

ADRIFF IN THE PACIFIC;

—OR—

The Strange Adventures of a Schoolboy Crew.

By JULES VERNE.

CHAPTER I.

THE STORM.

It was the 9th of March, 1860, and 11 o'clock at night.

The sea and sky were as one, and the eye could pierce but a few fathoms into the gloom. Through the raging sea over which the waves broke with a livid light, a little ship was driving under almost bare poles.

She was a schooner of a hundred tons. Her name was the *Blenth*, but you would have sought it in vain on her sternboard, for an accident of some sort had torn it away.

In the stern of the schooner were three boys, one about 14, the two others about 13 years of age; these, with a young negro some 12 years old, were at the wheel, and with their united strength strove to check the lurches which threatened every instant to throw the vessel broadside on. It was a difficult task, for the wheel seemed as though it would turn in spite of all they could do and hurl them against the bulwarks. Just before midnight such a wave came thundering against the stern that it was a wonder the rudder was not unshipped. The boys were thrown backwards by the shock, but they recovered themselves almost immediately.

"Does she still steer?" asked one of them.

"Yes, Gordon," answered Briant, who had coolly resumed his place. "Hold on tight, Donagan," he continued, "and don't be afraid. There are others besides ourselves to look after. You are not hurt, Moko?"

"No, Massa Briant," answered the boy. "But we must keep the yacht before the wind, or we shall be pooped."

At this moment the door of the companion leading to the saloon was thrown open. Two little heads appeared above the level of the deck, and with them came up the genial face of a dog, who saluted with a loud "Wough! wough!"

"Briant! Briant!" shouted one of the youngsters. "What is the matter?"

"Nothing, Iverson, nothing," returned Briant. "Get down again with Brole, and look sharp!"

"We are awfully frightened down here," said the other boy, who was a little younger.

"All of you?" asked Donagan.

"Yes, all of us," said Dole.

"Well, get back again," said Briant. "Get under the clothes, shut your eyes, and nothing will hurt you. There is no danger!"

"Look out!" said Moko. "Here's another wave."

A violent blow shook the stern. Fortunately the wave did not come on board. For if the water had swept down the companion the yacht would have been swamped.

"Go back, will you?" shouted Gordon.

"Go down; or I'll come after you!"

"Look here," said Briant, rather more gently, "go down, you youngsters."

The two heads disappeared, and at the same moment another boy appeared in the doorway.

"Do you want us, Briant?"

"No, Baxter," said Briant. "Let you and Cross and Webb and Service and Wilcox stop with the little ones. We four can manage."

Baxter shut the door from within.

"Yes, all of us," Dole had said.

But were there only little boys on board this schooner thus driven before the storm? Yes, only boys! And how many were there? Fifteen, counting Gordon, Briant, Donagan and the negro. How came they to be here? That you shall know shortly.

Was there not a man on the yacht? Not a captain to look after it? Not a sailor to give a hand in its management? Not a helmsman to steer in such a storm? Not one!

And more than that, there was not a person on board who knew the schooner's position on the ocean. And what ocean? The largest of all, the Pacific, which stretches for 6000 miles from Australia and New Zealand to the coast of South America.

"What is to be done?" asked Donagan.

"All we can do to save ourselves, heaven helping us," answered Briant, although even the most energetic man might have despaired under such circumstances, for the storm was increasing in violence.

The schooner had lost her mainmast, gone about four feet above the partners, so that no trysail could be set under which she might have been more easily steered.

The foremast still held, but the shrouds had stretched, and every minute it threatened to crash on to the deck. The forestaysail had been split to ribbons, and kept up a constant cracking, as if a rifle was being fired. The only sail that remained sound was the foresail, and this seemed as though it would go every moment, for the boys had not been strong enough to manage the last reef. If it were to go, the schooner could not be kept before the wind, the waves would board her over the quarter, and down she would go.

Suddenly, about 1 o'clock, a fearful crash was heard above the roaring of the storm.

"There goes the foremast!" said Donagan.

"No," said Moko; "it is the foresail blown out of the bolt ropes!"

"We must clear it," said Briant. "You remain at the wheel, Gordon, with Donagan; and Moko, come and help me."

Briant was not quite ignorant of things nautical. On his voyage out from Europe he had crossed the North Atlantic and Pacific and had learned a little seamanship, and that was why his companions, who knew none whatever, had left the schooner in his and Moko's hands.

Briant and the negro rushed forward. At all costs the foresail must be cut adrift, for it had caught and was bellving out in such a way that the schooner was in danger of capsizing, and if that happened she could never be righted, unless the mast were cut away and the wire shrouds broken, and how could the boys manage that?

The two set to work with remarkable judgment. Their object was to keep as much sail on the schooner as possible, so as to steer her before the wind as long as the storm lasted. They slacked off the hal-yards and let the sail down to within four or five feet of the deck, and they cut off the torn strips with their knives, secured the lower corners, and made all snug. Twenty times at least, were they in danger of being swept away by the waves.

Under her very small spread of canvas the schooner could still be kept on her course, and though the wind had so little to take hold of she was driven along at the speed of a torpedo boat. The faster she went the better. Her safety depended on her going faster than the waves, so that none could follow and board her.

Briant and Moko were making their way back to the wheel when the door of the companion again opened. A boy's head again appeared. This time it was Jack, Briant's brother, three years his junior.

"What do you want, Jack?" asked his brother.

"Come here! Come here!" said Jack. "There's water in the saloon."

Briant rushed down the companion stairs. The saloon was confusedly lighted by a lamp, which the rolling swung backwards and forwards. Its light revealed a dozen boys crouched on the couches around. The youngest—there were some as young as eight—were huddled against each other in fear.

"There is no danger," said Briant, wishing to give them confidence. "We are all right. Don't be afraid."

Then holding a lighted lantern to the floor, he saw that some water was washing from side to side.

Whence came this water? Did it come from a leak? That must be ascertained at once.

Forward of the saloon was the day-saloon, then the dining-saloon, and then the crew's quarters.

Briant went through these in order, and found that the water had been taken in from the seas dashing over the bows, down the fore-companion, which had not been quite closed, and that had been run aft by the pitching of the ship. There was thus no danger.

Briant stopped to cheer up his compan-

ions as he went back through the saloon, and then returned to his place at the helm.

An hour later there was another report from the bow. What remained of the foresail had been split to ribbons, and the strips flew off into space like huge gulls.

"We have no sail left!" exclaimed Donagan; "and it is impossible for us to set another."

"Well, it doesn't matter," said Briant. "We shall not get along so fast, that is all!"

The boy had not finished the sentence when several tons of water came with a leap over the taffrail. Briant, Donagan and Gordon were hurled against the companion to which they managed to cling. But the negro had disappeared in the wave, which had swept the deck from stern to bow, carrying away the binnacle, a pile of spare spars and the three boats, which were swinging to the davits in board. The deck was cleared at one blow, but the water almost instantly flowed off, and the yacht was saved from sinking beneath the flood.

"Moko! Moko!" shouted Briant, as soon as he could speak.

"See if he's gone overboard," said Donagan.

"No," said Gordon, leaning out to leeward. "No, I don't see him, and I don't hear him."

"We must save him! Throw him a buoy—throw him a rope!" said Briant.

And in a voice that rang clearly out in a few seconds of calm, he shouted again—

"Moko! Moko!"

"Here! Help!" replied the negro.

"He is not in the sea," said Gordon. "His voice comes from the bow."

"I'll save him," said Briant.

And he crept forward along the heaving, slippery deck, avoiding as best he might the blocks swinging from the ropes that were all adrift. The boy's voice was heard again, and then all was silent. By great effort Briant reached the fore-companion.

He shouted. There was no response.

Had Moko been swept away into the sea since he uttered his last cry? If so, he must be far astern now, for the waves could not carry him along as fast as the schooner was going. And then he was lost!

No! A feeble cry reached Briant, who hurried to the windlass in the frame of which the foot of the bowsprit was fitted. There he found the negro stuck in the very angle of the bow. A hal-yard was tightening every instant round his neck. He had been saved by it when the waves were carrying him away. Was he now to be strangled by it?

Briant opened his knife, and with some difficulty managed to cut the rope. Moko was then dragged aft, and as soon as he had recovered strength enough to speak—"I thank, Massa Briant," he said, and immediately resumed his place at the wheel, where the four did their utmost to keep the yacht safe from the enormous waves that now ran behind them, for the waves now ran faster than the yacht, and could easily board her as they passed. But what could be done? It was impossible to set the least scrap of sail.

The four boys looked out at the chaos of wild water; they felt that if the calm was long in coming their situation would be desperate. It was impossible that the schooner could float for another day, for the waves would assuredly sweep away the companions and swamp her.

But suddenly there came a cry from Moko of "Land! land!"

"Land!" exclaimed Briant.

"Yes," replied Moko, "land to the eastward."

And he pointed towards a part of the horizon now hidden by a mass of vapors.

"Are you sure?" asked Donagan.

"Yes, yes—certain," said Moko. "If the mist opens again you look—there—a little to the right of the foremast! Look, look!"

The mist began to open and rise from the sea. A few moments more, and the ocean reappeared for several miles in front of the yacht.

"Yes, land! It is really land!" shouted Briant.

"And land that is very low," added Gordon, who had just caught sight of the indented coast.

And now the wind blew with still greater strength; the schooner, carried along like a feather, was hurled toward the coast, which stood out like a line of ink on the whitish waste of sky. In the background a cliff rising from 150 to 200 feet; in the foreground was a yellowish beach ending toward the right in a rounded mass which seemed to belong to a forest farther inland.

Ah! If the schooner could reach the sandy beach without meeting with a line of reefs, if the mouth of a river would only offer a refuge, her passengers might perhaps escape safe and sound.

It occurred to Briant that it would be better for all his people to be on deck when the crash came, and opening the companion door he shouted down.

"Come on deck, every one of you!"

Immediately out jumped the dog, and then the 11 boys one after the other—the smallest at the sight of the mighty waves around them beginning to yell with terror.

It was a little before 6 in the morning when the schooner reached the first line of breakers.

"Hold on, all of you!" shouted Briant, stripping off half his clothes, so as to be ready to help those whom the surf swept away, for the vessel would certainly strike.

Suddenly there came a shock. The schooner had grounded. A second wave took her 50 feet farther, just skimming the rocks that rose above the water level in quite a thousand places. Then she heeled over to port and remained motionless, surrounded by the boiling surf.

[CONTINUED MONDAY.]

