaiso, as Captain Hull would have done. Then we shall return to our own port. But that would delay you too much, and, though very sorry to be separated from you----"

"Well, Dick," replied Mrs. Weldon, "we shall see later what must be done. Tell me, you seem to fear the dangers which the land presents."

"In fact, they are to be feared," replied the novice, "but I am always hoping to meet some ship in these parts, and I am even very much surprised at not seeing any. If only one should pass, we would enter

into communication with her; she would give us our exact situation, which would greatly facilitate our arrival in sight of land."

"Are there not pilots who do service along this coast?" asked Mrs. Weldon.

"There ought to be," replied Dick Sand, "but much nearer land. We must then continue to approach it."

"And if we do not meet a pilot?" asked Mrs. Weldon, who kept on questioning him in order to know how the young novice would prepare for all contingencies.

"In that case, Mrs. Weldon, either the weather will be clear, the wind moderate, and I shall endeavor to sail up the coast sufficiently near to find a refuge, or the wind will be stronger, and then----"

"Then what will you do, Dick?"

"Then, in the present condition of the 'Pilgrim,'" replied Dick Sand, "once near the land, it will be very difficult to set off again."

"What will you do?" repeated Mrs. Weldon.

"I shall be forced to run my ship aground," replied the novice, whose brow darkened for a moment. "Ah! it is a hard extremity. God grant that we may not be reduced to that. But, I repeat it, Mrs. Weldon, the

appearance of the sky is reassuring, and it is impossible for a vessel or a pilot-boat not to meet us. Then, good hope. We are headed for the land, we shall see it before long."

Yes, to run a ship aground is a last extremity, to which the most energetic sailor does not resort without fear! Thus, Dick Sand did not wish to foresee it, while he had some chances of escaping it.

For several days there were, in the state of the atmosphere, alternatives which, anew, made the novice very uneasy. The wind kept in the condition of a stiff breeze all the time, and certain oscillations of the barometrical column indicated that it tended to freshen. Dick Sand then asked himself, not without apprehension, if he would be again forced to scud without sails. He had so much interest in keeping at least his top-sail, that he resolved to do so so long as it was not likely to be carried away. But, to secure the solidity of the masts, he had the shrouds and backstays hauled taut. Above all, all unnecessary risk must be avoided, as the situation would become one of the gravest, if the "Pilgrim" should be disabled by losing her masts.

Once or twice, also, the barometer rising gave reason to fear that the wind might change point for point; that is to say, that it might pass to the east. It would then be necessary to sail close to the wind!

A new anxiety for Dick Sand. What should he do with a contrary wind? Tack about? But if he was obliged to come to that, what new delays and what risks of being thrown into the offing.

Happily those fears were not realized. The wind, after shifting for several days, blowing sometimes from the north, sometimes from the south, settled definitely in the west. But it was always a strong breeze, almost a gale, which strained the masting.

It was the 5th of April. So, then, more than two months had already elapsed since the "Pilgrim" had left New Zealand. For twenty days a contrary wind and long calms had retarded her course. Then she was in a favorable condition to reach land rapidly. Her speed must even have been very considerable during the tempest. Dick Sand estimated its average at not less than two hundred miles a day! How, then, had he not yet made the coast? Did it flee before the "Pilgrim?" It was absolutely inexplicable.

And, nevertheless, no land was signaled, though one of the blacks kept watch constantly in the crossbars.

Dick Sand often ascended there himself. There, with a telescope to his eyes, he sought to discover some appearance of mountains. The Andes chain is very high. It was there in the zone of the clouds that he must seek some peak, emerging from the vapors of the horizon.

Several times Tom and his companions were deceived by false indications of land. They were only vapors of an odd form, which rose in the background. It happened sometimes that these honest men were obstinate in their belief; but, after a certain time, they were forced to

acknowledge that they had been dupes of an optical illusion. The pretended land, moved away, changed form and finished by disappearing completely.

On the 6th of April there was no longer any doubt possible.

It was eight o'clock in the morning. Dick Sand had just ascended into the bars. At that moment the fogs were condensed under the first rays of the sun, and the horizon was pretty clearly defined.

From Dick Sand's lips escaped at last the so long expected cry:

"Land! land before us!"

At that cry every one ran on deck, little Jack, curious as folks are at that age, Mrs. Weldon, whose trials were going to cease with the landing, Tom and his companions, who were at last going to set foot again on the American continent, Cousin Benedict himself, who had great hope of picking up quite a rich collection of new insects for himself.

Negoro, alone, did not appear.

Each then saw what Dick Sand had seen, some very distinctly, others with the eyes of faith. But on the part of the novice, so accustomed to observe sea horizons, there was no error possible, and an hour after, it must be allowed he was not deceived.

At a distance of about four miles to the east stretched a rather low coast, or at least what appeared such. It must be commanded behind by the high chain of the Andes, but the last zone of clouds did not allow the summits to be perceived.

The "Pilgrim" sailed directly and rapidly to this coast, which grew larger to the eye.

Two hours after it was only three miles away.

This part of the coast ended in the northeast by a pretty high cape, which covered a sort of roadstead protected from land winds. On the contrary, in the southeast, it lengthened out like a thin peninsula.

A few trees crowned a succession of low cliffs, which were then clearly defined under the sky. But it was evident, the geographical character of the country being given, that the high mountain chain of the Andes formed their background.

Moreover, no habitation in sight, no port, no river mouth, which might serve as a harbor for a vessel.

At that moment the "Pilgrim" was running right on the land. With the reduced sail which she carried, the winds driving her to the coast, Dick Sand would not be able to set off from it.

In front lay a long band of reefs, on which the sea was foaming all

white. They saw the waves unfurl half way up the cliffs. There must be a monstrous surf there.

Dick Sand, after remaining on the forecastle to observe the coast, returned aft, and, without saying a word, he took the helm.

The wind was freshening all the time. The schooner was soon only a mile from the shore.

Dick Sand then perceived a sort of little cove, into which he resolved to steer; but, before reaching it, he must cross a line of reefs, among which it would be difficult to follow a channel. The surf indicated that the water was shallow everywhere.

At that moment Dingo, who was going backwards and forwards on the deck, dashed forward, and, looking at the land, gave some lamentable barks. One would say that the dog recognized the coast, and that its instinct recalled some sad remembrance.

Negoro must have heard it, for an irresistible sentiment led him out of his cabin; and although he had reason to fear the dog, he came almost immediately to lean on the netting.

Very fortunately for him Dingo, whose sad barks were all the time being addressed to that land, did not perceive him.

Negoro looked at that furious surf, and that did not appear to frighten

him. Mrs. Weldon, who was looking at him, thought she saw his face redden a little, and that for an instant his features were contracted.

Then, did Negoro know this point of the continent where the winds were driving the "Pilgrim?"

At that moment Dick Sand left the wheel, which he gave back to old Tom. For a last time he came to look at the cove, which gradually opened. Then:

"Mrs. Weldon," said he, in a firm voice, "I have no longer any hope of finding a harbor! Before half an hour, in spite of all my efforts, the 'Pilgrim' will be on the reefs! We must run aground! I shall not bring the ship into port! I am forced to lose her to save you! But, between your safety and hers, I do not hesitate!"

"You have done all that depended on you, Dick?" asked Mrs. Weldon.

"All," replied the young novice.

And at once he made his preparations for stranding the ship.

First of all, Mrs. Weldon, Jack, Cousin Benedict and Nan, must put on life-preservers. Dick Sand, Tom and the blacks, good swimmers, also took measures to gain the coast, in case they should be precipitated into the sea.

Hercules would take charge of Mrs. Weldon. The novice took little Jack under his care.

Cousin Benedict, very tranquil, however, reappeared on the deck with his entomologist box strapped to his shoulder. The novice commended him to Bat and Austin. As to Negoro, his singular calmness said plainly enough that he had no need of anybody's aid.

Dick Sand, by a supreme precaution, had also brought on the forecastle ten barrels of the cargo containing whale's oil.

That oil, properly poured the moment the "Pilgrim" would be in the surf, ought to calm the sea for an instant, in lubricating, so to say, the molecules of water, and that operation would perhaps facilitate the ship's passage between the reefs. Dick Sand did not wish to neglect anything which might secure the common safety.

All these precautions taken, the novice returned to take his place at the wheel.

The "Pilgrim" was only two cables' lengths from the coast, that is, almost touching the reefs, her starboard side already bathed in the white foam of the surf. Each moment the novice thought that the vessel's keel was going to strike some rocky bottom.

Suddenly, Dick Sand knew, by a change in the color of the water, that a channel lengthened out among the reefs. He must enter it bravely

without hesitating, so as to make the coast as near as possible to the shore.

The novice did not hesitate. A movement of the helm thrust the ship into the narrow and sinuous channel. In this place the sea was still more furious, and the waves dashed on the deck.

The blacks were posted forward, near the barrels, waiting for the novice's orders.

"Pour the oil--pour!" exclaimed Dick Sand.

Under this oil, which was poured on it in quantities, the sea grew calm, as by enchantment, only to become more terrible again a moment after.

The "Pilgrim" glided rapidly over those lubricated waters and headed straight for the shore.

Suddenly a shock took place. The ship, lifted by a formidable wave, had just stranded, and her masting had fallen without wounding anybody.

The "Pilgrim's" hull, damaged by the collision, was invaded by the water with extreme violence. But the shore was only half a cable's length off, and a chain of small blackish rocks enabled it to be reached quite easily.

So, ten minutes after, all those carried by the "Pilgrim" had landed at the foot of the cliff.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BEST TO DO.

So then, after a voyage long delayed by calms, then favored by winds from the northwest and from the southwest--a voyage which had not lasted less than seventy-four days--the "Pilgrim" had just run aground!

However, Mrs. Weldon. and her companions thanked Providence, because they were in safety. In fact, it was on a continent, and not on one of the fatal isles of Polynesia, that the tempest had thrown them. Their return to their country, from any point of South America on which they should land, ought not, it seemed, to present serious difficulties.

As to the "Pilgrim," she was lost. She was only a carcass without value, of which the surf was going to disperse the débris in a few hours. It would be impossible to save anything. But if Dick Sand had not that joy of bringing back a vessel intact to his ship-owner, at least, thanks to him, those who sailed in her were safe and sound on some hospitable coast, and among them, the wife and child of James W. Weldon.

As to the question of knowing on what part of the American coast the schooner had been wrecked, they might dispute it for a long time. Was it, as Dick Sand must suppose, on the shore of Peru? Perhaps, for he knew, even by the bearings of the Isle of Paques, that the "Pilgrim"

had been thrown to the northeast under the action of the winds; and also, without doubt, under the influence of the currents of the equatorial zone. From the forty-third degree of latitude, it had, indeed, been possible to drift to the fifteenth.

It was then important to determine, as soon as possible, the precise point of the coast where the schooner had just been lost. Granted that this coast was that of Peru, ports, towns and villages were not lacking, and consequently it would be easy to gain some inhabited place. As to this part of the coast, it seemed deserted.

It was a narrow beach, strewed with black rocks, shut off by a cliff of medium height, very irregularly cut up by large funnels due to the rupture of the rock. Here and there a few gentle declivities gave access to its crest.

In the north, at a quarter of a mile from the stranding place, was the mouth of a little river, which could not have been perceived from the offing. On its banks hung numerous rhizomas, sorts of mangroves, essentially distinct from their congeners of India.

The crest of the cliff--that was soon discovered--was overhung by a thick forest, whose verdant masses undulated before the eyes, and extended as far as the mountains in the background. There, if Cousin Benedict had been a botanist, how many trees, new to him, would not have failed to provoke his admiration.

There were high baobabs--to which, however, an extraordinary longevity has been falsely attributed--the bark of which resembles Egyptian syenite, Bourbon palms, white pines, tamarind-trees, pepper-plants of a peculiar species, and a hundred other plants that an American is not accustomed to see in the northern region of the New Continent.

But, a circumstance rather curious, among those forest productions one would not meet a single specimen of that numerous family of palm-trees which counts more than a thousand species, spread in profusion over almost the whole surface of the globe.

Above the sea-shore a great number of very noisy birds were flying, which belonged for the greater part to different varieties of swallows, of black plumage, with a steel-blue shade, but of a light chestnut color on the upper part of the head. Here and there also rose some partridges, with necks entirely white, and of a gray color.

