

## CHAPTER XXI PAGANEL'S LAST ENTANGLEMENT

ON the 19th of March, eleven days after leaving the island, the DUNCAN sighted the American coast, and next day dropped anchor in the bay of Talcahuano. They had come back again after a voyage of five months, during which, and keeping strictly along the 37th parallel, they had gone round the world.

The passengers in this memorable expedition, unprecedented in the annals of the Travelers' Club, had visited Chili, the Pampas, the Argentine Republic, the Atlantic, the island of Tristan d'Acunha, the Indian Ocean, Amsterdam Island, Australia, New Zealand, Isle Tabor, and the Pacific. Their search had not been fruitless, for they were bringing back the survivors of the shipwrecked BRITANNIA.

Not one of the brave Scots who set out at the summons of their chief, but could answer to their names; all were returning to their old Scotia.

As soon as the DUNCAN had re-provisioned, she sailed along the coast of Patagonia, doubled Cape Horn, and made a swift run up the Atlantic Ocean. No voyage could be more devoid of incident.

The yacht was simply carrying home a cargo of happiness.

There was no secret now on board, not even John Mangles's attachment to Mary Grant.

Yes, there was one mystery still, which greatly excited

McNabbs's curiosity. Why was it that Paganel remained always hermetically fastened up in his clothes, with a big comforter round his throat and up to his very ears? The Major was burning with desire to know the reason of this singular fashion. But in spite of interrogations, allusions, and suspicions on the part of McNabbs, Paganel would not unbutton.

Not even when the DUNCAN crossed the line, and the heat was so great that the seams of the deck were melting. "He is so DISTRAIT that he thinks he is at St. Petersburg," said the Major, when he saw the geographer wrapped in an immense great-coat, as if the mercury had been frozen in the thermometer.

At last on the 9th of May, fifty-three days from the time of leaving Talcahuano, John Mangles sighted the lights of Cape Clear. The yacht entered St. George's Channel, crossed the Irish Sea, and on the 10th of May reached the Firth of Clyde. At 11 o'clock she dropped anchor off Dunbarton, and at 2 P.M. the passengers arrived at Malcolm Castle amidst the enthusiastic cheering of the Highlanders.

As fate would have it then, Harry Grant and his two companions were saved. John Mangles wedded Mary Grant in the old cathedral of St. Mungo, and Mr. Paxton, the same clergyman who had prayed nine months before for the deliverance of the father, now blessed the marriage of his daughter and his deliverer.

Robert was to become a sailor like Harry Grant and John Mangles, and take part with them in the captain's grand projects, under the auspices of Lord Glenarvan.

But fate also decreed that Paganel was not to die a bachelor? Probably so.

The fact was, the learned geographer after his heroic exploits, could not escape celebrity. His blunders made quite a FURORE among the fashionables of Scotland, and he was overwhelmed with courtesies.

It was then that an amiable lady, about thirty years of age, in fact, a cousin of McNabbs, a little eccentric herself, but good and still charming, fell in love with the geographer's oddities, and offered him her hand. Forty thousand pounds went with it, but that was not mentioned.

Paganel was far from being insensible to the sentiments of Miss Arabella, but yet he did not dare to speak. It was the Major who was the medium of communication between these two souls, evidently made for each other. He even told Paganel that his marriage was the last freak he would be able to allow himself. Paganel was in a great state of embarrassment, but strangely enough could not make up his mind to speak the fatal word.

"Does not Miss Arabella please you then?" asked McNabbs.

"Oh, Major, she is charming," exclaimed Paganel, "a thousand times too charming, and if I must tell you all, she would please me better if she were less so. I wish she had a defect!"

"Be easy on that score," replied the Major, "she has, and more than one. The most perfect woman in the world has always her quota. So, Paganel, it is settled then, I suppose?"

"I dare not."

"Come, now, my learned friend, what makes you hesitate?"

"I am unworthy of Miss Arabella," was the invariable reply of the geographer. And to this he would stick.

At last, one day being fairly driven in a corner by the intractable Major, he ended by confiding to him, under the seal of secrecy, a certain peculiarity which would facilitate his apprehension should the police ever be on his track.

"Bah!" said the Major.

"It is really as I tell you," replied Paganel.

"What does it matter, my worthy friend?"

"Do you think so, Major?"

"On the contrary, it only makes you more uncommon.

It adds to your personal merits. It is the very thing to make you the nonpareil husband that Arabella dreams about."

And the Major with imperturbable gravity left Paganel in a state of the utmost disquietude.

A short conversation ensued between McNabbs and Miss Arabella. A fortnight afterwards, the marriage was celebrated in grand style in the chapel of Malcolm Castle. Paganel looked magnificent, but closely buttoned up, and Miss Arabella was arrayed in splendor.

And this secret of the geographer would have been forever buried in oblivion, if the Major had not mentioned it to Glenarvan, and he could not hide it from Lady Helena, who gave a hint to Mrs. Mangles. To make a long story short, it got in the end to M. Olbinett's ears, and soon became noised abroad.

Jacques Paganel, during his three days' captivity among the Maories, had been tattooed from the feet to the shoulders, and he bore on his chest a heraldic kiwi with outspread wings, which was biting at his heart.

This was the only adventure of his grand voyage that Paganel could never

get over, and he always bore a grudge to New Zealand on account of it. It was for this reason too, that, notwithstanding solicitation and regrets, he never would return to France. He dreaded lest he should expose the whole Geographical Society in his person to the jests of caricaturists and low newspapers, by their secretary coming back tattooed.

The return of the captain to Scotland was a national event, and Harry Grant was soon the most popular man in old Caledonia. His son Robert became a sailor like himself and Captain Mangles, and under the patronage of Lord Glenarvan they resumed the project of founding a Scotch colony in the Southern Seas.