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A 100-ton schooner, manned by school-boys only, in a furious gale, is wrecked off an unknown coast in the Pacific. She lies in the boiling surf, near shore.

CHAPTER II.

"Don't be afraid," said Briant. "The yacht is strongly built, the coast is near. Wait, and we will try to reach the shore."

"And why wait?" asked Donagan.

"Yes--why?" added another boy about 12 years old, named Wilcox. "Donagan is right. Why wait?"

"Because the sea is too high at present, and we should be thrown out among the rocks," answered Briant.

"And if the yacht goes to pieces?" asked a third boy named Webb, who was about the same age as Wilcox.

"I do not think there is much fear of that," said Briant. "At least till the tide turns. When it goes out we can see about saving ourselves."

Briant was right. Although the tides are not very considerable in the Pacific, their range is enough to cause an appreciable difference of level between high and low water. There would therefore be an advantage in waiting a few hours, particularly if the wind dropped. The ebb might leave a part of the reef dry, and it would then be less dangerous to leave the schooner and easier to cross the quarter of a mile which separated her from the beach.

Reasonable as was this advice, Donagan and two or three others were not prepared to follow it; and they formed a small crowd in the bow and talked in whispers. During the schooner's passage they had consented to obey Briant's orders, on account of his knowledge of seamanship, but they had always intended to resume their freedom of action once they got ashore. And this was particularly the case with Donagan, who, in respect of education and ability, considered himself a long way the superior of Briant and the rest. Briant happened to be of French birth, and not unnaturally, the English were by no means disposed to knock under to him.

So Donagan, Wilcox, Webb and Cross stood in the bow, and looked away across the sheet of foam, dotted with eddies, furrowed with currents which looked dangerous enough to satisfy any of them. The most skillful swimmer would have struggled in vain against the troubled tide that ebbed in the teeth of the boisterous wind. The advice to wait for an hour or two was only too sensible, and Donagan and his supporters had to yield to the evidence of their own eyes, and returned to the stern among the younger boys, just as Briant was saying to them:

"Above all things do not separate! Let us keep together, or we are lost."

"Do you presume to lay down the law for us?" exclaimed Donagan.

"I presume nothing," said Briant, "except what is for the safety of all."

"Briant is right," said Gordon, who never spoke without thinking, and took things generally in a cool, quiet sort of way.

"Yes, yes!" joined in two of the youngsters, who felt drawn towards Briant by a secret instinct.

Donagan did not reply, but he and his friends kept away from the rest, and waited till it was time to begin work at saving themselves.

There was no sign that the land was inhabited. There was no house or hut, not even at the mouth of the river. The natives, if there were any, might perhaps prefer to live away from the shore, where they were exposed to such boisterous winds from the westward.

"I see no smoke," said Briant, lowering the binocular.

"And there is no boat on the beach," said Moko.

"How could there be, if there is no harbor?" asked Donagan.

"It is not necessary that there should be a harbor," said Gordon. "Fishing boats could lie up the river mouth, and it might be that the storm has obliged the people to take them up the river."

Gordon's observation was true enough, but, anyhow, there was no sign of a boat to be seen, and the whole coast seemed uninhabited.

The tide was going out--very slowly, it is true--for the wind drove it back. But the wind was falling and edging more to the northwest and everything ought to be in readiness when the reef offered a practicable passage.

It was nearly 7 o'clock. Every one was busy bringing up on deck such things as were of first importance, leaving the others to be collected when the sea washed them ashore. There was on board a large store of preserved provisions, and some of them were made up into packages for the older boys to take with them. But for this to be done the reef ought to be dry. Would the tide be low enough to leave the beach dry up to the rocks?

What a pity it was that the boats had been carried away in the storm! They were large enough to hold all on board, and in them Briant and his comrades could have tried to reach the shore, and afterwards take many things from the wreck which would now have to be left.

Suddenly there was a shout in the bow. Baxter had made an important discovery. The yawl, instead of being washed away, was foul of the bowsprit rigging and uninjured. It could only hold five or six, it is true, but it would be of great service if the tide did not run out far enough to leave a dry passage to land.

But here again a discussion broke out, in which Briant and Donagan took opposite sides. In fact, as soon as the yawl was found, Donagan, Wilcox, Webb and Cross had taken possession of her.

"What are you doing?" asked Briant.

"What we choose," answered Wilcox.

"Are you going off in that boat?"

"Yes," said Donagan, "and it will take more than you to stop us."

"I will stop you," said Briant; "I and those you are going to leave behind."

"I leave behind!" said Donagan contemptuously. "That is what you think, is it? I am going to leave nobody behind, you see! We are going to the beach, and then one of us will bring the yawl back."

"And if you cannot get back?" said Briant, with difficulty keeping his temper. "If she gets stove on the rocks?"

"Come on," said Webb, pushing Briant aside "let us get her off!"

Briant caught hold of the boat as they were trying to launch her.

"You shall not go," he said.

"We'll see about that," said Donagan.

"You shall not go," said Briant. "This boat is for the youngsters, if the tide is not low enough to let them walk ashore."

"Leave it alone," said Donagan angrily.

"I tell you, Briant, you shall not stop us."

"And I tell you, Donagan, that I shall."

There was to be a fight over it, evidently. Wilcox, Webb and Cross took Donagan's part; Baxter, Service and Gannett were backing up Briant, when Gordon intervened. He was the oldest and coolest of the lot, and he showed his good sense by intervening in favor of Briant.

"Come, come," Donagan, don't be so impatient! Can't you see the water is very rough, and that there is a chance of your losing the boat?"

"I will not stand Briant doing latently over us as he has been doing lately," said Donagan.

"Hear, hear," said Cross and Webb.

"I am engineering over nobody," replied Briant; "but I will not let anybody act for himself at the expense of all the others."

"We think not as much of the others as you do," said Donagan; "and when we are ashore--"

"Which we are not just yet," said Gordon.

"Come, Donagan, don't be obstinate; leave the boat alone till there is a better chance."

The efforts of the peacemaker were successful--as they had been more than once before--and the boys left the boat for a time.

The tide had now gone down a couple of feet. Was there a channel through the breakers? Briant went forward to see. Mounting the starboard shrouds, he sat on the cross-trees. Through the reef there was a channel, which could be traced by the points of rock sticking up out of the water on each side. But there were too many eddies along it at present to think of venturing through it in the boat. Better wait a little until the outgoing tide had left it practicable.

From the cross-trees Briant carefully reconnoitered the coast in front of him. There were no signs of inhabitants in the bay, which from point to point was about eight miles long.

After being aloft half an hour, Briant returned to report what he had seen. Donagan and his supporters listened without saying anything. Not so Gordon, who asked--

"It was about 6 o'clock, was it not, when the yacht grounded?"

"Yes," said Briant.

"And how long is the tide running out?"

"Five hours, I think. Isn't it, Moko?" replied Briant.

"Yes, five or six hours," said Moko.

"That would make it 11," said Gordon, "for the best time for us to try."

"That is what I thought," said Briant.

"Well, let us all be ready by then," said Gordon. "And now let us have something to eat. If we have to take to the water let it be some time after we have had a meal."

The suggestion was received with much applause, and acted upon immediately. With the biscuits and the jam the youngsters forgot their trout-les, and as they had had nothing to eat for 24 hours they ate away steadily as if they never intended to stop.

After a time Briant went to the bow and took another long look at the rocks.

How slowly the tide seemed to go out! And yet the depth of water must be decreasing, for the yachts heeled over more

and more. Moko got out the leadline and found he touched bottom at eight feet. Would the schooner be left high and dry? Moko did not think so, and he took an opportunity of telling Briant so on the quiet, so as to alarm nobody. Briant went and consulted with Gordon. Evidently the northerly wind prevented the tide running out as far as usual in calm weather.

"What is to be done?" said Gordon.

"I don't know," said Briant. "What a nuisance it is that we are only boys when we ought to be men!"

"It is, rather," replied Gordon. "But necessity, you know, may bring us up to the mark. Never despair! We shall be all right if we are careful. We must do something."

"Yes; we must do something. If we don't get away from the ship before the tide comes back we are done for."

"That is true enough, for she'll go to pieces. We must leave her somehow."

"Yes, somehow!"

"Couldn't we make a raft?"

"I thought of that, but nearly all the spars went overboard in the storm. We cannot break up the deck to make a raft with the planks, for we have no time. We have only the boat and the sea's too rough for her. All I can see is to get a rope across the reef and fasten it to one of those rocks over there. We might get them all ashore that way."

"Who'll take the rope?"

"I will," said Briant.

"I'll help you," said Gordon.

"No. I'll go alone."

"Won't you take the boat?"

"That would risk losing her. Better keep her as a last resource."

It was then 10.15. In 45 minutes it would be low water. At the schooner's bow there was not more than four or five feet of water; but it seemed as though only a few inches more would run out. Sixty yards away the water swallowed considerably, as could be seen by its color and the numerous rocks sticking up out of it. To cross this 60 yards was the difficulty. If Briant could get a rope firmly fixed to one of the pointed rocks and stretch it taut with the help of the windlass, all might get off in safety. And along the rope they could slide the packages of provisions and other articles from the wreck. But it was a risky undertaking, and Briant would allow no one to attempt it but himself.

He chose a rope of moderate size, and, slipping off his clothes, tied it round his waist.

"Now, come along there," said Gordon. "Stand by to pay out the rope."

Donagan and his friends came forward with the rest, and stood ready to slack the rope out gently from the coil, so as to ease off the weight as much as possible.

As Briant was about to plunge into the sea, his brother ran up, crying:

"My brother! My brother!"

"Don't be afraid, Jack, don't be afraid for me!" was the reply; and in another moment Briant was on the surface of the sea, swimming strongly with the rope behind him.

In a calm the task would not have been easy, for the surf beat furiously among the rocks. Currents and counter-currents prevented the brave boy from keeping a straight line, and when he entered them he could with difficulty make his way through. Gradually he made his way towards the beach, but it was evident that his strength was failing him. He had not gone 20 yards from the schooner when he entered a whirlpool caused by the meeting of two streams of surf. If he could get round it or through it all might be well, for the sea beyond was calm. He tried to pass it on the left hand, but the attempt was a failure. A strong swimmer in the prime of life would have tried in vain. The whirlpool seized him, and drew him irresistibly to the centre.

"Help! Pull! Pull!" he shouted, and then he disappeared.

[CONTINUED TOMORROW.]

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Briant, one of the oldest and most experienced of the boys, with a life line about him, plunges into the surf toward the shore, is caught in a whirlpool and disappears.

CHAPTER II.—CONTINUED.