Mrs. Weldon and Dick Sand observed that these different birds did not appear to be at all wild. They approached without fearing anything. Then, had they not yet learned to fear the presence of man, and was this coast so deserted that the detonation of a firearm had never been heard there?

At the edge of the rocks were walking some pelicans of the species of "pelican minor," occupied in filling with little fish the sack which they carry between the branches of their lower jaw. Some gulls, coming from the offing, commenced to fly about around the "Pilgrim."

Those birds were the only living creatures that seemed to frequent this part of the coast, without counting, indeed, numbers of interesting insects that Cousin Benedict would well know how to discover. But, however little Jack would have it, one could not ask them the name of the country; in order to learn it, it would be necessary to address some native. There were none there, or at least, there was not one to be seen. No habitation, hut, or cabin, neither in the north, beyond the little river, nor in the south, nor finally on the upper part of the cliff, in the midst of the trees of the thick forest. No smoke ascended into the air, no indication, mark, or imprint indicated that this portion of the continent was visited by human beings. Dick Sand continued to be very much surprised.

"Where are we? Where can we be?" he asked himself. "What! nobody to speak to?"

Nobody, in truth, and surely, if any native had approached, Dingo would have scented him, and announced him by a bark. The dog went backward and forward on the strand, his nose to the ground, his tail down, growling secretly--certainly very singular behavior--but neither betraying the approach of man nor of any animal whatsoever.

"Dick, look at Dingo!" said Mrs. Weldon.

"Yes, that is very strange," replied the novice. "It seems as if he were trying to recover a scent."

"Very strange, indeed," murmured Mrs. Weldon; then, continuing, "what is Negoro doing?" she asked.

"He is doing what Dingo is doing," replied Dick Sand. "He goes, he comes! After all, he is free here. I have no longer the right to control him. His service ended with the stranding of the Pilgrim.'"

In fact, Negoro surveyed the strand, turned back, and looked at the shore and the cliff like a man trying to recall recollections and to fix them. Did he, then, know this country? He would probably have refused to reply to that question if it had been asked. The best thing was still to have nothing to do with that very unsociable personage. Dick Sand soon saw him walk from the side of the little river, and when Negoro had disappeared on the other side of the cliff, he ceased to think of him.

Dingo had indeed barked when the cook had arrived on the steep bank, but became silent almost immediately.

It was necessary, now, to consider the most pressing wants. Now, the most pressing was to find a refuge, a shelter of some kind, where they could install themselves for the time, and partake of some nourishment. Then they would take counsel, and they would decide what it would be convenient to do.

As to food, they had not to trouble themselves. Without speaking of the

resources which the country must offer, the ship's store-room had emptied itself for the benefit of the survivors of the shipwreck. The surf had thrown here and there among the rocks, then uncovered by the ebb-tide, a great quantity of objects. Tom and his companions had already picked up some barrels of biscuit, boxes of alimentary preserves, cases of dried meat. The water not having yet damaged them, food for the little troop was secured for more time, doubtless, than they would require to reach a town or a village. In that respect there was nothing to fear. These different waifs, already put in a safe place, could no longer be taken back by a rising sea.

Neither was sweet water lacking. First of all Dick Sand had taken care to send Hercules to the little river for a few pints. But it was a cask which the vigorous negro brought back on his shoulder, after having filled it with water fresh and pure, which the ebb of the tide left perfectly drinkable.

As to a fire, if it were necessary to light one, dead wood was not lacking in the neighborhood, and the roots of the old mangroves ought to furnish all the fuel of which they would have need. Old Tom, an ardent smoker, was provided with a certain quantity of German tinder, well preserved in a box hermetically closed, and when they wanted it, he would only have to strike the tinder-box with the flint of the strand.

It remained, then, to discover the hole in which the little troop would lie down, in case they must take one night's rest before setting out.

And, indeed, it was little Jack who found the bedroom in question, While trotting about at the foot of the cliff, he discovered, behind a turn of the rock, one of those grottoes well polished, well hollowed out, which the sea herself digs, when the waves, enlarged by the tempest, beat the coast.

The young child was delighted. He called his mother with cries of joy, and triumphantly showed her his discovery.

"Good, my Jack!" replied Mrs. Weldon. "If we were Robinson Crusoes, destined to live a long time on this shore, we should not forget to give your name to that grotto!"

The grotto was only from ten to twelve feet long, and as many wide; but, in little Jack's eyes, it was an enormous cavern. At all events, it must suffice to contain the shipwrecked ones; and, as Mrs. Weldon and Nan noted with satisfaction, it was very dry. The moon being then in her first quarter, they need not fear that those neap-tides would reach the foot of the cliff, and the grotto in consequence. Then, nothing more was needed for a few hours' rest.

Ten minutes after everybody was stretched out on a carpet of sea-weed. Negoro himself thought he must rejoin the little troop and take his part of the repast, which was going to be made in common. Doubtless he had not judged it proper to venture alone under the thick forest, through which the winding river made its way.

It was one o'clock in the afternoon. The preserved meat, the biscuit, the sweet water, with the addition of a few drops of rum, of which Bat had saved a quarter cask, made the requisites for this repast. But if Negoro took part in it, he did not at all mingle in the conversation, in which were discussed the measures demanded by the situation of the shipwrecked. All the time, without appearing to do so, he listened to it, and doubtless profited by what he heard.

During this time Dingo, who had not been forgotten, watched outside the grotto. They could be at ease. No living being would show himself on the strand without the faithful animal giving the alarm.

Mrs. Weldon, holding her little Jack, half lying and almost asleep on her lap, began to speak.

"Dick, my friend," said she, "in the name of all, I thank you for the devotion that you have shown us till now; but we do not consider you free yet. You will be our guide on land, as you were our captain at sea. We place every confidence in you. Speak, then! What must we do?"

Mrs. Weldon, old Nan, Tom and his companions, all had their eyes fixed on the young novice. Negoro himself looked at him with a singular persistence. Evidently, what Dick Sand was going to reply interested him very particularly.

Dick Sand reflected for a few moments. Then:

"Mrs. Weldon," said he, "the important thing is to know, first, where we are. I believe that our ship can only have made the land on that portion of the American sea-coast which forms the Peruvian shore. The winds and currents must have carried her as far as that latitude. But are we here in some southern province of Peru, that is to say on the least inhabited part which borders upon the pampas? Maybe so. I would even willingly believe it, seeing this beach so desolate, and, it must be, but little frequented. In that case, we might be very far from the nearest town, which would be unfortunate."

"Well, what is to be done?" repeated Mrs. Weldon.

"My advice," replied Dick Sand, "would be not to leave this shelter till we know our situation. To-morrow, after a night's rest, two of us could go to discover it. They would endeavor, without going too far, to meet some natives, to inform themselves from them, and return to the grotto. It is not possible that, in a radius of ten or twelve miles, we find nobody."

"To separate!" said Mrs. Weldon.

"That seems necessary to me," replied the novice. "If no information can be picked up, if, as is not impossible, the country is absolutely desolate, well, we shall consider some other way of extricating ourselves."

"And which of us shall go to explore?" asked Mrs. Weldon, after a moment's reflection.

"That is yet to be decided," replied Dick Sand. "At all events, I think that you, Mrs. Weldon, Jack, Mr. Benedict, and Nan, ought not to quit this grotto. Bat, Hercules, Acteon, and Austin should remain near you, while Tom and I should go forward. Negoro, doubtless, will prefer to remain here?" added Dick Sand, looking at the head-cook.

"Probably," replied Negoro, who was not a man to commit himself any more than that.

"We should take Dingo with us," continued the novice. "He would be useful to us during our exploration."

Dingo, hearing his name pronounced, reappeared at the entrance of the grotto, and seemed to approve of Dick Sand's projects by a little bark.

Since the novice had made this proposition, Mrs. Weldon remained pensive. Her repugnance to the idea of a separation, even short, was very serious. Might it not happen that the shipwreck of the "Pilgrim" would soon be known to the Indian tribes who frequented the sea-shore, either to the north or to the south, and in case some plunderers of the wrecks thrown on the shore should present themselves, was it not better for all to be united to repulse them?

That objection, made to the novice's proposition, truly merited a

discussion.

It fell, however, before Dick Sand's arguments, who observed that the Indians ought not to be confounded with the savages of Africa or Polynesia, and any aggression on their part was probably not to be feared. But to entangle themselves in this country without even knowing to what province of South America it belonged, nor at what distance the nearest town of that province was situated, was to expose themselves to many fatigues. Doubtless separation might have its inconveniences, but far less than marching blindly into the midst of a forest which appeared to stretch as far as the base of the mountains.

"Besides," repeated Dick Sand, persistently, "I cannot admit that this separation will be of long duration, and I even affirm that it will not be so. After two days, at the most, if Tom and I have come across neither habitation nor inhabitant, we shall return to the grotto. But that is too improbable, and we shall not have advanced twenty miles into the interior of the country before we shall evidently be satisfied about its geographical situation. I may be mistaken in my calculation, after all, because the means of fixing it astronomically have failed me, and it is not impossible for us to be in a higher or lower latitude."

"Yes--you are certainly right, my child," replied Mrs. Weldon, in great anxiety.

"And you, Mr. Benedict," asked Dick Sand, "what do you think of this

project?"

"I?" replied Cousin Benedict.

"Yes; what is your advice?"

"I have no advice," replied Cousin Benedict. "I find everything proposed, good, and I shall do everything that you wish. Do you wish to remain here one day or two? that suits me, and I shall employ my time in studying this shore from a purely entomological point of view."

"Do, then, according to your wish," said Mrs. Weldon to Dick Sand. "We shall remain here, and you shall depart with old Tom."

"That is agreed upon," said Cousin Benedict, in the most tranquil manner in the world. "As for me, I am going to pay a visit to the insects of the country."

"Do not go far away, Mr. Benedict," said the novice. "We urge you strongly not to do it."

"Do not be uneasy, my boy."

"And above all, do not bring back too many musquitoes," added old Tom.

A few moments after, the entomologist, his precious tin box strapped to his shoulders, left the grotto.

Almost at the same time Negoro abandoned it also. It appeared quite natural to that man to, be always occupied with himself. But, while Cousin Benedict clambered up the slopes of the cliff to go to explore the border of the forest, he, turning round toward the river, went away with slow steps and disappeared, a second time ascending the steep bank.

Jack slept all the time. Mrs. Weldon, leaving him on Nan's knees, then descended toward the strand. Dick Sand and his companions followed her. The question was, to see if the state of the sea then would permit them to go as far as the "Pilgrim's" hull, where there were still many objects which might be useful to the little troop.

The rocks on which the schooner had been wrecked were now dry. In the midst of the débris of all kinds stood the ship's carcass, which the high sea had partly covered again. That astonished Dick Sand, for he knew that the tides are only very moderate on the American sea-shore of the Pacific. But, after all, this phenomenon might be explained by the fury of the wind which beat the coast.

On seeing their ship again, Mrs. Weldon and her companions experienced a painful impression. It was there that they had lived for long days, there that they had suffered. The aspect of that poor ship, half broken, having neither mast nor sails, lying on her side like a being deprived of life, sadly grieved their hearts. But they must visit this hull, before the sea should come to finish demolishing it.

Dick Sand and the blacks could easily make their way into the interior, after having hoisted themselves on deck by means of the ropes which hung over the "Pilgrim's" side. While Tom, Hercules, Bat, and Austin employed themselves in taking from the storeroom all that might be useful, as much eatables as liquids, the novice made his way into the arsenal. Thanks to God, the water had not invaded this part of the ship, whose rear had remained out of the water after the stranding.

There Dick Sand found four guns in good condition, excellent Remingtons from Purdy & Co.'s factory, as well as a hundred cartridges, carefully shut up in their cartridge-boxes. There was material to arm his little band, and put it in a state of defense, if, contrary to all expectation, the Indians attacked him on the way.

The novice did not neglect to take a pocket-lantern; but the ship's charts, laid in a forward quarter and damaged by the water, were beyond use.

There were also in the "Pilgrim's" arsenal some of those solid cutlasses which serve to cut up whales. Dick Sand chose six, destined to complete the arming of his companions, and he did not forget to bring an inoffensive child's gun, which belonged to little Jack.

As to the other objects still held by the ship, they had either been dispersed, or they could no longer be used. Besides, it was useless to overburden themselves for the few days the journey would last. In food, in arms, in munitions, they were more than provided for. Meanwhile,

Dick Sand, by Mrs. Weldon's advice, did not neglect to take all the money which he found on board--about five hundred dollars.