On the yacht terror was at its height. "Haul away!" said Gordon, coolly.

And the boys hauled as if for their lives, and in less than a minute Briant was on board—unconscious, it is true, but soon brought back to life in his brother's arms.

That attempt had failed. What was to be done now? Were they to wait? To wait for what? Help? And where was help to come from?

It was now past noon, and the tide began to make, and the surf increased as the water rose. And as it was new moon the tide would be higher than the evening before. And the wind had gone down but little, and the schooner might be lifted from its rocky bed and strike again, and be shattered on the reef! And no one would survive! And yet nothing could be done!

In the stern the young boys gathered round the older ones, and watched the waters rise and the rocks disappear in turn beneath the surf. The wind had gone round to the west again, and beat full on the shore. As the water deepened the waves rose, and rolled and broke up against her. By 2 o'clock the schooner had recovered from her heel and was upright, and her bow was free, and being dashed up and down on the rocks, while her stern remained firmly fixed. Soon she began to roll from side to side, and the boys had to cling together to prevent being thrown overboard. Suddenly a foaming mountain came rolling in from the open sea, and rose a few feet from the stern of the yacht. It was over 20 feet high; it came with the fury of a torrent; it covered the reef; it lifted the schooner from the rocks, and, without even grazing them, swept her onward; in less than a minute, amid the roaring mass of water, the wreck was carried to the beach and laid on the sand within a couple of hundred feet of the trees at the foot of the cliff. And there it remained, while the sea flowed back and left it high and dry.

CHAPTER III.

WHY ADRIFT.

At the time of our story Charman's boarding-school was one of the largest in Auckland, New Zealand. It boasted about a hundred pupils belonging to the best families in the colony, and the course of study and management were the same as in high-class schools at home.

On Feb. 15, 1880, in the afternoon, a crowd of boys and their relatives came out of the schoolhouse into Queen street, merry and happy as birds just escaped from their cage. It was the beginning of the holidays. Two months of independence; two months of liberty! And for some of the boys there was the prospect of a sea voyage which had been talked about in school for months. How the others envied those who were to go on this cruise in which New Zealand was to be circumnavigated! The schooner had been chartered by the boys' friends, and fitted out for a voyage of six weeks. She belonged to the father of one of the boys, William H. Garnett, an old merchant captain, in whom every confidence was felt. A subscription had been raised among the parents to cover the expenses, and great was the joy of the young folks, who would have found it difficult to spend their holidays better.

The fortunate boys were of all ages from 8 to 14. With the exception of the Briants, who were French, and Gordon, who was an American, they were all English.

The crew consisted of the mate, six sailors, a cook and a boy, Moko, the young negro of 12, whose family had been in the service of a well-known colonist for many years. And we ought to mention Fan, a dog of American extraction, which belonged to Gordon, and never left her master.

The day of departure had been fixed for the 15th of February. The yacht lay moored at the end of Commercial pier. The crew was not on board when, on the evening of the 14th, the young passengers embarked. Capt. Garnett was not expected till the last moment, and the mate and the boy received Gordon and his companions, the men having gone ashore to take a parting glass. When the yacht had been cleared of visitors, and the boys had all gone to bed, so as to be ready early in the morning for the start, it occurred to the mate that he would go up into the town and look for his men, leaving Moko in charge. And Moko was too tired to keep awake.

What happened immediately the mate left was a mystery, but, accidentally or purposely, the moorings of the yacht got cast off without any one on board being the wiser.

It was a dark night. The land breeze was strong, and the tide running out, and away went the schooner to sea.

When Moko awoke he found the yacht adrift!

His shouts brought up Gordon, Briant, Donagan and a few of the others from below, but nothing could they do. They called for help in vain. None of the harbor lights were visible. The yacht was right out in the gulf, three miles from land.

At the suggestion of Briant and Moko the boys tried to get sail on the yacht so as to beat back into the harbor. But the sail was too heavy for them to set properly, and the result was that the yacht, instead of keeping her head up, dropped dead away to leeward. Cape Colville was passed, and the strait between Great Barrier island and the mainland run through, and soon the schooner was off to the eastward, many miles from New Zealand.

It was a serious position. There could be no help from the land. If a vessel were to come in search, several hours must elapse before she could catch them, even supposing that she could find them in the darkness. And even when day came, how could she describe so small a craft on the high sea? If the wind did not change all hope of returning to land must be given up. There remained only the chance of being spoken by some vessel on her way to a New Zealand port. And to meet this Moko hastened to hoist a lantern at the foremast head. And then all that could be done was to wait for daylight.

Many of the smaller boys were still asleep, and it was thought best not to wake them.

Several attempts were made to bring the schooner up in the wind, but all were useless. Her head fell off immediately, and away she went drifting to the eastward.

Suddenly a light was sighted two or three miles off. It was a white masthead light, showing a steamer under way. Soon the side lights, red and green, rose above the water, and the fact of their being seen together showed that the steamer was steering straight for the yacht.

The boys shouted in vain. The wash of the waves, the roar of the steam blowing off, and the mean of the rising wind united to drown their voice. But if they could not hear the cries the lookouts might see the light at the schooner's foremast. It was a last chance, and unfortunately in one of the yacht's jerky pitches the halliard broke and the lantern fell into the sea, and there was nothing to show the presence of the schooner which the steamer was steering straight down upon at the rate of 12 knots an hour.

In a few seconds she had struck the yacht, and would have sunk her, had she not taken her on the slant close to the stern: as it was she carried away only a bit of the main-board.

The shock had been so feeble that the steamer kept on, leaving the schooner to the mercy of the approaching storm.

Drifting before the wind, the boys might well think they were lost. When day came the wide horizon was deserted. Not one was sighted, and although the wind moderated occasionally, yet it never ceased blowing from the westward.

How long this drifting was to last neither Briant nor his comrades knew. In vain they tried to get the schooner back into New Zealand waters, and it was under these conditions that Briant, displaying energy superior to his age, began to exercise an influence over his companions to which even Donagan submitted. Although with Moko's help he could not succeed in getting the yacht to the westward, he could, and did, manage to keep her navigable. He did not spare himself. He watched night and day. He swept the horizon for any chance of safety. And he threw overboard several bottles containing an account of what had happened to the schooner. It was a slender chance, doubtless, but he did not care to neglect it.

A few hours after the yacht left Hauraki gulf the storm arose, and for two weeks it raged with unusual impetuosity. Assailed by enormous waves, and escaping a hundred times from being overwhelmed by the mountains of water, the yacht had gone ashore on an unknown land in the Pacific.

What was to be the fate of these shipwrecked schoolboys? From what side was help to come to them if they could not help themselves?

Their families had only too good reason to suppose that they had been swallowed up. When it was found that the yacht had disappeared the alarm was given.

Without losing an instant the harbor master sent out two mail steamers in search, with orders to explore the gulf and some miles beyond it. All that night, though the sea grew rough, the little steamers sought in vain. And when day came and they returned to Auckland it was to deprive the unfortunate relatives of every hope. They had not found the schooner, but they had found the wreck—a knocked away in collision by the Quito—a collision of which those on board the Quito knew nothing.

And in this wreckage were three or four letters of the schooner's name.

It seemed certain that the yacht had met with disaster, and gone down with all on board within a dozen miles of New Zealand.

[CONTINUED TOMORROW.]

ADRIFF IN THE PACIFIC;

—OR—

The Strange Adventures of a Schoolboy Crew.

By JULES VERNE.

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

A 100-ton schooner, manned by school-boys only, in a furious gale, is wrecked off an unknown coast in the Pacific. She lies in the boiling surf, near shore.

Briant, one of the oldest and most experienced of the boys, with a life line about him, plunges into the surf toward the shore, is caught in a whirlpool and disappears.

He is pulled back, unconscious, but recovers. The chapter explains that these boys were inmates of a boarding school, in Auckland, New Zealand, about to go on a holiday cruise of two months around the island. The schooner on the night of Feb 15 lay at the wharf with the boys on board waiting for her crew and captain. Accidentally or on purpose her moorings were loosened and she drifted out to sea, where she was caught in the gale. Drifting out she was grazed by a passing schooner, which, without knowing it, carried away her name board. Steamers were sent out in search, but picked up only the nameboard, and the schooner is supposed to have sunk with all on board. Briant has taken command.

CHAPTER IV.

PREPARING FOR A NEW LIFE.

The shore was deserted, as Briant had discovered when he was on the foremast cross trees. For an hour the schooner lay on her bed of sand, and no native was seen. There was no sign of house or hut under the trees, in front of the cliff, or on the banks of the rivulet, now full with the waters of the tide. There was not even the print of a human foot on the beach, which the tide had bordered with a long line of seaweed. At the mouth of the river there was no fishing boat to be seen, and no smoke arose in the air along the whole curve of the bay between the northern and southern capes.

The first idea that occurred to Briant and Gordon was to get through the trees and ascend the cliff behind.

"We are on land, that is something!" said Gordon; "but what is this land which seems uninhabited?"

"The important thing is that it is not uninhabitable," answered Briant. "We have food and ammunition for some time. We want a shelter of some sort, and we must find one—at least for the youngsters."

"Yes. Right you are."

"As to finding out where we are," said Briant, "there will be time enough for that when we have nothing else to do. If it is a continent, we may, perhaps, be rescued. If it is an island! an uninhabited island—well, we shall see! Come, Gordon, let us be off on our voyage of discovery."

They soon reached the edge of the trees, which ran off on the slant from the cliff to the right bank of the stream, 300 or 400 yards above its mouth.

In the wood there was no sign of the passage of man, not a track, not a footpath. Old trunks, fallen through old age, lay on the ground, and the boys sank to their knees in the carpet of dead leaves. But the birds flew away in alarm as if they had learnt that man was their enemy, and it was therefore likely that if the island was not inhabited it was occasionally visited by the natives of a neighboring territory.

In 10 minutes the boys were through the wood, which grew thicker where the rocks at the back rose like a wall for a hundred and eighty feet. Was there in this wall any break or hollow which would afford them a refuge? A cave sheltered from the winds of the sea by the curtain of trees, and beyond the reach of the sea oven in storms, would be the very place for the boys to take up as their quarters until a careful exploration enabled them to move farther inland.

Luckily the wall was as bare of irregularity as the curtain of a fortification. There was no cave, nor was there any place where the cliff could be climbed. To reach the interior the shore would have to be followed till the cliff ended.

For half an hour Briant and his companion kept on to the southward along the foot of the cliff, and then they reached the right bank of the stream, which came meandering in from the east. On the right bank they stood under the shade of the lofty trees; but the left bank bordered a country of very different aspect; flat and verdureless, it looked like a wide marsh extending to the southern horizon. Disappointed in their hope of reaching the top of the cliff where they might have had a view of many miles over the country, the boys returned to the wreck.

Donagan and a few others were strolling among the rocks, while Jenkins, Iverson, Dole and Costar were amusing themselves by collecting shellfish. The explorers reported the result of their journey. Until a more distant expedition could be undertaken, it seemed best not to abandon the wreck, which, although stove in below and heeling considerably, would do very well as a temporary dwelling place. The deck had been half torn up forward, but the saloons yielded ample shelter against a storm. The galley had not been damaged at all, to the very great satisfaction of the smaller boys.

That very day they set to work to make the schooner comfortable. A rope ladder on the starboard side gave easy access to the beach. Moko, who as a cabin boy knew something of cooking, took charge of the galley, and, helped by Service, proceeded to cook a meal which, thanks to excellent appetite, gave general satisfaction, and even Jenkins, Iverson, Dole and Costar became quite lively. Jack alone continued miserable; his character seemed to have quite changed, but to all his companions said to him on the subject he gave evasive replies.

Thoroughly tired out after so many days and nights of danger, the need of a good sound sleep was apparent to all. The youngsters were the first to find their way to the saloon, and the others soon followed. Briant, Gordon and Donagan took it in turns to keep watch. Might not some wild beasts put in an appearance? Or even a band of natives, who would be more formidable? But neither came. The night passed without an alarm of any kind; and when the sun rose the boys joined in prayer to God for their deliverance from peril, and started on such work as was necessary.

The first thing was to make a list of the provisions, and then of the weapons, instruments, utensils, clothes, tools, etc. The food question was serious, for it seemed they were in a desert land. They would have to trust to fishing and shooting, if anything remained to be shot. Donagan, who was a capital shot, had seen nothing yet but the birds on the reef and beach. But to be reduced to feeding on sea birds was not a pleasant prospect, and it was desirable to know how long the schooner's provisions would last if managed with care.

It was found that, except the biscuits, of which there was a large store, the preserves, hams, meat biscuits—made of flour, minced pork and spice—corned beef, salt beef and sea stores generally, could not last longer than two months, so that from the very first they must have recourse to the productions of the country, and keep the provisions in case they had to journey some hundreds of miles to reach a port on the coast or a town in the interior.

"Suppose some of those things have been damaged?" asked Baxter. "If the sea water got into the hold—"

"That we shall see when we open the cases that look as though they had been knocked about," said Gordon. "If we were to cook them up again they might do."

"I'll look after that," said Moko.

"The sooner the better," said Briant, "for the first day or two we shall have to live entirely on these things."

"And why shouldn't we start today," asked Wilcox, "and see if we cannot find some more eggs among those rocks to the northward?"

"Yes, that's it," said Dole.

"And why shouldn't we go fishing?" asked Webb. "Are there not any fishing-lines on board? Who'll go fishing?"

"I will! I will!" said the youngsters.

"All right," said Briant: "but no playing about. We only give the lines to those who mean business."

"Don't get excited," said Iverson. "We will be as steady as—"

"But look here," said Gordon: "we must first make a list of what there is on board. We have other things to think of besides what there is to eat."

"You can go and get a few oysters for lunch," said Service.

"Ah! that I'll do," said Gordon. "Off you go in twos and threes; and, Moko, you go with them."

The negro could be trusted. He was willing, clever and plucky, and would probably be of great use. He was particularly attached to Briant, who did not conceal his liking for him.

"Come on!" said Jenkins.

"Are you not going with them, Jack?" asked Briant.

Jack replied in the negative.

Jenkins, Dole, Costar and Iverson then went off in charge of Moko, and scrambled up on to the reef which the sea had just left dry. In the cracks and crannies they might perchance come across many molluscs—mussels, clams, and even oysters—which, either raw or cooked, would form a welcome reinforcement. Away they went, running and jumping, and evidently looking on the expedition as one of pleasure rather than work. At their age they remembered little of the trials they had passed through, and thought less of the dangers to come.

As soon as they had gone the elder boys began their search on the yacht. Donagan, Cross, Wilcox and Webb devoted themselves to the weapons, ammunition, clothes, bedding, tools and utensils, while Briant, Garnett, Baxter and Service took stock of the drinkables. As each article was called out Gordon entered it in his notebook.

It was found that the yacht had a complete set of spare sails and rigging of all sorts, cordage, cables, hawsers, etc., and if she could have got afloat again could have been completely refitted. But these best quality sails and new cordage would never again be used on the sea; they would come in useful in other ways. A few fishing appliances, hand lines and deep sea-lines figured in the inventory, and very valuable they would be, for fish were abundant.

The list of weapons in the notebook gave eight central-fire fowling-pieces, a long-range duck gun and 12 revolvers. For ammunition there were 300 cartridges for the breech-loaders, two barrels of gunpowder, each of 25 pounds, and a large quantity of lead, small shot and bullets. This ammunition, intended to be used on the New Zealand coast at the place the yacht put in at, would come in more usefully for the general security. The storeroom also contained a few rockets for night signalling, and 30 cartridges and projectiles for the two small cannons on board, which it was hoped would not have to be used in repulsing a native attack.

The cooking utensils, and such like, were enough, even if the stay was to be a lengthy one. Though a good deal of the crockery had been smashed when the yacht ran ashore on the reef, yet enough remained for the service of the table. And these things were not absolutely necessary. There were more valuable things, such as garments of flannel, cloth, cotton, and linen in sufficient quantity to give a change for each change of climate. And if the land was in the same latitude as Auckland, which was likely, as the vessel had run before a westerly wind all the time, the boys might expect a hot summer and very cold winter. Fortunately there were on board a whole heap of clothes ready for an excursion of many weeks. In the seamen's chests there were trousers, linen frocks, waterproof coats and thick jerseys that could be made to fit big or little and enable them to defy the rigors of the winter. If circumstances obliged them to abandon the schooner, each could take away with him a complete set of bedding, for the bunks were well supplied with mattresses, sheets, blankets, pillows and quilts, and with care these things would last a long time.

A long time! That might mean forever. In Gordon's notebook there was also a list of the instruments on board; two aneroid barometers, a spirit thermometer, two chronometers, several copper speaking-trumpets, three telescopes of short and long range, a binnacle compass and two smaller ones, a storm glass indicating the approach of tempestuous weather, several British ensigns and jacks and a set of signalling flags. And there was also a Halkett boat—a little india-rubber canoe which folds up like a bag, and is large enough to take a person across a river or lake.

There were plenty of tools in the carpenter's chest, bags of nails, turrets, screws, iron nuts and bands of all sorts for repairing the yacht. Thread and needles were not wanting, for the mothers had prepared for frequent mendings. There was no risk of being deprived of fire, for without reckoning matches there were enough tinder-boxes and tinder to last for a long time. There were some large scale charts, but only for the coast of New Zealand, and consequently useless for the part where they had been wrecked; but luckily Gordon had brought with him a general atlas. And of course Garnett had taken good care that his famous accordion had come off safe and sound. There were pens and pencils, ink and paper, and an almanac for 1880, which was at once handed over to Baxter for him to cancel each day as it elapsed.

"It was on the 10th of March," said he, "that we came ashore. Well, out goes the 10th of March, and all the days before it."

In the strong box of the yacht there was £150 in gold, which might come in useful if the boys reached some port from which they could get home.

Gordon took careful stock of the casks stowed in the hold.

About noon the youngsters, headed by Moko, returned. They had, after a time, quieted down and set seriously to work, and they had brought back a good store of shellfish, which the cabin boy undertook to get ready. As to eggs, there ought to be a great quantity, for Moko had noted the presence of innumerable rock pigeons of an edible kind nesting on the higher edges of the cliff.

An hour afterwards Moko announced that dinner was ready, and the boys hurried up the ladder on to the schooner and took their seats in the dining saloon. The shellfish, particularly the mussels, were declared to be excellent, although their seasoning left something to be desired; but at that age hunger is the best sauce. A biscuit and piece of corned beef, and fresh water from the stream, taken when the tide was at the lowest, so as to avoid its being brackish, made an acceptable meal.

The afternoon was spent in arranging the things that had been entered on the list. Jenkins and his companions going off to fish in the river, and having fair sport among the many crowd that swarmed about its mouth. After supper all were glad to get to bed, except Baxter and Wilcox, whose turn it was to keep guard.

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The schooner is thrown on shore and the boys begin to explore. The schooner's supplies furnish them with arms, ammunition, food and a complete set of household utensils, etc. The place teems with animal life.

CHAPTER V.

THE VIEW FROM THE CAPE.

Was it an island or a continent?

That was the question constantly occupying the minds of Briant, Gordon and Donagan, who by their character and intelligence were the three chiefs of this little world.

Insular or continental, the land was evidently not in the tropics. That could be seen by the vegetation--oaks, beeches, birches, alders, pines and firs of different sorts, and several of the myrtaceae and saxifragaceae. It seemed as though the country must be nearer the southern pole than New Zealand, and, if so, a severe winter might be anticipated. Already a thick carpet of dead leaves covered the ground in the wood near the cliff, the pines and firs alone retaining their foliage.

"That is why," said Gordon, "the morning after the wreck I thought it best not to look out for a permanent settlement hereabouts."

"That is what I think," said Donagan. "If we wait for the bad season it will be too late to get to some inhabited part, for we may have to go hundreds of miles."

"But we are only in the first half of March," said Briant.

"Well," said Donagan, "the fine weather may last till the end of April, and in six weeks we might get well on the road--"

"If there is a road!"

"And why shouldn't there be?"

"Quite so," said Gordon.

And so it was decided that the exploration should be made, and the wreck should not be abandoned until it had been discovered whether the boys had been cast on an island or a continent, which could only be the American continent. But no start could be made for the next five days, owing to the weather having become rainy and misty; and until the wind freshened to blow the fog away, the view would not be worth the ascent.

During the 11th and 15th of March Donagan, Wilcox, Webb and Cross went shooting rock pigeons. They always kept together, and it was obvious that they wished to form a clique apart from the rest. Gordon felt anxious about this; he saw that trouble must come of it, and when an opportunity offered he spoke about it and tried to make the discontented ones understand how necessary union was for the good of the community. But Donagan replied to his advances so coldly that he thought it unreasonable to insist, though he did not despair of destroying the germs of dissension which might have deplorable results, for events might lead to bringing about an understanding where advice failed.