That was a small sum, indeed! Mrs. Weldon had carried a larger amount herself and she did not find it again.

Who, then, except Negoro, had been able to visit the ship before them and to lay hands on Captain Hull's and Mrs. Weldon's reserve? No one but he, surely, could be suspected. However, Dick Sand hesitated a moment. All that he knew and all that he saw of him was that everything was to be feared from that concentrated nature, from whom the misfortunes of others could snatch a smile. Yes, Negoro was an evil being, but must they conclude from that that he was a criminal? It was painful to Dick Sand's character to go as far as that. And, meanwhile, could suspicion rest on any other? No, those honest negroes had not left the grotto for an instant, while Negoro had wandered over the beach. He alone must be guilty. Dick Sand then resolved to question Negoro, and, if necessary, have him searched when he returned. He wished to know decidedly what to believe.

The sun was then going down to the horizon. At that date he had not yet crossed the equator to carry heat and light into the northern hemisphere, but he was approaching it. He fell, then, almost perpendicularly to that circular line where the sea and the sky meet. Twilight was short, darkness fell promptly--which confirmed the novice in the thought that he had landed on a point of the coast situated between the tropic of Capricorn and the equator.

Mrs. Weldon, Dick Sand, and the blacks then returned to the grotto, where they must take some hours' rest.

"The night will still be stormy," observed Tom, pointing to the horizon laden with heavy clouds.

"Yes," replied Dick Sand, "there is a strong breeze blowing up. But what matter, at present? Our poor ship is lost, and the tempest can no longer reach us?"

"God's will be done!" said Mrs. Weldon.

It was agreed that during that night, which would be very dark, each of the blacks would watch turn about at the entrance to the grotto. They could, besides, count upon Dingo to keep a careful watch.

They then perceived that Cousin Benedict had not returned.

Hercules called him with all the strength of his powerful lungs, and almost immediately they saw the entomologist coming down the slopes of the cliff, at the risk of breaking his neck.

Cousin Benedict was literally furious. He had not found a single new insect in the forest--no, not one--which was fit to figure in his collection. Scorpions, scolopendras, and other myriapodes, as many as he could wish, and even more, were discovered. And we know that Cousin

Benedict did not interest himself in myriapodes.

"It was not worth the trouble," added he, "to travel five or six thousand miles, to have braved the tempest, to be wrecked on the coast, and not meet one of those American hexapodes, which do honor to an entomological museum! No; the game was not worth the candle!"

As a conclusion, Cousin Benedict asked to go away. He did not wish to remain another hour on that detested shore.

Mrs. Weldon calmed her large child. They made him hope that he would be more fortunate the next day, and all went to lie down in the grotto, to sleep there till sunrise, when Tom observed that Negoro had not yet returned, though night had arrived.

"Where can he be?" asked Mrs. Weldon.

"What matter!" said Bat.

"On the contrary, it does matter," replied Mrs. Weldon. "I should prefer having that man still near us."

"Doubtless, Mrs. Weldon," replied Dick Sand; "but if he has forsaken our company voluntarily, I do not see how we could oblige him to rejoin us. Who knows but he has his reasons for avoiding us forever?"

And taking Mrs. Weldon aside, Dick Sand confided to her his suspicions.

He was not astonished to find that she had them also. Only they differed on one point.

"If Negoro reappears," said Mrs. Weldon, "he will have put the product of his theft in a safe place. Take my advice. What we had better do, not being able to convict him, will be to hide our suspicions from him, and let him believe that we are his dupes."

Mrs. Weldon was right. Dick Sand took her advice.

However, Negoro was called several times.

He did not reply. Either he was still too far away to hear, or he did not wish to return.

The blacks did not regret being rid of his presence; but, as Mrs. Weldon had just said, perhaps he was still more to be feared afar than near. And, moreover, how explain that Negoro would venture alone into that unknown country? Had he then lost his way, and on this dark night was he vainly seeking the way to the grotto?

Mrs. Weldon and Dick Sand did not know what to think. However it was, they could not, in order to wait for Negoro, deprive themselves of a repose so necessary to all.

At that moment the dog, which was running on the strand, barked aloud.

"What is the matter with Dingo?" asked Mrs. Weldon.

"We must, indeed, find out," replied the novice. "Perhaps it is Negoro coming back."

At once Hercules, Bat, Austin, and Dick Sand took their way to the mouth of the river.

But, arrived at the bank, they neither saw nor heard anything. Dingo now was silent.

Dick Sand and the blacks returned to the grotto.

The going to sleep was organized as well as possible. Each of the blacks prepared himself to watch in turn outside. But Mrs. Weldon, uneasy, could not sleep. It seemed to her that this land so ardently desired did not give her what she had been led to hope for, security for hers, and rest for herself.

* * * * *

CHAPTER XV.

HARRIS.

The next day, April 7th, Austin, who was on guard at sunrise, saw Dingo run barking to the little river. Almost immediately Mrs. Weldon, Dick Sand and the blacks came out of the grotto.

Decidedly there was something there.

"Dingo has scented a living creature, man or beast," said the novice.

"At all events it was not Negoro," observed Tom, "for Dingo would bark with fury."

"If it is not Negoro, where can he be?" asked Mrs. Weldon, giving Dick Sand a look which was only understood by him; "and if it is not he, who, then, is it?"

"We are going to see, Mrs. Weldon," replied the novice. Then, addressing Bat, Austin, and Hercules, "Arm yourselves, my friends, and come!"

Each of the blacks took a gun and a cutlass, as Dick Sand had done. A cartridge was slipped into the breech of the Remingtons, and, thus armed, all four went to the bank of the river.

Mrs. Weldon, Tom, and Acteon remained at the entrance of the grotto, where little Jack and Nan still rested by themselves.

The sun was then rising. His rays, intercepted by the high mountains in the east, did not reach the cliff directly; but as far as the western horizon, the sea sparkled under the first fires of day.

Dick Sand and his companions followed the strand of the shore, the curve of which joined the mouth of the river.

There Dingo, motionless, and as if on guard, was continually barking.

It was evident that he saw or scented some native.

And, in fact, it was no longer against Negoro, against its enemy on board the ship, that the dog had a grudge this time.

At that moment a man turned the last plane of the cliff. He advanced prudently to the strand, and, by his familiar gestures, he sought to calm Dingo. They saw that he did not care to face the anger of the vigorous animal.

"It is not Negoro!" said Hercules.

"We cannot lose by the change," replied Bat.

"No," said the novice. "It is probably some native, who will spare us the ennui of a separation. We are at last going to know exactly where we are."

And all four, putting their guns back on their shoulders, went rapidly toward the unknown.

The latter, on seeing them approach, at first gave signs of the greatest surprise. Very certainly, he did not expect to meet strangers on that part of the coast. Evidently, also, he had not yet perceived the remains of the "Pilgrim," otherwise the presence of the shipwrecked would very naturally be explained to him. Besides, during the night the surf had finished demolishing the ship's hull; there was nothing left but the wrecks that floated in the offing.

At the first moment the unknown, seeing four armed men marching toward him, made a movement as if he would retrace his steps. He carried a gun in a shoulder-belt, which passed rapidly into his hand, and from his hand to his shoulder. They felt that he was not reassured.

Dick Sand made a gesture of salutation, which doubtless the unknown understood, for, after some hesitation, he continued to advance.

Dick Sand could then examine him with attention.

He was a vigorous man, forty years old at the most, his eyes bright, his hair and beard gray, his skin sunburnt like that of a nomad who has

always lived in the open air, in the forest, or on the plain. A kind of blouse of tanned skin served him for a close coat, a large hat covered his head, leather boots came up above his knees, and spurs with large rowels sounded from their high heels.

What Dick Sand noticed at first--and which was so, in fact--was that he had before him, not one of those Indians, habitual rovers over the pampas, but one of those adventurers of foreign blood, often not very commendable, who are frequently met with in those distant countries.

It also seemed, by his rather familiar attitude, by the reddish color of a few hairs of his beard, that this unknown must be of Anglo-Saxon origin. At all events, he was neither an Indian nor a Spaniard.

And that appeared certain, when in answer to Dick Sand, who said to him in English, "Welcome!" he replied in the same language and without any accent.

"Welcome yourself, my young friend," said the unknown, advancing toward the novice, whose hand he pressed.

As to the blacks, he contented himself with making a gesture to them without speaking to them.

"You are English?" he asked the novice.

"Americans," replied Dick Sand.

"From the South?"

"From the North."

This reply seemed to please the unknown, who shook the novice's hand more vigorously and this time in very a American manner.

"And may I know, my young friend," he asked, "how you find yourself on this coast?"

But, at that moment, without waiting till the novice had replied to his question, the unknown took off his hat and bowed.

Mrs. Weldon had advanced as far as the steep bank, and she then found herself facing him.

It was she who replied to this question.

"Sir," said she, "we are shipwrecked ones whose ship was broken to pieces yesterday on these reefs."

An expression of pity spread over the unknown's face, whose eyes sought the vessel which had been stranded.

"There is nothing left of our ship," added the novice. "The surf has finished the work of demolishing it during the night."

"And our first question," continued Mrs. Weldon, "will be to ask you where we are."

"But you are on the sea-coast of South America," replied the unknown, who appeared surprised at the question. "Can you have any doubt about that?"

"Yes, sir, for the tempest had been able to make us deviate from our route," replied Dick Sand. "But I shall ask where we are more exactly. On the coast of Peru, I think."

"No, my young friend, no! A little more to the south! You are wrecked on the Bolivian coast."

"Ah!" exclaimed Dick Sand.

"And you are even on that southern part of Bolivia which borders on Chili."

"Then what is that cape?" asked Dick Sand, pointing to the promontory on the north.

"I cannot tell you the name," replied the unknown, "for if I know the country in the interior pretty well from having often traversed it, it is my first visit to this shore."

Dick Sand reflected on what he had just learned. That only half astonished him, for his calculation might have, and indeed must have, deceived him, concerning the currents; but the error was not considerable. In fact, he believed himself somewhere between the twenty-seventh and the thirtieth parallel, from the bearings he had taken from the Isle of Paques, and it was on the twenty-fifth parallel that he was wrecked. There was no impossibility in the "Pilgrim's" having deviated by relatively small digression, in such a long passage.

Besides, there was no reason to doubt the unknown's assertions, and, as that coast was that of lower Bolivia there was nothing astonishing in its being so deserted.

"Sir," then said Dick Sand, "after your reply I must conclude that we are at a rather great distance from Lima."

"Oh! Lima is far away--over there--in the north!"

Mrs. Weldon, made suspicious first of all by Negoro's disappearance, observed the newly-arrived with extreme attention; but she could discover nothing, either in his attitude or in his manner of expressing himself which could lead her to suspect his good faith.

"Sir," said she, "without doubt my question is not rash. You do not seem to be of Peruvian origin?"

"I am American as you are, madam," said the unknown, who waited for an

instant for the American lady to tell him her name.

"Mrs. Weldon," replied the latter.

"I? My name is Harris and I was born in South Carolina. But here it is twenty years since I left my country for the pampas of Bolivia, and it gives me pleasure to see compatriots."

"You live in this part of the province, Mr. Harris?" again asked Mrs. Weldon.

"No, Mrs. Weldon," replied Harris, "I live in the South, on the Chilian frontier; but at this present moment I am going to Atacama, in the northeast."

"Are we then on the borders of the desert of that name?" asked Dick Sand.

"Precisely, my young friend, and this desert extends far beyond the mountains which shut off the horizon."

"The desert of Atacama?" repeated Dick Sand.

"Yes," replied Harris. "This desert is like a country by itself, in this vast South America, from which it differs in many respects. It is, at the same time, the most curious and the least known portion of this continent."

"And you travel alone?" asked Mrs. Weldon.

"Oh, it is not the first time that I have taken this journey!" replied the American. "There is, two hundred miles from here, an important farm, the Farm of San Felice, which belongs to one of my brothers, and it is to his house that I am going for my trade. If you wish to follow me you will be well received, and the means of transport to gain the town of Atacama will not fail you. My brother will be happy to furnish, them."

These offers, made freely, could only prepossess in favor of the American, who immediately continued, addressing Mrs. Weldon:

"These blacks are your slaves?"

And he pointed to Tom and his companions.

"We have no longer any slaves in the United States," replied Mrs. Weldon, quickly. "The North abolished slavery long ago, and the South has been obliged to follow the example of the North!"

"Ah! that is so," replied Harris. "I had forgotten that the war of 1862 had decided that grave question. I ask those honest men's pardon for it," added Harris, with that delicate irony which a Southerner must put into his language when speaking to blacks. "But on seeing those gentlemen in your service, I believed----"

"They are not, and have never been, in my service, sir," replied Mrs. Weldon, gravely.

"We should be honored in serving you, Mrs. Weldon," then said old Tom. "But, as Mr. Harris knows, we do not belong to anybody. I have been a slave myself, it is true, and sold as such in Africa, when I was only six years old; but my son Bat, here, was born of an enfranchised father, and, as to our companions, they were born of free parents."

"I can only congratulate you about it," replied Harris, in a tone which Mrs. Weldon did not find sufficiently serious. "In this land of Bolivia, also, we have no slaves. Then you have nothing to fear, and you can go about as freely here as in the New England States."

At that moment little Jack, followed by Nan, came out of the grotto rubbing his eyes. Then, perceiving his mother, he ran to her. Mrs. Weldon embraced him tenderly.

"The charming little boy!" said the American, approaching Jack.

"It is my son," replied Mrs. Weldon.

"Oh, Mrs. Weldon, you must have been doubly tried, because your child has been exposed to so many dangers."

"God has brought him out of them safe and sound, as He has us, Mr.

Harris," replied Mrs. Weldon.

"Will you permit me to kiss him on his pretty cheeks?" asked Harris.

"Willingly," replied Mrs. Weldon.

But Mr. Harris's face, it appeared, did not please little Jack, for he clung more closely to his mother.

"Hold!" said Harris, "you do not want me to embrace you? You are afraid of me, my good little man?"

"Excuse him, sir," Mrs. Weldon hastened to say. "It is timidity on his part."

"Good! we shall become better acquainted," replied Harris. "Once at the Farm, he will amuse himself mounting a gentle pony, which will tell him good things of me."

But the offer of the gentle pony did not succeed in cajoling Jack any more than the proposition to embrace Mr. Harris.

Mrs. Weldon, thus opposed, hastened to change the conversation. They must not offend a man who had so obligingly offered his services.

During this time Dick Sand was reflecting on the proposition which had been made to them so opportunely, to gain the Farm of San Felice. It

was, as Harris had said, a journey of over two hundred miles, sometimes through forests, sometimes through plains--a very fatiguing journey, certainly, because there were absolutely no means of transport.

The young novice then presented some observations to that effect, and waited for the reply the American was going to make.

"The journey is a little long, indeed," replied Harris, "but I have there, a few hundred feet behind the steep bank, a horse which I count on offering to Mrs. Weldon and her son. For us, there is nothing difficult, nor even very fatiguing in making the journey on foot. Besides, when I spoke of two hundred miles, it was by following, as I have already done, the course of this river. But if we go through the forest, our distance will be shortened by at least eighty miles. Now, at the rate of ten miles a day, it seems to me that we shall arrive at the Farm without too much distress."

Mrs. Weldon thanked the American.

"You cannot thank me better than by accepting," replied Harris. "Though I have never crossed this forest, I do not believe I shall be embarrassed in finding the way, being sufficiently accustomed to the pampas. But there is a graver question--that of food. I have only what is barely enough for myself while on the way to the Farm of San Felice."

"Mr. Harris," replied Mrs. Weldon, "fortunately we have food in more than sufficient quantity, and we shall be happy to share with you."

"Well, Mrs. Weldon, it seems to me that all is arranged for the best, and that we have only to set out."

Harris went toward the steep bank, with the intention of going to take his horse from the place where he had left it, when Dick Sand stopped him again, by asking him a question.

To abandon the sea-coast, to force his way into the interior of the country, under that interminable forest, did not please the young novice. The sailor reappeared in him, and either to ascend or descend the coast would be more to his mind.

"Mr. Harris," said he, "instead of traveling for one hundred and twenty miles in the Desert of Atacama, why not follow the coast? Distance for distance, would it not be better worth while to seek to reach the nearest town, either north or south?"

"But my young friend," replied Harris, frowning slightly, "it seems to me that on this coast, which I know very imperfectly, there is no town nearer than three or four hundred miles."

"To the north, yes," replied Dick Sand; "but to the south----"

"To the south," replied the American, "we must descend as far as Chili. Now, the distance is almost as long, and, in your place, I should not like to pass near the pampas of the Argentine Republic. As to me, to my

great regret, I could not accompany you there."

"The ships which go from Chili to Peru, do they not pass, then, in sight of this coast?" asked Mrs. Weldon.

"No," replied Harris. "They keep much more out at sea, and you ought not to meet any of them."

"Truly," replied Mrs. Weldon. "Well, Dick, have you still some question to ask Mr. Harris?"

"A single one, Mrs. Weldon," replied the novice, who experienced some difficulty in giving up. "I shall ask Mr. Harris in what port he thinks we shall be able to find a ship to bring us back to San Francisco?"

"Faith, my young friend, I could not tell you," replied the American. "All that I know is, that at the Farm of San Felice we will furnish you with the means of gaining the town of Atacama, and from there----"

"Mr. Harris," then said Mrs. Weldon, "do not believe that Dick Sand hesitates to accept your offers."

"No, Mrs. Weldon, no; surely I do not hesitate," replied the young novice; "but I cannot help regretting not being stranded a few degrees farther north or farther south. We should have been in proximity to a port, and that circumstance, in facilitating our return to our country, would prevent us from taxing Mr. Harris's good will."

"Do not fear imposing upon me, Mrs. Weldon," returned Harris. "I repeat to you that too rarely have I occasion to find myself again in the presence of my compatriots. For me it is a real pleasure to oblige you."

"We accept your offer, Mr. Harris," replied Mrs. Weldon; "but I should not wish, however, to deprive you of your horse. I am a good walker----"

"And I am a very good walker," replied Harris, bowing. "Accustomed to long journeys across the pampas, it is not I who will keep back our caravan. No, Mrs. Weldon, you and your little Jack will use this horse. Besides, it is possible that we may meet some of the farm servants on the way, and, as they will be mounted--well, they will yield their horses to us."

Dick Sand saw well that in making new objections he would oppose Mrs. Weldon.

"Mr. Harris," said he, "when do we set out?"

"Even to-day, my young friend," replied Harris. "The bad season commences with the month of April, and it is of the utmost importance for you to reach the farm of San Felice first. Finally, the way across the forest is the shortest, and perhaps the safest. It is less exposed than the coast to the incursions of wandering Indians, who are indefatigable robbers."

"Tom, my friends," replied Dick Sand, turning to the blacks, "it only remains for us to make preparations for departure. Let us select, then, from among the provisions on hand, those which can be most easily transported, and let us make packs, of which each will take his share."

"Mr. Dick," said Hercules, "if you wish, I shall carry the whole load very well."

"No, my brave Hercules," replied the novice; "it will be better for us all to share the burden."

"You are a strong companion, Hercules," then said Harris, who looked at the negro as if the latter were for sale. "In the markets of Africa you would be worth a good price."

"I am worth what I am worth," replied Hercules, laughing, "and the buyers will only have to run well, if they wish to catch me."

All was agreed upon, and to hasten the departure, each went to work. However, they had only to think of feeding the little troop for the journey from the sea-coast to the farm, that is to say, for a march of ten days.

"But, before setting out, Mr. Harris," said Mrs. Weldon, "before accepting your hospitality, I beg you to accept ours. We offer it to you with our best wishes."

"I accept, Mrs. Weldon; I accept with eagerness," replied Harris, gayly.

"In a few minutes our breakfast will be ready."

"Good, Mrs. Weldon. I am going to profit by those ten minutes to go and get my horse and bring it here. He will have breakfasted, he will."

"Do you want me to go with you, sir?" asked Dick Sand.

"As you please, my young friend," replied Harris. "Come; I shall make you acquainted with the lower course of this river."

Both set out.

During this time, Hercules was sent in search of the entomologist. Faith, Cousin Benedict was very uneasy indeed about what was passing around him.

He was then wandering on the summit of the cliff in quest of an "unfindable" insect, which, however, he did not find.

Hercules brought him back against his will. Mrs. Weldon informed him that departure was decided upon, and that, for ten days, they must travel to the interior of the country.

Cousin Benedict replied that he was ready to set out, and that he would not ask better than to cross America entirely, provided they would let

him "collect" on the way.

Mrs. Weldon then occupied herself, with Nan's assistance, in preparing a comfortable repast--a good precaution before setting out.

During this time, Harris, accompanied by Dick Sand, had turned the angle of the cliff. Both followed the high bank, over a space of three hundred steps. There, a horse, tied to a tree, gave joyous neighing at the approach of his master.

It was a vigorous beast, of a species that Dick Sand could not recognize. Neck and shoulders long, loins short, and hindquarters stretched out, shoulders flat, forehead almost pointed. This horse offered, however, distinctive signs of those races to which we attribute an Arabian origin.

"You see, my young friend," said Harris, "that it is a strong animal, and you may count on it not failing you on the route."

Harris detached his horse, took it by the bridle, and descended the steep bank again, preceding Dick Sand. The latter had thrown a rapid glance, as well over the river as toward the forest which shut up its two banks. But he saw nothing of a nature to make him uneasy.

However, when he had rejoined the American, he suddenly gave him the following question, which the latter could little expect:

"Mr. Harris," he asked, "you have not met a Portuguese, named Negoro, in the night?"

"Negoro?" replied Harris, in the tone of a man who does not understand what is said. "Who is this Negoro?"

"He was the cook on board," replied Dick Sand, "and he has disappeared."

"Drowned, perhaps," said Harris.

"No, no," replied Dick Sand. "Yesterday evening he was still with us, but during the night he has left us, and he has probably ascended the steep bank of this river. So I asked you, who have come from that side, if you had not met him."

"I have met nobody," replied the American; "and if your cook has ventured alone into the forest, he runs a great risk of going astray. Perhaps we shall overtake him on the way."

"Yes; perhaps!" replied Dick Sand.

When the two returned to the grotto, breakfast was ready. It was composed, like the supper of the evening before, of alimentary conserves, of corned beef and of biscuit. Harris did honor to it, like a man whom nature had endowed with a great appetite.

"Let us go," said he; "I see that we shall not die of hunger on the

way! I shall not say as much for that poor devil of a Portuguese, of whom our young friend has spoken."

"Ah!" said Mrs. Weldon, "Dick Sand has told you that we have not seen Negoro again?"

"Yes, Mrs. Weldon," replied the novice. "I desired to know if Mr. Harris had not met him."

"No," replied Harris; "so let us leave that deserter where he is, and think of our departure--whenever you are ready, Mrs. Weldon."

Each took the pack which was intended for him. Mrs. Weldon, assisted by Hercules, placed herself on the horse, and the ungrateful little Jack, with his gun strapped on his back, straddled the animal without even thinking of thanking him who had put that excellent beast at his disposal. Jack, placed before his mother, then said to her that he would know how to lead the gentleman's horse very well.

They then gave him the bridle to hold, and he did not doubt that he was the veritable head of the caravan.

* * * * *

CHAPTER XVI.

ON THE WAY.

It was not without a certain apprehension--nothing seemed to justify it, however--that Dick Sand, three hundred steps from the steep bank of the river, penetrated into the thick forest, the difficult paths of which he and his companions were going to follow for ten days. On the contrary, Mrs. Weldon herself, a woman and a mother, whom the perils would make doubly anxious, had every confidence. Two very serious motives had contributed to reassure her; first, because this region of the pampas was neither very formidable on account of the natives, nor on account of the animals which were found there; next, because, under the direction of Harris, of a guide so sure of himself as the American appeared to be, they could not be afraid of going astray.

Here is the order of proceeding, which, as far as possible, would be observed during the journey:

Dick Sand and Harris, both armed, one with his long gun, the other with a Remington, kept at the head of the little troop.

Then came Bat and Austin, also armed, each with a gun and a cutlass.

Behind them followed Mrs. Weldon and little Jack, on horseback; then Nan and Tom.

In the rear, Acteon, armed with the fourth Remington, and Hercules, with a hatchet in his belt, closed the march.