While the excursion to the north of the bay was stopped by the misty weather, Donagan and his friends had plenty of sport. He was really an excellent shot, and he was very proud of his skill, and despised such contrivances as traps, nets and snares, in which Wilcox delighted. Webb was a good hand with the gun, but did not pretend to equal Donagan. Cross had very little of the sacred fire, and contented himself with praising his cousin's prowess. Fan, the dog, distinguished herself highly, and made no hesitation in jumping into the waves in retrieving the somewhat miscellaneous victims of the guns. Moko refused to have anything to do with the cormorants, gulls, seamews and grebes, but there were quite enough rock pigeons as well as guinea and ducks to serve his purpose. The guinea were of the bernicle kind, and from the direction they took when the report of the gun scared them away, it was supposed that they lived in the interior of the country.

Donagan shot a few of those oyster catchers which live on limpets, cockles and mussels. In fact there was plenty of choice, although Moko found it no easy matter to get rid of the oily taste, and did not always succeed to the general satisfaction. But, as Gordon said, the boys need not be too particular, for the most must be made of the provisions on board.

On the 15th of March the weather appeared favorable for the excursion to the cape, which was to solve the problem as to island or continent. During the night the sky cleared up the mist which the calm of the preceding days had accumulated. A land breeze swept it away in a few hours. The sun's bright rays gilded the crest of the cliff. It looked as if in the afternoon the eastern horizon would be clearly visible, and that was the horizon on which their hopes depended. If the line of water continued along it the land must be an island and the only hope of rescue was from a ship.

The idea of this visit to the end of the bay first occurred, it will be remembered, to Briant, and he had resolved to go off alone. He would gladly have been accompanied by Gordon, who, however, did not feel justified in leaving his companions without any one to look after them.

On the evening of the 15th, finding the barometer remained steady, he told Gordon he would be off at dawn next morning. Ten or 11 miles, there and back, was nothing to a healthy lad who did not mind fatigue. The day would be enough for the journey and he would be sure to get back before night.

Briant was off at daybreak without the others knowing he had gone. His weapons were only a stick and the revolver, so as to be prepared for any wild beast that came along, although Donagan had not come across any in his shooting expeditions. With these he also took one of the schooner's telescopes--a splendid instrument of great range and clearness of vision.

Walking at a good pace he followed the trend of the coast along the inner line of reefs, his road marked by a border of seaweed still wet with the retreating tide. In an hour he had passed the extreme point reached by Donagan in his foray after the rock pigeons. The birds had nothing to fear from him now. His object was to push on and reach the foot of the cape as soon as possible. The sky was clear of cloud, and if the mist came back in the afternoon his journey might be useless.

During the first hour he kept on as fast as he could walk, and got over half his journey. If no obstacle hindered him, he expected to reach the promontory by 8 o'clock. But as the cliff ran nearer to the reefs the beach became more difficult to traverse. The strip of land grew so narrow that, instead of the firm elastic path near the stream, he had to take to the slippery rocks and make his way over vicious seaweed and round deep pools and over loose pebbles on which there was no safe footing. It was tiring walking, and took two full hours more than he expected.

"I must get to the cape before high water," said he to himself. "The beach is covered by the tide, and the sea runs up to the foot of the cliff. If I am obliged to go back at all or to take refuge on some rocks, I shall get there too late. I must get on at all cost before the tide runs up."

And the brave boy, trying to forget the fatigue which began to creep over his limbs, struck out across what seemed the shortest way. Many times he had to take off his boots and stockings and wade the pools, and now and then, with all his strength and activity, he could not avoid a fall.

It was then 10 o'clock. Exhausted and hungry, Briant thought it best to have something to eat before attempting the ascent of the promontory, which raised its crest some 300 feet above the sea. And he sat down on a rock out of reach of the rising tide, which had begun to gain on the outer ridge of reefs. An hour later he would not have been able to pass along the foot of the cliff without running the danger of imprisonment by the flood. But there was nothing to be anxious about now, and in the afternoon the ebb would leave the passage dry.

The ascent was not easy. He had to climb from one rock to another, the rocks being often so large that he could barely reach up them. But as he belonged to that order of boys we classify as climbers, and brought all his gifts into play, he eventually reached the top.

With his glass at his eye he first looked to the east. The country was flat as far as he could see. The cliff was the greatest elevation, and the ground gently sloped towards the interior. In the distance were a few hillocks hardly worth mentioning. There was much forest land, and under the yellow foliage rose many streams that ran towards the coast. The surface was level up to the horizon, which might be a dozen miles away. It did not look as though the sea was there.

To the north Briant could make out the beach running straight away for seven or eight miles. Beyond was another cape, and a stretch of sand that looked like a huge desert. To the south was a wide marsh. Briant had surveyed the whole sweep of the westerly horizon.

Was he on an island or a continent? He could not say. If it was an island, it was a large one. That was all he could discover.

Then he looked to the westward. The sea was shining under the oblique rays of the sun which was slowly sinking in the heavens.

Suddenly he brought his glass to his eye and looked away into the othing.

"Ships!" he exclaimed. "Ships going past!"

Three black spots appeared on the circle of gleaming water about 15 miles away.

Great was his excitement. Was he the sport of an illusion? Were they vessels he saw?

He lowered the glass and cleaned the eyepiece, which had clouded with his breath. He looked again.

The three points looked like ships with nothing visible but their hulls. There was no sign of their masts and no smoke to show that they were under way.

And then the thought occurred to him that they were too far off for his signals to be seen; and as it was likely that his companions had not seen these ships, the best thing he could do, was to get back to the wreck and light a big fire on the beach. And then--when the sun went down--

As he thought he kept his eye on the three black spots. One thing was certain; they did not move.

Again he looked through the glass, and for some minutes he kept them in the field of his objective. And then he saw that they were three small islands that the schooner must have passed close by when they were hidden in the mist.

It was 2 o'clock. The tide began to retire, leaving the line of reefs bare at the foot of the cliff. Briant, thinking it was time to return to the wreck, prepared to descend the hill.

But once again he looked to the eastward. In the more oblique position of the sun he might see something that had hitherto escaped him. And he did not regret doing so.

For beyond the border of forest he could now see a bluish line, which stretched from north to south for many miles, with its two ends lost behind the confused mass of trees.

"What is that?" he asked himself.

"What again he looked.

"The sea! Yes! The sea!

And the glass almost dropped from his hands.

It was the sea to the eastward, there could be no doubt! It was not a continent on which he had been cast, but an island. An island in the immensity of the Pacific, which it would be impossible to leave!

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CHAPTER VI.

ISLAND OR CONTINENT?

In the evening after supper, Briant told the bigger boys the result of his exploration. Briefly it was as follows: To the east, beyond the forest zone, he had distinctly seen a line of water extending from north to south. That this was the horizon of the sea appeared indubitable. Hence it was on an island and not on a continent that the yacht had been wrecked.

Gordon and the others received the information with considerable excitement.

They were on an island and deprived of every means of leaving it. Their scheme of finding a road to the eastward would have to be abandoned! They would have to wait till a ship came in sight! Could it be true that this was their only chance of rescue?

"But was not Briant mistaken?" asked Donagan.

"Did you not mistake a bank of clouds for the sea?" asked Cross.

"No," answered Briant. "I am certain I made no mistake. What I saw was a line of water, and it formed the horizon."

"How far off was it?" asked Wilcox.

"About six miles from the cape."

"And beyond that," asked Webb, "were there no mountains, no elevated ground?"

"No; nothing but the sky."

Briant was so positive that it was not reasonable to retain the least doubt in the matter.

But Donagan, as was always the case when he argued with Briant, continued obstinate.

"And I repeat that Briant has made a mistake. And until we have seen it with our own eyes—"

"Which we shall do," said Gordon, "for we must know the truth about it."

"And I say we have not a day to lose," said Baxter, "if we are to leave this place before the bad weather, supposing we are on a continent."

"We will go tomorrow, if the weather permits," said Gordon. "We will start on an expedition that may last some days. I say weather permitting, for to plunge into the forest in bad weather would be madness."

"Agreed, Gordon," answered Briant. "And when we reach the other side of the island—"

"If it is an island!" interrupted Donagan.

"But it is one!" replied Briant, impatiently. "I have made no mistake. I distinctly saw the sea in the east. It pleases Donagan to contradict me as usual—"

"And you are not infallible, Briant!"

"No, I am not! But this time I am. I will go myself to this sea, and if Donagan likes to come with me—"

"Certainly I will go!"

"And so will we," said three or four of the bigger boys.

"Good!" said Gordon. "But don't get excited, my dear young friends. If we are only boys we may as well act like men. Our position is serious, and any imprudence may make it worse. We must not all go into this forest. The youngsters cannot come with us, and we cannot leave them all on the wreck. Donagan and Briant may go, and two others may go with them—"

"I'll go!" said Wilcox.

"So will I!" said Service.

"Very well," said Gordon. "Four is quite enough. If you are too long coming back we can send a few others to your assistance, while the rest remain with the schooner. Don't forget that this is our camp, our house, our home, and we can only leave it when we are sure that we are on a continent."

"We are on an island," said Briant. "For the last time I say so!"

"That we shall see!" replied Donagan.

Gordon's sensible advice had had its effect in calming the discord. Obviously—and Briant saw it clearly enough—it was advisable to push through the central forest and reach the line of water. If it was a sea to the eastward there might be other islands separated from them by a channel they could cross; and if they were on an island of an archipelago, surely it was better to know it before taking any steps on which their safety might depend. It was certain that there was no land to the west right away to New Zealand. The only chance of reaching an inhabited country was by journeying towards the sun-rising.

But it would not be wise to attempt such an expedition except in fine weather. As Gordon has just said, it would not do to act like children, but like men. In the circumstances in which they were placed, with the future so threatening, if the intelligence of these boys did not develop quickly, if the levity and inconsistency natural at their age carried them away, or if disunion was allowed among them, the position of things would become critical. And it was for this reason that Gordon resolved to do everything to maintain order among his comrades.

The scheme of exploring the eastern coast was not given up, but during the next fortnight it was impossible to put it into execution. The weather was abominable, nothing but rain from morning till night, and violent squalls. The way through the forest would have been impracticable; and the expedition had to be postponed, notwithstanding the keen desire to unravel the mystery of continent or island.

During these stormy days the boys remained at the wreck, but they were not idle. They were constantly at work making good the damage done to the yacht by the inclement weather, for owing to the wet the planks began to give, and the deck ceased to be watertight. In places the rain would come in through the joints where the caulking had been torn away, and this had to be made good without delay. Repairs were also needed to stop, not only the waterways, but the airways opened in the hull. Gordon would have used some of the spare sails for the purpose, but he could not bring himself to sacrifice the thick canvas which might come in so usefully for tents, and so he did the best he could with tarpaulins.