Dingo went backwards and forwards, and, as Dick Sand remarked, always like an uneasy dog seeking a scent. The dog's ways had visibly changed since the "Pilgrim's" shipwreck had cast it on this sea-coast. It seemed agitated, and almost incessantly it kept up a dull grumbling, rather lamentable than furious. That was remarked by all, though no one could explain it.

As to Cousin Benedict, it had been as impossible to assign him an order of marching as Dingo. Unless he had been held by a string, he would not have kept it. His tin box strapped to his shoulder, his net in his hand, his large magnifying glass suspended to his neck, sometimes behind, sometimes in front, he scampered away among the high herbs, watching for orthopters or any other insect in "pter," at the risk of being bit by some venomous serpent.

During the first hour Mrs. Weldon, uneasy, called him back twenty times. It was no use.

"Cousin Benedict," she finished by saying to him, "I beg you very seriously not to go far away, and I urge you for the last time to pay attention to my entreaties."

"Meanwhile, cousin," replied the intractable entomologist, "when I

perceive an insect?"

"When you perceive an insect," replied Mrs. Weldon, "you would do well to let it go in peace, or you will put me under the necessity of taking your box away from you."

"Take away my box!" cried Cousin Benedict, as if it were a question of snatching away his heart.

"Your box and your net," added Mrs. Weldon, pitilessly.

"My net, cousin! And why not my glasses? You will not dare! No; you will not dare!"

"Even, your glasses, which I forgot. I thank you, Cousin Benedict, for reminding me that I have that means of making you blind, and, in that way, forcing you to be wise."

This triple menace had the effect of making him keep quiet--this unsubmissive cousin--for about an hour. Then he began to go away again, and, as he would do the same, even without net, without box, and without glasses, they were obliged to let him do as he pleased. But Hercules undertook to watch him closely--which quite naturally became one of his duties--and it was agreed that he would act with Cousin Benedict as the latter would with an insect; that is, that he would catch him, if necessary, and bring him back as delicately as the other would with the rarest of the lepidopters.

That rule made, they troubled themselves no more about Cousin Benedict.

The little troop, it has been seen, was well armed, and guarded itself carefully. But, as Harris repeated, there was no encounter to fear except with wandering Indians, and they would probably see none.

At all events, the precautions taken would suffice to keep them respectful.

The paths which wound across the thick forest did not merit that name. They were rather the tracks of animals than the tracks of men. They could only be followed with difficulty. So, in fixing the average distance that the little troop would make in a march of twelve hours at only five or six miles, Harris had calculated wisely.

The weather, however, was very fine. The sun mounted toward the zenith, spreading in waves his almost perpendicular rays. On the plain this heat would be unbearable, Harris took care to remark; but, under those impenetrable branches, they bore it easily and with impunity.

The greater part of the trees of this forest were unknown, as well to Mrs. Weldon as to her companions, black or white.

However, an expert would remark that they were more remarkable for their quality than for their height. Here, it was the "banhinia," or iron wood; there, the "molompi," identical with the "pterocarpe," a

solid and light wood, fit for making the spoons used in sugar manufactories or oars, from the trunk of which exuded an abundant resin; further on, "fusticks," or yellow wood, well supplied with coloring materials, and lignum-vitæs, measuring as much as twelve feet in diameter, but inferior in quality to the ordinary lignum-vitæs.

While walking, Dick Sand asked Harris the name of these different trees.

"Then you have never been on the coast of South America?" Harris asked him before replying to his question.

"Never," replied the novice; "never, during my voyages, have I had occasion to visit these coasts, and to say the truth, I do not believe that anybody who knew about them has ever spoken to me of them."

"But have you at least explored the coasts of Colombia, those of Chili, or of Patagonia?"

"No, never."

"But perhaps Mrs. Weldon has visited this part of the new continent?" asked Harris. "Americans do not fear voyages, and doubtless----"

"No, Mr. Harris," replied Mrs. Weldon. "The commercial interests of my husband have never called him except to New Zealand, and I have not had to accompany him elsewhere. Not one of us, then, knows this portion of lower Bolivia."

"Well, Mrs. Weldon, you and your companions will see a singular country, which contrasts strangely with the regions of Peru, of Brazil, or of the Argentine Republic. Its flora and fauna would astonish a naturalist. Ah! we may say that you have been shipwrecked at a good place, and if we may ever thank chance----"

"I wish to believe that it is not chance which has led us here, but God, Mr. Harris."

"God! Yes! God!" replied Harris, in the tone of a man who takes little account of providential intervention in the things of this world.

Then, since nobody in the little troop knew either the country or its productions, Harris took a pleasure in naming pleasantly the most curious trees of the forest.

In truth, it was a pity that, in Cousin Benedict's case, the entomologist was not supplemented by the botanist! If, up to this time, he had hardly found insects either rare or new, he might have made fine discoveries in botany. There was, in profusion, vegetation of all heights, the existence of which in the tropical forests of the New World had not been yet ascertained. Cousin Benedict would certainly have attached his name to some discovery of this kind. But he did not like botany--he knew nothing about it. He even, quite naturally, held flowers in aversion, under the pretext that some of them permit themselves to imprison the insects in their corollas, and poison them

with their venomous juices.

At times, the forest became marshy. They felt under foot quite a network of liquid threads, which would feed the affluents of the little river. Some of the rills, somewhat large, could only be crossed by choosing fordable places.

On their banks grew tufts of reeds, to which Harris gave the name of papyrus. He was not mistaken, and those herbaceous plants grew abundantly below the damp banks.

Then, the marsh passed, thickets of trees again covered the narrow routes of the forest.

Harris made Mrs. Weldon and Dick Sand remark some very fine ebony-trees, much larger than the common ebony-tree, which furnish a wood much blacker and much stronger than that of commerce. Then there were mango-trees, still numerous, though they were rather far from the sea. A kind of fur of white moss climbed them as far as the branches. Their thick shade and their delicious fruit made them precious trees, and meanwhile, according to Harris, not a native would dare to propagate the species. "Whoever plants a mango-tree dies!" Such is the superstitious maxim of the country.

During the second half of this first day of the journey, the little troop, after the midday halt, began to ascend land slightly inclined. They were not as yet the slopes of the chain of the first plane, but a

sort of undulating plateau which connected the plain with the mountain.

There the trees, a little less compact, sometimes clustered in groups, would have rendered the march easier, if the soil had not been invaded by herbaceous plants. One might believe himself in the jungles of Oriental India. Vegetation appeared to be less luxuriant than in the lower valley of the little river, but it was still superior to that of the temperate regions of the Old or of the New World.

Indigo was growing there in profusion, and, according to Harris, this leguminous plant passed with reason for the most usurping plant of the country. If a field came to be abandoned, this parasite, as much despised as the thistle or the nettle, took possession of it immediately.

One tree seemed lacking in this forest, which ought to be very common in this part of the new continent; it was the caoutchouc-tree. In fact, the "ficus primoides," the "castilloa elastica," the "cecropia peltats," the "collophora utilis," the "cameraria letifolia," and above all, the "syphonia elastica," which belong to different families, abound in the provinces of South America. And meanwhile, a rather singular thing, there was not a single one to be seen.

Now, Dick Sand had particularly promised his friend Jack to show him some caoutchouc trees. So a great deception for the little boy, who figured to himself that gourds, speaking babies, articulate punchinellos, and elastic balloons grew quite naturally on those trees.

He complained.

"Patience, my good little man," replied Harris. "We shall find some of those caoutchoucs, and by hundreds, in the neighborhood of the farm."

"Handsome ones, very elastic?" asked little Jack.

"The most elastic there are. Hold! while waiting, do you want a good fruit to take away your thirst?" And, while speaking, Harris went to gather from a tree some fruits, which seemed to be as pleasant to the taste as those from the peach-tree.

"Are you very sure, Mr. Harris," asked Mrs. Weldon, "that this fruit can do no harm?"

"Mrs. Weldon, I am going to convince you," replied the American, who took a large mouthful of one of those fruits. "It is a mango."

And little Jack, without any more pressing, followed Harris's example, He declared that it was very good, "those pears," and the tree was at once put under contribution.

Those mangos belonged to a species whose fruit is ripe in March and April, others being so only in September, and, consequently, their mangos were just in time.

"Yes, it is good, good, good!" said little Jack, with his mouth full.

"But my friend Dick has promised me caoutchoucs, if I was very good, and I want caoutchoucs!"

"You will have them, Jack," replied Mrs. Weldon, "because Mr. Harris assures you of it."

"But that is not all," went on Jack. "My friend Dick has promised me some other thing!"

"What then, has friend Dick promised?" asked Harris, smiling.

"Some humming-birds, sir."

"And you shall have some humming-birds, my good little man, but farther on--farther on," replied Harris.

The fact is that little Jack had a right to claim some of these charming creatures, for he was now in a country where they should abound. The Indians, who know how to weave their feathers artistically, have lavished the most poetical names on those jewels of the flying race. They call them either the "rays" or the "hairs of the sun." Here, it is "the little king of the flowers;" there, "the celestial flower that comes in its flight to caress the terrestrial flower." It is again "the bouquet of jewels, which sparkles in the fire of the day." It can be believed that their imagination would know how to furnish a new poetical appellation for each of the one hundred and fifty species which constitute this marvelous tribe of humming-birds.

Meanwhile, however numerous these humming-birds might be in the forests of Bolivia, little Jack was obliged to still content himself with Harris's promise. According to the American, they were still too close to the coast, and the humming-birds did not like these deserts so near the ocean. The presence of man did not frighten them at the "hacienda;" they heard nothing all day but their cry of "teretere" and the murmur of their wings, similar to that of a spinning-wheel.

"Ah! how I should like to be there!" cried little Jack.

The surest method of getting there--to the "hacienda" of San Felice--was not to stop on the road. Mrs. Weldon and her companions only took the time absolutely necessary for repose.

The aspect of the forest already changed. Between the less crowded trees large clearings opened here and there. The sun, piercing the green carpet, then showed its structure of red, syenite granite, similar to slabs of lapis-lazuli. On some heights the sarsaparilla abounded, a plant with fleshy tubercles, which formed an inextricable tangle. The forest, with the narrow paths, was better for them.

Before sunset the little troop were about eight miles from the point of departure. This journey had been made without accident, and even without great fatigue. It is true, it was the first journey on the march, and no doubt the following halting places would be rougher.

By a common consent they decided to make a halt at this place. The question then was, not to establish a real camp, but to simply organize a resting-place. One man on guard, relieved every two hours, would suffice to watch during the night, neither the natives nor the deer being truly formidable.

They found nothing better for shelter than an enormous mango-tree, whose large branches, very bushy, formed a kind of natural veranda. If necessary, they could nestle in the branches.

Only, on the arrival of the little troop, a deafening concert arose from the top of the tree.

The mango served as a perch for a colony of gray parrots, prattling, quarrelsome, ferocious birds, which set upon living birds, and those who would judge them from their congeners which Europe keeps in cages, would be singularly mistaken.

These parrots jabbered with such a noise that Dick Sand thought of firing at them to oblige them to be silent, or to put them to flight. But Harris dissuaded him, under the pretext that in these solitudes it was better not to disclose his presence by the detonation of a fire-arm.

"Let us pass along without noise," he said, "and we shall pass along without danger."

Supper was prepared at once, without any need of proceeding to cook

food. It was composed of conserves and biscuit. A little rill, which wound under the plants, furnished drinkable water, which they did not drink without improving it with a few drops of rum. As to dessert, the mango was there with its juicy fruit, which the parrots did not allow to be picked without protesting with their abominable cries.

At the end of the supper it began to be dark. The shade rose slowly from the ground to the tops of the trees, from which the foliage soon stood out like a fine tracery on the more luminous background of the sky. The first stars seemed to be shining flowers, which twinkled at the end of the last branches. The wind went down with the night, and no longer trembled in the branches of the trees. The parrots themselves had become mute. Nature was going to rest, and inviting every living being to follow her in this deep sleep.

Preparations for retiring had to be of a very primitive character.

"Shall we not light a large fire for the night?" Dick Sand asked the American.

"What's the good?" replied Harris. "Fortunately the nights are not cold, and this enormous mango will preserve the soil from all evaporation. We have neither cold nor dampness to fear. I repeat, my young friend, what I told you just now. Let us move along incognito. No more fire than gunshots, if possible."

"I believe, indeed," then said Mrs. Weldon, "that we have nothing to

fear from the Indians--even from those wanderers of the woods, of whom you have spoken, Mr. Harris. But, are there not other four-footed wanderers, that the sight of a fire would help to keep at a distance?"

"Mrs. Weldon," replied the American, "you do too much honor to the deer of this country. Indeed, they fear man more than he fears them."

"We are in a wood," said Jack, "and there is always beasts in the woods."

"There are woods and woods, my good little man, as there are beasts and beasts," replied Harris, laughing. "Imagine that you are in the middle of a large park. Truly, it is not without reason that the Indians say of this country, 'Es como el pariso!' It is like an earthly paradise!"

"Then there are serpents?" said Jack.

"No, my Jack," replied Mrs. Weldon, "there are no serpents, and you may sleep tranquilly."

"And lions?" asked Jack.

"Not the ghost of a lion, my good little man," replied Harris.

"Tigers, then?"

"Ask your mama if she has ever heard tell of tigers on this continent."

"Never," replied Mrs. Weldon.

"Good!" said Cousin Benedict, who, by chance, was listening to the conversation: "if there are neither lions nor tigers in the New World, which is perfectly true, we at least encounter cougars and jaguars."

"Are they bad?" asked little Jack.

"Phew!" replied Harris; "a native has little fear of attacking those animals, and we are strong. Stay! Hercules would be strong enough to crush two jaguars at once, one in each hand!"

"You will watch well, Hercules," then said little Jack, "and if a beast comes to bite us----"

"It is I who will bite it, Mr. Jack!" replied Hercules, showing his mouth, armed with superb teeth.

"Yes, you will watch, Hercules," said the novice, "but your companions and I will relieve you, turn about."

"No, Mr. Dick," replied Acteon, "Hercules, Bat, Austin, and I, we four will be enough for this labor. You must rest the whole night."

"Thank you, Acteon," replied Dick Sand, "but I ought to----"

"No! let those brave men do it, my dear Dick!" then said Mrs. Weldon.

"I, also; I shall watch!" added little Jack, whose eyelids were already closing.

"Yes, my Jack, yes, you will watch!" replied his mother, who did not wish to contradict him.

"But," the little boy said again, "if there are no lions, if there are no tigers in the forest, there are wolves!"

"Oh! wolves in jest!" replied the American. "They are not even wolves, but kinds of foxes, or rather of those dogs of the woods which they call 'guaras.'"

"And those guaras, they bite?" asked little Jack.

"Bah! Dingo would make only one mouthful of those beasts!"

"Never mind," replied Jack, with a last yawn; "guaras are wolves, because they are called wolves!"

And with that Jack fell asleep peaceably in Nan's arms, beside the trunk of the mango. Mrs. Weldon, lying near her, gave a last kiss to her little boy, and her tired eyes quickly closed for the night.

A few moments later Hercules brought back to the camp Cousin Benedict,

who had just gone off to commence a chase for pyrophores. They are "cocuyos," or luminous flies, which the stylish put in their hair, like so many living gems. These insects which throw a bright and bluish light from two spots situated at the base of their corselet, are very numerous in South America. Cousin Benedict then counted on making a large collection, but Hercules did not leave him time, and, in spite of his recriminations, the negro brought him to the halting-place. That was because, when Hercules had orders, he executed them with military preciseness, which, no doubt, prevented the incarceration of a notable quantity of luminous flies in the entomologist's tin box.

A few moments after, with the exception of the giant, who was watching, all were reposing in a profound sleep.

CHAPTER XVII.

A HUNDRED MILES IN TWO DAYS.

Generally, travelers or ramblers in the woods, who have slept in the forests under the lovely stars, are awakened by howlings as fantastic as disagreeable. There is everything in this morning concert: clucking, grunting, croaking, sneering, barking, and almost "speaking," if one may make use of this word, which completes the series of different noises.

There are the monkeys who thus salute the daybreak. There we meet the little "marikina," the marmoset with a speckled mask; the "mono gris," the skin of which the Indians use to recover the batteries of their guns; the "sagous," recognizable from their long bunches of hair, and many others, specimens of this numerous family.

Of these various four-handed animals, the most remarkable are decidedly the "gueribas," with curling tails and a face like Beelzebub. When the sun rises, the oldest of the band, with an imposing and mysterious voice, sings a monotonous psalm. It is the baritone of the troop. The young tenors repeat after him the morning symphony. The Indians say then that the "gueribas" recite their pater-nosters.

But, on this day, it seemed that the monkeys did not offer their prayer, for no one heard them; and, meanwhile, their voice is loud, for

it is produced by the rapid vibration of a kind of bony drum, formed by a swelling of the hyoides bone in the neck.

In short, for one reason or for another, neither the "gueribas," nor the "sagous," nor any other four-handed animals of this immense forest, sang, on this morning, their usual concert.

This would not have satisfied the wandering Indians. Not that these natives appreciate this kind of strange choral music, but they willingly give chase to the monkeys, and if they do, it is because the flesh of this animal is excellent, above all, when it is smoke-dried.

Dick Sand, of course, could not be familiar with the habits of the "gueribas," neither were his companions, or this not hearing them would have undoubtedly been a subject of surprise. They awoke then, one after the other, much refreshed by these few hours of repose, which no alarm had come to disturb.

Little Jack was not the last to stretch his arms. His first question was, to ask if Hercules had eaten a wolf during the night. No wolf had shown himself, and consequently Hercules had not yet breakfasted.

All, besides, were fasting like him, and after the morning prayer, Nan occupied herself preparing the repast.

The bill of fare was that of the supper of the night before, but with appetites sharpened by the morning air of the forest, no one dreamed of

being difficult to please. It was necessary, above all, to gather strength for a good day's march, and they did it. For the first time, perhaps, Cousin Benedict comprehended that to eat was not an action indifferent or useless to life; only, he declared that he had not come to "visit" this country to walk with his hands in his pockets, and that, if Hercules prevented him from chasing the "cocuyos," and other luminous flies, Hercules would have some trouble with him.

This threat did not seem to frighten the giant to any great extent. However, Mrs. Weldon took him aside and told him that, perhaps, he might allow his big baby to run to the right and left, but on condition that he did not lose sight of him. It would not do to completely sever Cousin Benedict from the pleasures so natural to his age.

At seven o'clock in the morning, the little troop took up their journey toward the east, preserving the order of march that had been adopted the previous day. It was always the forest. On this virgin soil, where the heat and the moisture agreed to produce vegetation, it might well be thought that the reign of growth appeared in all its power. The parallel of this vast plateau was almost confounded with tropical latitudes, and, during certain months in summer, the sun, in passing to the zenith, darted its perpendicular rays there. There was, therefore, an enormous quantity of imprisoned heat in this earth, of which the subsoil preserved the damp. Also, nothing could be more magnificent than this succession of forests, or rather this interminable forest.

Meanwhile, Dick Sand had not failed to observe this--that, according to

Harris, they were in the region of the pampas. Now, pampas is a word from the "quichna" language, which signifies a plain. Now, if his recollections did not deceive him, he believed that these plains presented the following characteristics: Lack of water, absence of trees, a failure of stones, an almost luxuriant abundance of thistles during the rainy season, thistles which became almost shrubby with the warm season, and then formed impenetrable thickets; then, also, dwarf trees, thorny shrubs, the whole giving to these plains a rather arid and desolate aspect.

Now, it had not been thus, since the little troop, guided by the American, had left the coast. The forest had not ceased to spread to the limits of the horizon. No, this was not the pampas, such as the young novice had imagined them. Had nature, as Harris had told him, been able to make a region apart from the plateau of Atacama, of which he knew nothing, if it did not form one of the most vast deserts of South America, between the Andes and the Pacific Ocean?

On that day Dick Sand propounded some questions on this subject, and expressed to the American the surprise he felt at this singular appearance of the pampas.

But he was quickly undeceived by Harris, who gave him the most exact details about this part of Bolivia, thus witnessing to his great knowledge of the country.

"You are right, my young friend," he said to the novice. "The true

pampa is indeed such as the books of travels have depicted it to you, that is, a plain rather arid, and the crossing of which is often difficult. It recalls our savannahs of North America--except that these are a little marshy. Yes, such is indeed the pampa of the Rio Colorado, such are the "llanos" of the Orinoco and of Venezuela. But here, we are in a country, the appearance of which even astonishes me. It is true, it is the first time I have followed this route across the plateau, a route which has the advantage of shortening our journey. But, if I have not yet seen it, I know that it presents an extraordinary contrast to the veritable pampa. As to this one, you would find it again, not between the Cordilleras of the west and the high chain of the Andes, but beyond the mountains, over all that eastern part of the continent which extends as far as the Atlantic."

"Must we then clear the Andes range?" Dick Sand asked, quickly.

"No, my young friend, no," replied the American, smiling. "So I said: You would find it again, and not: You will find it again. Be reassured, we shall not leave this plateau, the greatest elevations of which do not exceed fifteen hundred feet. Ah! if it had been necessary to cross the Cordilleras with only the means of transport at our disposal, I should never have drawn you into such an undertaking."

"In fact," replied Dick Sand, "it would be better to ascend or descend the coast."

"Oh! a hundred times!" replied Harris. "But the Farm of San Felice is

situated on this side of the Cordilleras. So, then, our journey, neither in its first nor in its second part, will offer any real difficulty."

"And you do not fear going astray in these forests, which you cross for the first time?" asked Dick Sand.

"No, my young friend, no," replied Harris. "I know indeed that this forest is like an immense sea, or rather like the bottom of a sea, where a sailor himself could not take the latitude nor recognize his position. But accustomed to traveling in the woods, I know how to find my route only by the inclination of certain trees, by the direction of their leaves, by the movement or the composition of the soil, by a thousand details which escape you! Be sure of it, I will lead you, you and yours, where you ought to go!"

All these things were said very clearly by Harris. Dick Sand and he, at the head of the troop, often talked without any one mingling in their conversation. If the novice felt some doubts that the American did not always succeed in scattering, he preferred to keep them to himself.

The 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th of April passed in this manner, without any incident to mark the journey. They did not make more than eight to nine miles in twelve hours. The times consecrated to eating or repose came at regular intervals, and though a little fatigue was felt already, the sanitary condition was still very satisfactory.

Little Jack began to suffer a little from this life in the woods, to which he was not accustomed, and which was becoming very monotonous for him. And then all the promises which had been made him had not been kept. The caoutchouc jumping-jacks, the humming-birds, all those seemed constantly to recede. There had also been a question of showing him the most beautiful parrots in the world, and they ought not to be wanting in these rich forests. Where, then, were the popinjays with green plumage, almost all originally from these countries, the aras, with naked cheeks, with long pointed tails, with glittering colors, whose paws never rest on the earth, and the "camindes," which are more peculiar to tropical countries, and the many-colored she-parrots, with feathered faces, and finally all those prattling birds which, according to the Indians, still speak the language of extinct tribes?

Of parrots, little Jack only saw ash-gray jakos, with red tails, which abounded under the trees. But these jakos were not new to him. They have transported them into all parts of the world. On the two continents they fill the houses with their insupportable chattering, and, of all the family of the "psittacius," they are the ones which learn to speak most easily.

It must be said, besides, that if Jack was not contented, Cousin Benedict was no more so. He had been allowed to wander a little to the right or to the left during the march. However, he had not found any insect which was fit to enrich his collection. Even the "pyrophores" obstinately refused to show themselves to him, and attract him by the phosphorescences of their corselet. Nature seemed truly to mock the

unhappy entomologist, whose temper was becoming cross.

For four days more the march toward the northeast was continued in the same way. On the 16th of April the distance traversed from the coast could not be estimated at less than one hundred miles. If Harris had not gone astray--and he affirmed it without hesitation--the Farm of San Felice was no more than twenty miles from the halting place of that day. Before forty-eight hours the little troop then would have a comfortable shelter where its members could at last repose from their fatigues.

Meanwhile, though the plateau had been almost entirely crossed in its middle part, not a native, not a wanderer had been encountered under the immense forest.

More than once, without saying anything about it, Dick Sand regretted being unable to go ashore on some other point of the coast. More to the south, or more to the north, villages, hamlets, or plantations would not have been lacking, and long before this Mrs. Weldon and her companions would have found an asylum.

But, if the country seemed to be abandoned by man, animals showed themselves more frequently during these last days. At times was heard a kind of long, plaintive cry, that Harris attributed to some of those large tardi-grades, habitual denizens of those vast wooded regions, named "ais."