Besides this there was the urgent question of finding a better shelter. Even if they did go eastwards they could not move for five or six months, and the schooner would not last as long as that, and if they had to abandon her in the rainy season where were they to find a refuge? The cliff, on its western face, had not the slightest indentation that could be utilized. It was on the other side, where it was sheltered from the wind from the sea, that search must be made, and, if necessary, a house built large enough to hold them all.

Whenever the weather was fine for a few

hours Donagan, Wilcox and Webb went off after the pigeons, which Moko more or less successfully cooked in different ways. Garnett, Service, Cross and the youngsters, including Jack, when his brother insisted on it, went away fishing. Among the shoals of fishes that haunted the weeds on the reef were many specimens of the genus *Notthenia* and hake of large size, and in and out among the thongs of the huge sponges, some of which were 400 feet long, was a prodigious quantity of small fish that could be caught by the hand.

It was a treat to hear the exclamations of the youthful fishers as they drew their nets or lines to the edge of the reef.

"I have got a lot! I have a splendid lot!" exclaimed Jenkins. "Oh, they are big ones!"

"So are mine! Mine are bigger than yours!" exclaimed Iverson, calling on Dole to help him.

"They'll get away," said Costar, as he ran up to help.

"Hold on! hold on!" cried Garnet, going from one to the other. "Get in your net quickly!"

"But I can't! I can't!" said Costar.

And then with a united effort the nets were got in on the sand. It was time for in the clear water there was a number of hylines, or ferocious lampreys, who would have made short work of the fish caught in the meshes; and although many were lost in this way, enough were saved to furnish the table. A good deal of hake was caught, and was found to be excellent, eaten either fresh or salted. The fish at the mouth of the river were chiefly galaxias, a kind of gudgeon which Moko found he could cook best fried.

On the 27th of March a more important capture afforded a somewhat amusing adventure.

When the rain left off in the afternoon the youngsters started off to fish in the river.

Suddenly there were loud shouts from them—shouts of joy, it is true, but shouts for help.

Gordon, Briant, Service and Moko, who were busy on board the schooner, dropped their work, ran off to help, and soon cleared the five or six hundred yards that separated them from the stream.

"Come along!" shouted Jenkins.

"Come and see Costar and his charger!" said Iverson.

"Quick, Briant, quick, or he'll get away!" shouted Jenkins.

"Let me get down! let me get down! I am afraid," said Costar, gesticulating in despair.

"Gee up!" said Dole, who was with Costar on some moving mass.

The mass was a turtle of huge size—one of those enormous chelonians that are usually met with floating on the surface of the sea. This time it had been surprised on the beach, and was seeking to regain its natural element.

In vain the boys, who had slipped a string round his neck, were trying to keep the animal back. He kept moving off with irresistible strength, dragging the whole band behind him. For a lark Jenkins had perched Costar on the carapace, with Dole astride behind him, and the youngster began to scream with fright as the turtle slowly neared the water.

"Hold on! hold on, Costar!" said Gordon.

"Take care your horse doesn't get the bit between his teeth!" shouted Service.

Briant could not help laughing, for there was no danger. As soon as Dole let go, Costar had only to slip off to be safe.

But it was advisable to catch the animal, and, if Briant and the others united their efforts to those of the little ones, they might stop him; and they must put a stopper on his progress before he reached the water, where he would be safe.

The revolvers Gordon and Briant had brought with them from the schooner were useless, for the shell of a turtle is bullet-proof; and if they attacked him with the axe he would draw in his head and paddles and be unassailable.

"There is only one way," said Gordon; "we must turn him over."

"And how?" said Service. "He must weigh at least three hundredweight, and we can never—"

"Get some spars! get some spars!" said Briant; and, followed by Moko, he ran off to the schooner.

The turtle was now not more than 30 yards from the sea. Gordon soon had Costar and Dole off its back, and then, seizing the string, they all pulled as hard as they could, without in the least stopping the advance of the animal, which could have dragged all Charman's school behind it.

Luckily, Briant and Moko returned before the turtle reached the sea.

Two spars were then run underneath it, and with a great effort he was pitched over on his back. Then he was a prisoner, for he could not turn over on his feet. And just as he was drawing in his head Briant gave him such a crack with the hatchet that he died almost immediately.

"Well, Costar, are you still afraid of this big brute?" asked Briant.

"No, no, Briant; for he's dead."

"Good!" said Service; "but you daren't eat him!"

"Can you eat him?"

"Certainly."

"Then I'll eat him, if he's good," said Costar, loking his lips at the thought.

"It is good stuff," said Moko, who was quite within the truth in saying that turtle meat was quite a dainty.

On the first of April the weather gave signs of changing. The barometer slowly rose, and the wind began to moderate. There were unmistakable symptoms of approaching calm of perhaps longish duration.

The bigger boys discussed the matter and began to prepare for an expedition, the importance of which was obvious to all.

"I don't think there will be anything to stop us tomorrow," said Donagan.

"Nothing, I hope," said Briant. "We ought to be ready to get away early."

"I understand," said Gordon, "that the line of water you saw in the east was six or seven miles from the cape."

"Yes," said Briant; "but as the bay is a deep curve, it is possible that the sea may be much nearer here."

"Then," continued Gordon, "you will not be away more than 24 hours."

"That is, if we can go due east. But can we find a way through the forest when we have got round this cliff?"

"Oh, that won't stop us!" said Donagan.

"Perhaps not," said Briant, "but there may be other obstacles—a water course, a marsh. Who knows? It will be best, I think, to take rations for some days—"

"And ammunition," added Wilcox.

"Quite so," said Briant; "and let it be understood that if we are not back in two days you need not be anxious."

"I shall be anxious if you are away more than a half a day," said Gordon.

"But that is not the question. As the expedition has been decided upon, let it proceed. You have not only to reach this eastern sea, but to reconnoitre the country behind the cliff. This side we have found no cave, and when we leave the schooner we shall have to carry the things where they will be sheltered from the sea breeze. To spend the rainy season on this beach seems to me to be impracticable."

"You are right, Gordon," answered Briant, "and we will look out for some place where we can instal ourselves."

"At least until we have found that we cannot get out of this pretended island," said Donagan, returning to his idea.

"That is understood," said Gordon. "So tomorrow you start!"

[CONTINUED TOMORROW.]

ADRIFF IN THE PACIFIC;

—OC—

The Strange Adventures of a Schoolboy Crew.

By JULES VERNE.

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

A 100-ton schooner, manned by school-boys only, in a furious gale, is wrecked off an unknown coast in the Pacific. She lies in the boiling surf, near shore.

Briant, one of the oldest and most experienced of the boys, with a life-line about him, plunges into the surf toward the shore is caught in a whirlpool and disappears.

He is pulled back, unconscious, but recovers. The chapter explains that these boys were inmates of a boarding-school in Auckland, New Zealand, about to go on a holiday cruise of two months around the island. The schooner on the night of Feb. 15 lay at the wharf with the boys on board waiting for her crew and captain. Accidentally or on purpose her moorings were loosened, and she drifted out to sea, where she was caught in the gale. Drifting out she was grazed by a passing schooner, which, without knowing it, carried away her name board. Steamers were sent out in search, but picked up only the name board, and the schooner is supposed to have sunk, with all on board Briant has taken command.

The schooner is thrown on shore, and the boys begin to explore. The schooner's supplies furnish them with arms, ammunition, food, and a complete set of household utensils, etc. The place seems of animal life.

Briant, travelling inland, sees afar off the sea, proving that the land is an island.

After several exciting hunting adventures, the boys leave on exploring expedition.

CHAPTER VII. FAN'S DISCOVERY.

At 7 o'clock in the morning, Briant, Donagan, Wilcox and Service left the wreck. The sun rising in a cloudless sky gave promise of one of those pleasant October days that are almost peculiar to the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere. Neither the heat nor the cold would be excessive. If any obstacle was to be met with that would delay or stop the advance, it would be due entirely to the nature of the ground.

The young explorers set out obliquely across the beach so as to reach the foot of the cliff. Gordon had advised them to take Fan with them; her instinct might be of great use to them; and so Fan formed part of the expedition.

A quarter of an hour after their departure the boys had disappeared under the trees. The birds were in numbers, but as no time was to be lost, Donagan had the good sense to restrain his shooting propensities. And Fan, recognizing that useless runnings to and fro were not advisable, kept near her masters without diverging to the left or right more than her duties as scout required.

The plan was to skirt the base of the cliff until the cape, at the north of the bay, was reached, and then strike off for the sheet of water seen by Briant. This was not the shortest way, but it was the safest, and a mile or two extra was not much for healthy boys who were such good walkers.

When they reached the cliff Briant recognized the place where he and Gordon had been on their first exploration. As there was no passage in this part of the limestone wall in a southerly direction, a practicable pass must be sought for towards the north, even if they went all the way to the cape.

They kept on for an hour, and as there could be no doubt they would have to go all the way to the cape, Briant was anxious about the passage being clear. Would not the tide be up over the beach when they got there? That would mean the loss of half a day waiting till the tide left the reef bare.

"Let us hurry on," said he, after pointing out the importance of reaching the reef before the tide came in.

"Bah!" answered Wilcox. "We are not afraid of wetting our ankles."

"You are guide, Briant," said Donagan. "If we are behindhand it will be your fault."

"Then don't let us lose any time. Where is Service?" And he shouted, "Service! Service!"

The boy was not in sight. He had gone off with his friend Fan, and had just disappeared behind an angle of the cliff, a hundred yards off to the right.

But as if in answer there was a shout, and the dog was heard to bark. Was Service in danger, then?

In a minute Briant, Donagan and Wilcox had reached their companion, who had stopped before a partial fall of the cliff—a fall of ancient date. Owing to infiltration, or the action of the weather in wearing away the limestone, a sort of half-funnel had been formed from the top of the wall to the ground, with the point below. In the wall a gorge had been opened with the sides at a slope of from 40 to 50 degrees, and the irregularities afforded a series of ledges on which it would be easy to find a footing.

Donagan was the first to begin to mount the heap of stones at the base.

"Wait! wait!" said Briant. "There is no use in being rash."

But Donagan did not hear, and as he thought it was useful for his reputation to get in front of his companions—Briant in particular—he was soon halfway up the gorge.