On that day, also, during the midday halt, a hissing passed through the air, which made Mrs. Weldon very uneasy, because it was so strange.

"What is that?"' she asked, rising hastily.

"A serpent!" cried Dick Sand, who gun, in hand, threw himself before Mrs. Weldon.

They might fear, in fact, that some reptile would glide among the plants to the halting place. It would be nothing astonishing if it were one of those enormous "sucurus," kinds of boas, which sometimes measure forty feet in length.

But Harris reminded Dick Sand that the blacks were already following, and he reassured Mrs. Weldon.

According to him, that hissing could not be produced by a "sucuru," because that serpent does not hiss; but he indicated the presence of several inoffensive quadrupeds, rather numerous in that country.

"Be reassured, then," said he, "and make no movement which may frighten those animals."

"But what are they?" asked Dick Sand, who made it like a law of conscience to interrogate and make the American speak--who, however, never required pressing before replying.

"They are antelopes, my young friend," replied Harris.

"Oh! how I should like to see them!" cried Jack.

"That is very difficult, my good little man," replied the American, "very difficult."

"Perhaps we may try to approach than--those hissing antelopes?" returned Dick Sand.

"Oh! you will not take three steps," replied the American, shaking his head, "before the whole band will take flight. I beg of you, then, not to trouble yourself."

But Dick Sand had his reasons for being curious. He wished to see, and, gun in hand, he glided among the herbs. Immediately a dozen graceful gazelles, with small, sharp horns, passed with the rapidity of a water-spout. Their hair, bright red, looked like a cloud of fire under the tall underwood of the forest.

"I had warned you," said Harris, when the novice returned to take his place.

Those antelopes were so light of foot, that it had been truly impossible to distinguish them; but it was not so with another troop of animals which was signaled the same day. Those could be seen--imperfectly, it is true--but their apparition led to a rather

singular discussion between Harris and some of his companions.

The little troop, about four o'clock in the afternoon, had stopped for a moment near an opening in the woods, when three or four animals of great height went out of a thicket a hundred steps off, and scampered away at once with remarkable speed.

In spite of the American's recommendations, this time the novice, having quickly shouldered his gun, fired at one of these animals. But at the moment when the charge was going off, the weapon had been rapidly turned aside by Harris, and Dick Sand, skilful as he was, had missed his aim.

"No firing; no firing!" said the American.

"Ah, now, but those are giraffes!" cried Dick Sand, without otherwise replying to Harris's observation.

"Giraffes!" repeated Jack, standing up on the horse's saddle. "Where are they, the large beasts?"

"Giraffes!" replied Mrs. Weldon. "You are mistaken, my dear Dick. There are no giraffes in America."

"Indeed," said Harris, who appeared rather surprised, "there cannot be any giraffes in this country."

"What, then?" said Dick Sand.

"I really do not know what to think," replied Harris. "Have not your eyes deceived you, my young friend, and are not those animals more likely to be ostriches?"

"Ostriches!" repeated Dick Sand and Mrs. Weldon, looking at each other in great surprise.

"Yes, only ostriches," repeated Harris.

"But ostriches are birds," returned Dick Sand, "and consequently they have only two feet."

"Well," replied Harris, "I indeed thought I saw that those animals, which have just made off so rapidly, were bipeds."

"Bipeds!" replied the novice.

"Indeed it seemed to me that I saw animals with four legs," then said Mrs. Weldon.

"I also," added old Tom; then Bat, Acteon, and Austin confirmed those words.

"Ostriches with four legs!" cried Harris, with a burst of laughter. "That would be ridiculous!"

"So," returned Dick Sand, "we have believed they were giraffes, and not ostriches."

"No, my young friend, no," said Harris. "You have certainly seen badly. That is explained by the rapidity with which those animals have flown away. Besides, it has happened more than once that hunters have been deceived like you, and in the best faith in the world."

What the American said was very plausible. Between an ostrich of great height and a giraffe of medium height, seen at a certain distance, it is easy to make a mistake. If it were a question of a beak or a nose, both are none the less joined to the end of a long neck turned backward, and, strictly speaking, it may be said that an ostrich is only a half giraffe. It only needs the hind legs. Then, this biped and this quadruped, passing rapidly, on a sudden may, very properly, be taken one for the other.

Besides, the best proof that Mrs. Weldon and the others were mistaken was that there are no giraffes in America.

Dick Sand then made this reflection:

"But I believed that ostriches were not met with in the New World any more than giraffes."

"Yes, my young friend," replied Harris; "and, indeed, South America

possesses a peculiar species. To this species belongs the 'nandon,' which you have just seen."

Harris spoke the truth. The "nandon" is a long-legged bird, rather common in the plains of South America, and its flesh, when it is young, is good to eat.

This strong animal, whose height sometimes exceeds two meters, has a straight beak; wings long, and formed of tufted feathers of a bluish shade; feet formed of three claws, furnished with nails--which essentially distinguishes it from the ostriches of Africa.

These very exact details were given by Harris, who appeared to be very strongly posted on the manners of the "nandons."

Mrs. Weldon and her companions were obliged to acknowledge that they had been deceived.

"Besides," added Harris, "possibly we may encounter another band of these ostriches. Well, next time look better, and no longer allow yourselves to takes birds for quadrupeds! But above all, my young friend, do not forget my recommendations, and do not fire on any animal whatsoever. We have no need of hunting to procure food, and no detonation of a fire-arm must announce our presence in this forest."

Meanwhile Dick Sand remained pensive. Once more a doubt had just arisen on his mind.

The next day, April 17th, the march was continued, and the American affirmed that twenty-four hours would not pass before the little troop should be installed at the Farm of San Felice.

"There, Mrs. Weldon," added he, "you will receive all the care necessary to your position, and a few days' rest will quite restore you. Perhaps you will not find at this farm the luxury to which you are accustomed in your residence in San Francisco, but you will see that our improved lands in the interior do not lack what is comfortable. We are not absolutely savages."

"Mr. Harris," replied Mrs. Weldon, "if we have only thanks to offer you for your generous resort, at least we shall offer them to you with all our hearts. Yes! It is time for us to arrive there!"

"You are very much fatigued, Mrs. Weldon?"

"I, no matter!" replied Mrs. Weldon; "but I perceive that my little Jack is gradually becoming exhausted! The fever begins to affect him at certain hours!"

"Yes," replied Harris, "and although the climate of this plateau is very healthful, it must be acknowledged that in March and April intermittent fevers reign."

"Doubtless," then said Dick Sand, "but also Nature, who is always and

everywhere provident, has put the remedy near the evil!"

"And how is that, my young friend?" asked Harris, who did not seem to understand.

"Are we not, then, in the region of the quinquinas?" replied Dick Sand.

"In fact," said Harris, "you are perfectly right. The trees which furnish, the precious febrifuge bark are native here."

"I am even astonished," added Dick Sand, "that we have not yet seen a single one."

"Ah! my young friend," replied Harris, "those trees are not easy to distinguish. Though they are often of great height, though their leaves are large, their flowers rosy and odoriferous, we do not discover them easily. It is rarely that they grow in groups. They are rather scattered through the forests, and the Indians who collect the quinquina can only recognize them by their foliage, always green."

"Mr. Harris," said Mrs. Weldon, "if you see one of those trees you will show it to me."

"Certainly, Mrs. Weldon, but at the farm you will find some sulphate of quinine. That is worth still more to break the fever than the simple bark of the tree."

Formerly, this bark was only reduced to powder, which bore the name of "Jesuits' Powder," because, in 1649, the Jesuits of Rome received a considerable quantity from their mission in America.

This last day of the journey passed without other incident. Evening came and the halt was organized for the whole night as usual. Till then it had not rained, but the weather was preparing to change, for a warm mist rose from the soil and soon found a thick fog.

They were touching, in fact, on the rainy season. Fortunately, the next day, a comfortable shelter would be hospitably offered to the little troop. There were only a few hours to elapse.

Though, according to Harris, who could only establish his calculation by the time which the journey had lasted, they could not be more than six miles from the farm, the ordinary precautions were taken for the night. Tom and his companions would watch one after the other. Dick Sand insisted that nothing should be neglected in that respect. Less than ever, would he depart from his habitual prudence, for a terrible suspicion was incrusted in his mind; but he did not wish to say anything yet.

The retiring to rest had been made at the feet of a group of large trees. Fatigue aiding, Mrs. Weldon and hers were already asleep, when they were awakened by a great cry.

"Eh! what's the matter?" asked Dick Sand, quickly, who was on his feet

first of all.

"It is I! it is I who have cried!" replied Cousin Benedict.

"And what is the matter with you?" asked Mrs. Weldon.

"I have just been bit!"

"By a serpent?" asked Mrs. Weldon, with alarm.

"No, no! It was not a serpent, but an insect," replied Cousin Benedict. "Ah! I have it! I have it!"

"Well, crush your insect," said Harris, "and let us sleep, Mr. Benedict!"

"Crush an insect!" cried Cousin Benedict. "Not so! I must see what it is!"

"Some mosquito!" said Harris, shrugging his shoulders.

"No! It is a fly," replied Cousin Benedict, "and a fly which ought to be very curious!"

Dick Sand had lit a little portable lantern, and he approached Cousin Benedict.

"Divine goodness!" cried the latter. "Behold what consoles me for all my deceptions! I have, then, at last made a discovery!"

The honest man was raving. He looked at his fly in triumph. He would willingly kiss it.

"But what is it, then?" asked Mrs. Weldon.

"A dipter, cousin, a famous dipter!" And Cousin Benedict showed a fly smaller than a bee, of a dull color, streaked with yellow on the lower part of its body.

"And this fly is not venomous?" asked Mrs. Weldon.

"No, cousin, no; at least not for man. But for animals, for antelopes, for buffaloes, even for elephants, it is another thing. Ah! adorable insect!"

"At last," asked Dick Sand, "will you tell us, Mr. Benedict, what is this fly?"

"This fly," replied the entomologist, "this fly that I hold between my fingers, this fly--it is a tsetse! It is that famous dipter that is the honor of a country, and, till now, no one has ever found a tsetse in America!"

Dick Sand did not dare to ask Cousin Benedict in what part of the world

this redoubtable tsetse was only to be met. And when his companions, after this incident, had returned to their interrupted sleep, Dick Sand, in spite of the fatigue which overwhelmed him, did not close his eyes the whole night.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

THE TERRIBLE WORD.

It was time to arrive. Extreme lassitude made it impossible for Mrs. Weldon to continue any longer a journey made under such painful conditions. Her little boy, crimson during the fits of fever, very pale during the intermissions, was pitiable to see. His mother extremely anxious, had not been willing to leave Jack even in the care of the good Nan. She held him, half-lying, in her arms.

Yes, it was time to arrive. But, to trust to the American, on the very evening of this day which was breaking--the evening of the 18th of April, the little troop should finally reach the shelter of the "hacienda" of San Felice.

Twelve days' journey for a woman, twelve nights passed in the open air; it was enough to overwhelm Mrs. Weldon, energetic as she was. But, for a child, it was worse, and the sight of little Jack sick, and without the most ordinary cares, had sufficed to crush her.

Dick Sand, Nan, Tom, and his companions had supported the fatigues of the journey better.

Their provisions, although they were commencing to get exhausted, had not become injured, and their condition was satisfactory.

As for Harris, he seemed made for the difficulties of these long journeys across the forests, and it did not appear that fatigue could affect him. Only, in proportion as he neared the farm, Dick Sand observed that he was more preoccupied and less frank in behavior than before. The contrary would have been more natural. This was, at least, the opinion of the young novice, who had now become more than suspicious of the American. And meanwhile, what interest could Harris have in deceiving them? Dick Sand could not have explained it, but he watched their guide more closely.

The American probably felt himself suspected by Dick Sand, and, no doubt, it was this mistrust which made him still more taciturn with "his young friend."

The march had been resumed.

In the forest, less thick, the trees were scattered in groups, and no longer formed impenetrable masses. Was it, then, the true pampas of which Harris had spoken?

During the first hours of the day, no accident happened to aggravate the anxieties that Dick Sand felt. Only two facts were observed by him. Perhaps they were not very important, but in these actual junctures, no detail could be neglected.

It was the behavior of Dingo which, above all, attracted more

especially the young man's attention.

In fact the dog, which, during all this journey, had seemed to be following a scent, became quite different, and that almost suddenly. Until then, his nose to the ground, generally smelling the herbs or the shrubs, he either kept quiet, or he made a sort of sad, barking noise, like an expression of grief or of regret.