His companions followed his example, taking care not get immediately under him, so as not to be hit by the fragments he dislodged, and which came rolling down to the ground. All went well and Donagan had the satisfaction of reaching the crest of the cliff before the others.

Already he had drawn his glasses from their case, and was observing the forests that stretched out of sight towards the east.

There was the same panorama of verdure and sky as Briant had observed from the summit of the cape, not so extended, though, for the cliff was some hundred feet lower.

"Well!" asked Wilcox. "Do you see nothing?"

"Nothing!" answered Donagan.

"Let me have a look," said Wilcox.

Donagan held out the glasses to his companion, not without evident satisfaction.

"I do not see the least sign of water," said Wilcox, lowering the glasses.

"That is good enough," said Donagan, "to prove that there is none. You can look, Briant, and I think you will acknowledge your mistake."

"I do not care to do so," answered Briant. "I know I have made no mistake."

"That is rather strong!"

"Not in the least. The cliff is lower than the cape, and the range of view is less. It was as high as I was the blue line would be seen six or seven miles off. You would then see it where I did, and you would see it was impossible to mistake it for a bank of cloud."

"It is easy to say that," said Wilcox.

"And 't is as easy to prove," answered Briant. "Let us cross this flat and get through the forest, and keep on till we get there."

"That is good," said Donagan. "We shall have to go rather far, and I am not sure that it is worth the trouble."

"Stay here, then, Donagan," said Briant. "Service and I will go on alone."

"We'll go, too," said Wilcox. "Come on, Donagan!"

"Not till we have had something to eat," answered Service.

The necessity of this was acknowledged, and after half an hour the march was resumed.

The first mile was soon accomplished. The grassy soil presented no obstacle. Here and there a few mosses and lichens covered a few rocky mounds. An occasional clump of shrubs dotted the ground, a few tree-ferns or club mosses, heaths, hollies, or clumps of barberries, with leathery leaves that will flourish even in the highest latitudes.

When Briant and his comrades had crossed the upper plateau, they found the descent on the other side of the cliff as high and perpendicular as that towards the sea. Had it not been for the bed of a half-

dry torrent, down which they made their way with difficulty, they would have had to keep on up to the cave.

When the forest was reached the road became more difficult. Fallen trees obstructed the path and the underwood was so thick that it had at times to be cut through. And the boys had to use their axes like the pioneers through the forests of the new world. This meant a stoppage almost every moment. Arms got more tired than legs, and owing to the delay not more than three or four miles had been accomplished when evening began to close in.

At 2 o'clock a second halt was made in a little clearing, through which ran a shallow stream—such a stream as would have been called a creek in North America. The waters of the creek were of perfect limpidity, and flowed gently over the bed of blackish rocks. To look at its peaceful shallow current, cumbered with no dead wood or drifting bushes, no one would believe that its rise was far away. Nothing was easier than to cross it by the stones scattered in its bed, and in one place some flat stones lay so symmetrically as to attract attention.

"That is strange!" said Donagan. It looked as though a causeway had been laid from one bank to another.

"You might call it a dam!" said Service, beginning to cross it.

"Wait! wait!" cried Briant. "We must have a look at these stones."

They could not have put themselves there," said Wilcox.

"No," said Briant. "It looks as though some one had been making a path across the stream. Let us get nearer!"

They examined every stone of this curious pathway, which projected only a few inches above the stream and would be covered in the rainy season.

But could they say that the hand of man had put these stones in the creek? No. It was more likely that the stones had been brought down by the floods and gradually piled up to form the dam. And this was the explanation adopted by Briant and his companions after a minute examination.

Neither the left nor right bank showed traces of footsteps, and there was nothing to prove that man had ever set foot in the forest.

The creek flowed away toward the northeast. Did it then throw itself into the sea which Briant affirmed he had seen from the cape?

"At least," said Donagan, "it may be the tributary of a river which flows towards the west."

"We shall see in time," said Briant, not caring to reopen the discussion; "but so long as it runs to the east we may as well follow it, if it does not wind too much."

About 5:30 Briant and Donagan were forced to agree that the creek's course had undoubtedly turned towards the north, and to follow it would take them out of their way too much. So they had to abandon it and plunge eastward under the thick foliage of leach and birch.

At times so high was the underwood that, in order not to lose one another, they had to keep up a constant shouting.

They had been walking all day and there was nothing to indicate the proximity of a sheet of water. Briant began to get anxious. Had he been the sport of an illusion when he described the horizon from the summit of the cape?

"No! no!" he repeated to himself. "I am not mistaken! It cannot be! It is not so!"

It was now 7 o'clock in the evening and the edge of the forest had not been reached. Darkness was coming on; it would be soon too dark to move.

It was resolved to halt and pass the night beneath the shelter of the trees. With a good slice of corned beef there was no chance of starving, with good coverings they need not fear the cold. Besides, they might light a fire with some dead branches, if the precaution, excellent as it might be against animals, was not dangerous as attractive to such natives as might be prowling about.

"Better not run the risk of being seen," said Donagan.

All agreed to this, and only supper was troubled about. There was no lack of appetite, and after making a deep hole in the ration they had brought with them, they were about to make themselves comfortable at the foot of a gigantic birch when Service pointed out a thicket a few yards off. From it rose a moderately-sized tree whose lower branches bent till they touched the ground. There on a heap of dry leaves the four boys lay down and wrapped themselves well up. At their age sleep is not long in coming. And they were soon soundly off, while Fan, left to guard them copied their example.

Once or twice, however, the dog heard a prolonged growling. Evidently there were some animals, tame or wild, prowling in the forest; but they did not come near the camp.

It was nearly 7 o'clock when Briant and the other awoke. The oblique rays of the sun piercing the thick mass of leafage dimly lighted up where they had passed the night.

Service was the first to go out of the thicket. Immediately he began to shout, or rather to exclaim—

"Briant! Donagan! Wilcox! Come here!"

"What is the matter?" asked Briant.

"Yes, what is the matter?" asked Wilcox, who must always say something. "Service, you frightened us."

"All the better!" answered Service. "Look here! See where we have been sleeping."

It was not a thicket at all. It was a cabin made of leaves, one of those huts the Indians call "a ajoupa," and which are formed by interlacing branches. The ajoupa was a very old one, for the roof and walls were only held up by the tree; and its style was the same as that in use among the natives of South America.

"Then there are inhabitants!" said Donagan, casting a rapid glance around him.

"Or at least there have been," said Briant. "for this hut could not have made itself."

"That explains the causeway across the creek," said Wilcox.

"Well," said Service, "if there are inhabitants they are very good fellows to build this hut expressly for our use last night."

In reality nothing was less certain than that these natives were good fellows. It was evident that they frequented or had frequented, this part of the forest at some period more or less remote. But they might be Indians if the land was joined to the continent, or Polynesians, or even cannibals, if the land was an island of one of the archipelagoes of Oceania and in that case the danger was great and more than ever was it important to solve the difficulty.

Briant was starting off when Donagan proposed to carefully examine this hut, which seemed to have been abandoned for a long time. They might find some utensil, or instrument, or tool, the origin of which they could recognize.

The heap of dry leaves was carefully pulled over, and in one corner Service found a fragment of burnt clay which might have been a bowl or a flask—just a trace of the work of man, but that was all.

They therefore set out, and at 7:30 had fairly started, compass in hand, bearing due east, the ground sloping gradually as they went. For two hours they kept on, slowly, very slowly, through dense thickets of shrubs and small trees, and once or twice halting to cut their way through with the axe.

A little before 10 o'clock they caught sight of a horizon through the trees. Beyond the forest was a wide plain, dotted with mastic trees, thyme bushes and clumps of heath. Half a mile to the eastward it was bounded by a strip of sand, on which beat the surf of the sea—on by Briant, and which extended right up to the horizon.

Donagan said nothing. He was angry to find that his companion had not made a mistake.

And Briant said nothing. He did not wish to triumph over his friend.

And gazed at his eyes he searched the view all round.

On the north the shore, now brightly lighted by the sun's rays, seemed to curve off to the left. At the south it was the same, but the curve was sharper.

There could be no doubt any longer. It was not a continent, it was an island on which the schooner had been wrecked, and all hope would have to be given up of getting away from it except through help from without.

Beyond, there was no other land in sight. It seemed as though the island lay lost by itself in the immensity of the Pacific.

The four boys crossed the plain to the leach and halted at the foot of a sandhill. Their intention was to have lunch and then go back through the forest. If they made haste they might get back to the wreck before nightfall.

The meal was not a cheerful one. Hardly a word did they exchange.

At length Donagan picked up his bag and his gun and said,

"Let us be off."

And all four, giving a last look at the sea, were making a move, when Fan ran off alone the beach.

"Fan! Here, Fan!" shouted Service.

But the dog continued to caper along the wet sand, and at last rushed into the sea and began to drink.

"She drinks! She drinks!" exclaimed Donagan.

And in an instant he was by the side of the sea and drinking the water that Fan so much enjoyed.

It was fresh.

It was a lake stretching away to the eastern horizon. It was not the sea!

[CONTINUED MONDAY.]

ADRIFF IN THE PACIFIC;

--OR--

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By JULES VERNE.

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Briant, one of the oldest and most experienced of the boys, with a life line about him, plunges into the surf toward the shore, is caught in a whirlpool and disappears.

He is pulled back, unconscious, but recovers. The chapter explains that these boys were inmates of a boarding-school in Auckland, New Zealand, about to go on a holiday cruise of two months around the island. The schooner on the night of Feb. 17 lay at the wharf with the boys on board waiting for her crew and captain. Accidentally or on purpose her moorings were loosened, and she drifted out to sea, where she was caught in the gale. Drifting out she was grazed by a passing schooner, which, without knowing it, carried away her name board. Steamers were sent out in search but picked up only the name board, and the schooner is supposed to have sunk, with all on board. Briant has taken command.

The schooner is thrown on shore, and the boys begin to explore. The schooner's supplies furnish them with arms, ammunition, food, and a complete set of household utensils, etc. The place teems with animal life.

Briant, travelling inland, sees afar off the sea proving that the land is an island.

After several exciting hunting adventures, the boys leave on exploring expedition.

On their march they find traces of an artificial dam. Briant's "sea" proves to be a fresh water lake.

CHAPTER VIII. THE COVE.

And so the important question on which the safety of the boys depended was still unsolved. That the imagined sea was a lake there could be no doubt. But was it not possible that the lake was on an island? If the explorations were continued would not there be a sea discovered beyond—a sea there was no way of crossing?