Now, on this day, the barking of the singular animal became like bursts, sometimes furious, such as they formerly were when Negoro appeared on the deck of the "Pilgrim." A suspicion crossed suddenly Dick Sand's mind, and it was confirmed by Tom, who said to him:

"How very singular, Mr. Dick! Dingo no longer smells the ground as he did yesterday! His nose is in the air, he is agitated, his hair stands up! One would think he scented in the distance----"

"Negoro, is it not so?" replied Dick Sand, who seized the old black's arm, and signed to him to speak in a low voice.

"Negoro, Mr. Dick! May it not be that he has followed our steps?"

"Yes, Tom; and that at this moment even he may not be very far from us."

"But why?" said Tom.

"Either Negoro does not know this country," went on Dick Sand, "and

then he would have every interest in not losing sight of us----"

"Or?" said Tom, who anxiously regarded the novice.

"Or," replied Dick Sand, "he does know it, and then he----"

"But how should Negoro know this country? He has never come here!"

"Has he never been here?" murmured Dick Sand.

"It is an incontestable fact that Dingo acts as if this man whom he detests were near us!"

Then, interrupting himself to call the dog, which, after some hesitation, came to him:

"Eh!" said he; "Negoro! Negoro!"

A furious barking was Dingo's reply. This name had its usual effect upon him, and he darted forward, as if Negoro had been hidden behind some thicket.

Harris had witnessed all this scene. With his lips a little drawn, he approached the novice.

"What did you ask Dingo then?" said he.

"Oh, not much, Mr. Harris," replied old Tom, jokingly. "We asked him for news of the ship-companion whom we have lost!"

"Ah!" said the American, "the Portuguese, the ship's cook of whom you have already spoken to me?"

"Yes." replied Tom. "One would say, to hear Dingo, that Negoro is in the vicinity."

"How could he get as far as this?" replied Harris.

"He never was in this country that I know of; at least, he concealed it from us," replied Tom.

"It would be astonishing," said Harris. "But, if you wish, we will beat these thickets. It is possible that this poor devil has need of help; that he is in distress."

"It is useless, Mr. Harris," replied Dick Sand. "If Negoro has known how to come as far as this, he will know how to go farther. He is a man to keep out of trouble."

"As you please," replied Harris.

"Let us go. Dingo, be quiet," added Dick Sand, briefly, so as to end the conversation.

The second observation made by the novice was in connection with the American horse. He did not appear to "feel the stable," as do animals of his species. He did not suck in the air; he did not hasten his speed; he did not dilate his nostrils; he uttered none of the neighings that indicate the end of a journey. To observe him well, he appeared to be as indifferent as if the farm, to which he had gone several times, however, and which he ought to know, had been several hundreds of miles away.

"That is not a horse near home," thought the young novice.

And, meanwhile, according to what Harris had said the evening before, there only remained six miles to go, and, of these last six miles, at five o'clock in the evening four had been certainly cleared.

Now, if the horse felt nothing of the stable, of which he should have great need, nothing besides announced the approaches to a great clearing, such as the Farm of San Felice must be.

Mrs. Weldon, indifferent as she then was to what did not concern her child, was struck at seeing the country still so desolate. What! not a native, not a farm-servant, at such a short distance! Harris must be wild! No! she repulsed this idea. A new delay would have been the death of her little Jack!

Meanwhile, Harris always kept in advance, but he seemed to observe the depths of the wood, and looked to the right and left, like a man who

was not sure of himself--nor of his road.

Mrs. Weldon shut her eyes so as not to see him.

After a plain a mile in extent, the forest, without being as dense as in the west, had reappeared, and the little troop was again lost under the great trees.

At six o'clock in the evening they had reached a thicket, which appeared to have recently given passage to a band of powerful animals. Dick Sand looked around him very attentively. At a distance winch far surpassed the human height, the branches were torn off or broken. At the same time the herbs, roughly scattered, exhibited on the soil, a little marshy, prints of steps which could not be those of jaguars, or cougars.

Were these, then, the "ais," or some other tardi-graves, whose feet had thus marked the soil? But how, then, explain the break in the branches at such a height?

Elephants might have, without doubt, left such imprints, stamped these large traces, made a similar hole in the impenetrable underwood. But elephants are not found in America. These enormous thick-skinned quadrupeds are not natives of the New World. As yet, they have never been acclimated there.

The hypothesis that elephants had passed there was absolutely

inadmissible.

However that might be, Dick Sand hardly knew how much this inexplicable fact gave him to think about. He did not even question the American on this point. What could he expect from a man who had tried to make him take giraffes for ostriches? Harris would have given him some explanation, more or less imaginative, which would not have changed the situation.

At all events, Dick had formed his opinion of Harris. He felt in him a traitor! He only awaited an occasion to unmask his disloyalty, to have the right to do it, and everything told him that this opportunity was near.

But what could be Harris's secret end? What future, then, awaited the survivors of the "Pilgrim?" Dick Sand repeated to himself that his responsibility had not ceased with the shipwreck. It was more than ever necessary for him to provide for the safety of those whom the waves had thrown on this coast! This woman, this young child, these blacks--all his companions in misfortune--it was he alone who must save them! But, if he could attempt anything on board ship, if he could act on the sea, here, in the midst of the terrible trials which he foresaw, what part could he take?

Dick Sand would not shut his eyes before the frightful reality that each instant made more indisputable. In this juncture he again became the captain of fifteen years, as he had been on the "Pilgrim." But he

would not say anything which could alarm the poor mother before the moment for action had arrived.

And he said nothing, not even when, arrived on the bank of a rather large stream, preceding the little troop about one hundred feet, he perceived enormous animals, which threw themselves under the large plants on the brink.

"Hippopotami! hippopotami!" he was going to exclaim.

And they were, indeed, these thick-skinned animals, with a big head, a large, swollen snout, a mouth armed with teeth which extend a foot beyond it--animals which are squat on their short limbs, the skin of which, unprovided with hair, is of a tawny red. Hippopotami in America!

They continued to march during the whole day, but painfully. Fatigue commenced to retard even the most robust. It was truly time to arrive, or they would be forced to stop.

Mrs. Weldon, wholly occupied with her little Jack, did not perhaps feel the fatigue, but her strength was exhausted. All, more or less, were tired. Dick Sand, resisted by a supreme moral energy, caused by the sentiment of duty.

Toward four o'clock in the evening, old Tom found, in the grass, an object which attracted his attention. It was an arm, a kind of knife, of a particular shape, formed of a large, curved blade, set in a

square, ivory handle, rather roughly ornamented. Tom carried this knife to Dick Sand, who took it, examined it, and, finally, showed it to the American, saying:

"No doubt the natives are not very far off."

"That is so," replied Harris, "and meanwhile----"

"Meanwhile?" repeated Dick Sand, who now steadily looked Harris in the face.

"We should be very near the farm," replied Harris, hesitating, "and I do not recognize----"

"You are then astray?" quickly asked Dick Sand.

"Astray! no. The farm cannot be more than three miles away, now. But, I wished to take the shortest road through the forest, and perhaps I have made a little mistake!"

"Perhaps," replied Dick Sand.

"I would do well, I think, to go in advance," said Harris.

"No, Mr. Harris, we will not separate," replied Dick Sand, in a decided tone.

"As you will," replied the American. "But, during the night, it will be difficult for me to guide you."

"Never mind that!" replied Dick Sand. "We are going to halt. Mrs. Weldon will consent to pass a last night under the trees, and to-morrow, when it is broad daylight, we will proceed on our journey! Two or three miles still, that will be an hour's walk!"

"Be it so," replied Harris.

At that moment Dingo commenced to bark furiously.

"Here, Dingo, here!" cried Dick Sand. "You know well that no one is there, and that we are in the desert!"

This last halt was then decided upon.

Mrs. Weldon let her companions work without saying a word. Her little Jack was sleeping in her arms, made drowsy by the fever.

They sought the best place to pass the night. This was under a large bunch of trees, where Dick Sand thought of disposing all for their rest. But old Tom, who was helping him in these preparations, stopped suddenly, crying out:

"Mr. Dick! look! look!"

"What is it, old Tom?" asked Dick Sand, in the calm tone of a man who attends to everything.

"There--there!" cried Tom; "on those trees--blood stains!--and--on the ground--mutilated limbs!"

Dick Sand rushed toward the spot indicated by old Tom. Then, returning to him: "Silence, Tom, silence!" said he.

In fact, there on the ground were hands cut off, and above these human remains were several broken forks, and a chain in pieces!

Happily, Mrs. Weldon had seen nothing of this horrible spectacle.

As for Harris, he kept at a distance, and any one observing him at this moment would have been struck at the change made in him. His face had something ferocious in it.

Dingo had rejoined Dick Sand, and before these bloody remains, he barked with rage.

The novice had hard work to drive him away.

Meanwhile, old Tom, at the sight of these forks, of this broken chain, had remained motionless, as if his feet were rooted in the soil. His eyes were wide open, his hands clenched; he stared, murmuring these incoherent words:

"I have seen--already seen--these forks--when little--I have seen!"

And no doubt the memories of his early infancy returned to him vaguely. He tried to recall them. He was going to speak.

"Be silent, Tom!" repeated Dick Sand. "For Mrs. Weldon's sake, for all our sakes, be silent!"

And the novice led the old black away.

Another halting place was chosen, at some distance, and all was arranged for the night.

The repast was prepared, but they hardly touched it. Fatigue took away their hunger. All were under an indefinable impression of anxiety which bordered on terror.

Darkness came gradually: soon it was profound. The sky was covered with great stormy clouds. Between the trees in the western horizon they saw some flashes of heat lightning. The wind had fallen; not a leaf moved on the trees. An absolute silence succeeded the noises of the day, and it might be believed that the heavy atmosphere, saturated with electricity, was becoming unfit for the transmission of sounds.

Dick Sand, Austin, and Bat watched together. They tried to see, to hear, during this very dark night, if any light whatsoever, or any

suspicious noise should strike their eyes or their ears. Nothing troubled either the calm or the obscurity of the forest.

Torn, not sleepy, but absorbed in his remembrances, his head bent, remained quiet, as if he had been struck by some sudden blow.

Mrs. Weldon rocked her child in her arms, and only thought of him.

Only Cousin Benedict slept, perhaps, for he alone did not suffer from the common impression. His faculty for looking forward did not go so far.

Suddenly, about eleven o'clock, a prolonged and grave roaring was heard, with which was mingled a sort of sharper shuddering. Tom stood up and stretched out his hand toward a dense thicket, a mile or more distant.

Dick Sand seized his arm, but he could not prevent Tom from crying in a loud voice: "The lion! the lion!"

This roaring, which he had so often heard in his infancy, the old black had just recognized it.

"The lion!" he repeated.

Dick Sand, incapable of controlling himself longer, rushed, cutlass in hand, to the place occupied by Harris.

Harris was no longer there, and his horse had disappeared with him.

A sort of revelation took place in Dick Sand's mind. He was not where he had believed he was!

So it was not on the American coast that the "Pilgrim" had gone ashore! It was not the Isle of Paques, whose bearing the novice had taken at sea, but some other island situated exactly to the west of this continent, as the Isle of Paques is situated to the west of America.

The compass had deceived him during a part of the voyage, we know why! Led away by the tempest over a false route, he must have doubled Cape Horn, and from the Pacific Ocean he had passed into the Atlantic! The speed of his ship, which he could only imperfectly estimate, had been doubled, unknown to him, by the force of the hurricane!

Behold why the caoutchouc trees, the quinquinas, the products of South America were missing in this country, which was neither the plateau of Atacama nor the Bolivian pampa!

Yes, they were giraffes, not ostriches, which had fled away in the opening! They were elephants that had crossed the thick underwood! They were hippopotami whose repose Dick Sand had troubled under the large plants! It was the tsetse, that dipter picked up by Benedict, the formidable tsetse under whose stings the animals of the caravans perish!

Finally, it was, indeed, the roaring of the lion that had just sounded through the forest! And those forks, those chains, that knife of singular form, they were the tools of the slave-trader! Those mutilated hands, they were the hands of captives!

The Portuguese Negoro, and the American Harris, must be in collusion! And those terrible words guessed by Dick Sand, finally escaped his lips:

"Africa! Equatorial Africa! Africa of the slave-trade and the slaves!"

End of Part I