The lake was of considerable size, for it touched the horizon on three of its sides, as Donagan observed, and it certainly was more likely to be on a continent than on an island.

"Then it must be the American continent on which we have been wrecked," said Briant.

"I always thought so," said Donagan, "and it seems that I was not mistaken."

"Anyhow," said Briant, "it was a line of water I saw to the east."

"Yes, but it was not the sea."

It was already the beginning of April, and the Southern winter is earlier than the Northern; and there could be no thought of setting out before the return of the fine weather.

But the position would soon be untenable in the bay, exposed as it was to the winds. Before the end of the month the schooner would have to be left. If no cavern could be found in the cliffs, would the boys be better off here by the lake? Would it not be as well to explore its neighborhood more carefully? The exploration would delay their return for a day or two, and would give Gordon some anxiety, but Briant and Donagan did not hesitate. Their provisions would last another day, and there was no sign of a change of weather. So it was decided to go south by the side of the lake.

It was about 8:30 when the four boys began their march, skirting the grassy sand hills that mammilated the plain bounded on the west by the masses of greenery. Fan hunted about in front, and put up several flocks of tinamous that hastened to shelter under the leafy bushes and ferns. Here and there rose clumps of a sort of red and white cranberry and plants of white colery. But the guns had to be kept silent, for it was possible that the environs of the lake were visited by savages. In following the shore sometimes at the foot of the sand hills, sometimes along the sand, the boys easily accomplished a dozen miles during the day. They found no trace of savages. No smoke rose from the trees. No footprints marked the sand, wet with the sheet of water that stretched away into the offing. Not a sail was to be seen on the horizon not a boat on the surface. The lake was deserted. If the country had been inhabited, it did not seem to be so now.

Wild beasts or ruminants there were none. Two or three times in the afternoon a few birds appeared on the edge of the forest but it was impossible to get at them.

Service exclaimed:

"They are ostriches."

"Very small ostriches, then," answered Donagan, "for they are not over tall."

"If they are ostriches," said Briant, "and if we are on a continent"—

"Do you still doubt it?" asked Donagan, ironically.

"It must be the American continent, where such animals are very abundant," continued Briant, "that is all I wished to say."

About 7 o'clock in the evening a halt was called. Next day, unless something happened, the journey would be resumed to the wreck. That evening it was not possible to go further to the southward. At the halting-place one of the rivers flowed out from the lake, and this would have to be crossed by swimming. Darkness was setting in, and the country would be but imperfectly seen, but it appeared as though there was a cliff on the right bank of this watercourse.

Briant, Donagan, Wilcox and Service, after supper had been despatched, thought only of a night's rest, under the stars this time, no hut being discoverable. And the stars were bright and sparkled brilliantly, and the crescent moon moved slowly down to set in the Pacific. All was quiet on the lake and on the beach. The four lads, nestled between the enormous roots of a beech tree, slept so soundly that even a thunder storm would not have awakened them.

About 4 o'clock in the morning, just as the dawn was showing on the horizon above the lake, the dog began to give signs of uneasiness, growling gently, and sniffing the ground as if she wanted to be sent off in search of something.

It was nearly 7 o'clock when Briant awoke his comrades. All were up immediately and while Service nibbled a bit of biscuit the three others went to take a look around the country beyond the watercourse.

"Well," exclaimed Wilcox, "it is a good thing we didn't try to cross the water yesterday. We should have stuck in the marsh."

"Yes," said Briant, "it is a marsh, and it stretches right away to the south, and we cannot see the end of it."

"Just look at the ducks," said Donagan, "and teal and snipe on it! If we could take up our quarters here for the winter we should not want for game."

"And why shouldn't we?" asked Briant, walking towards the right bank of the stream.

At the back was a lofty cliff which ended in a peak. The two sides joined at an angle—one ran by the bank of the river, the other skirted the lake. Was this cliff the same as that which shut in the bay where the schooner was wrecked? That could not be ascertained for certain until a more complete exploration of the district had been made.

The right bank of the river was about 20 feet high, and ran along the base of the cliff. The left bank was very low, and could scarcely be distinguished from the pools and bogs of the marshy plain which extended out of sight towards the south. To make out the direction of the river they would have to ascend the cliff, and this Briant resolved to do before starting for the wreck.

The first thing was to take a look round the outlet of the stream from the lake. This was only about 40 feet across, but as it increased in width so did it increase in depth.

"Just look here!" said Wilcox, as he reached the end of the cliff.

A pile of stones attracted his attention, forming a sort of dam on the same plan as the one they had seen in the forest.

"There is no doubt this time," said Briant.

"No; there is no doubt," remarked Dona-

gan, pointing to some pieces of wood at the end of the dam.

"The remains were obviously those of a boat of some sort. One piece, half rotten and covered with moss, and curved like a stein, held an iron ring eaten away with rust."

"A ring! a ring!" exclaimed Service.

And the four stood still, looking around them, as if the man who had used the boat and built the dam was about to appear before them.

But nobody came. Many years had evidently gone by since the boat had been left to rot by the side of the stream, and the man had rejoined his fellows or ended his miserable existence on this land he could not leave; and we can understand how the boys felt at this clear evidence of human intervention and the thoughts it gave rise to.

Meanwhile Fan had been behaving in a strange manner, as if she had at last got on a scent. Her ears were pricked up, her tail wagged, and her nose was held close to the ground, as she worried about under the bushes.

"Look at Fan," said Service.

"She smells something," said Donagan, stepping toward her.

Fan had just stopped with one paw raised and her neck stretched out. Then she suddenly rushed towards a clump of trees at the foot of the cliff by the side of the lake.

Briant and his comrades followed her. A few minutes afterwards they stopped before an old beech tree, on the bark of which were cut two letters and a date, in this fashion:

J. B.
1827.

Briant, Donagan, Wilcox and Service would have remained silent and motionless for some time before this inscription if Fan had not backed round the angle of the cliff.

"Here, Fan, here!" shouted Briant.

"The dog did not return, but she began to bark loudly."

"Take care," said Briant, "do not separate, and be on your guard."

Indeed, they could not be too careful. A band of savages might be in the neighborhood, and their presence was more to be feared than wished for, if they were of those Indians who infest the pampas of South America.

The guns were cocked and the revolvers got out ready for the defensive. The boys advanced round the angle of the cliff and up the narrow bank of the stream. They had not taken a dozen paces before Donagan stooped to pick up something from the ground. It was a pickaxe, with the handle half-rotten—a pickaxe of American or European origin—not one of those heavy tools made by the Polynesian savages. Like the ring on the boat, it was deeply rusted, and must have been left behind many years ago.

At the foot of the cliff were traces of tillage a few irregular furrows, a little square of yams, which, left to themselves, had run wild.

Suddenly a mournful bark was heard, and Fan reappeared, seized with some inexplicable agitation. She turned round, she ran in front of her masters, looked back at them, called them and seemed to invite them to follow.

"There is certainly something extraordinary the matter," said Briant, trying in vain to get the dog quiet.

"Let us go where she is taking us to," said Donagan, making a sign to Wilcox and Service to follow.

Ten yards farther on Fan stood up before a mass of brushwood and bushes, which reached up to the very foot of the cliff.

Briant looked to see if the bushes hid the corpse of some animal, or even of a man on whose traces Fan had fallen. Clearing away the bushes he saw a narrow opening.

"Is there a cave here?" he exclaimed, stepping back a few paces.

"Likely enough," said Donagan. "But what is there in the cave?"

"We will see," answered Briant.

And with his hatchet he began to cut away the entanglement about the entrance. He listened, but heard no suspicious noise.

Service was about to slip through into the cave, when Briant stopped him.

"See what Fan is going to do first."

The dog barked angrily twice or thrice in a way that was anything but reassuring for a person in the cave, had one been there.

What did it mean? Briant put a handful of dry twigs across the opening and lighted them to see if the air was foul. The twigs crackled and burnt brightly; evidently the air was breathable.

"Shall we go in?" asked Wilcox.

"Yes," said Donagan.

"Wait till we can see our way," said Briant. And cutting a resinous branch from one of the pine trees close by, he lighted it. Then, followed by his companions, he stepped into the cave.

The opening was about four feet high and two feet wide, but it grew larger immediately, forming a cavity 12 feet high and twice as wide, with a floor of hard, dry sand.

As he hurried to the front Wilcox stumbled over a wooden bench near a table, on which were certain domestic utensils, a jug of stoneware, some large shells that had been used as plates, a knife with a notched and rusty blade, two or three psbbooks, a tin cup, empty, like the jug. Near the opposite wall was a sort of box, made of planks roughly nailed together, and which contained a few tattered clothes.

There could be no doubt that the excavation had been inhabited. But when, and by whom? What had become of the human being who had lived here?

At the end was a miserable pallet covered with some fragments of linen. At the head, on a bench, was a second cup and a wooden candlestick, with only a burnt match on the bowl.

The boys recoiled from the pallet at first, thinking it might hold a corpse.

Briant, repressing his repugnance, lifted up the covering.

The pallet was empty.

A minute afterwards the boys, who were much affected, had rejoined Fan, who still kept up her mournful barking.

They descended the bank of the stream for about 20 yards, and suddenly stopped. A feeling of horror nailed them to the spot.

[CONTINUED TOMORROW.]

ADrift IN THE PACIFIC;

—OR—

The Strange Adventures of a Schoolboy Crew.

By JULES VERNE.

CHAPTER IX

FRANCOIS BAUDOIN.

There, among the roots of a beech tree, were the remains of a skeleton.

The boys were silent. Who was this man who had come to die here? Was he a shipwrecked sailor to whom no help had come in his last hour? To what nation did he belong? Was he a young man when he arrived in this corner of the earth? Was he an old man when he died? How had he supplied his wants? If he had been shipwrecked, had others survived the catastrophe with him? And if so, had he remained alone after the death of his companions in misfortune? Did the different things in the cave belong to his ship, or had he made them with his own hands? But to such questionings no answer might ever be given.

"Come," said Briant.

And, followed by Fan, they entered the cave by the light of another torch.

One of the first things they saw was a shelf fixed against the right wall, on which was a bundle of clumsy candles made of fat and tow. Service lighted one of these candles and placed it in the wooden candlestick, and the search began.

In the first place the shape of the cave was noted, for there was no doubt of its habitability. There was no trace of damp, although the only ventilation was through the one opening on the bank of the stream. The walls were as dry as if they were of granite, without any trace of crystallized infiltrations. Its position sheltered it from the sea breezes. Daylight penetrated it but little, it is true, but by opening one or two windows in the wall it would be easy to make this right, and to ventilate it sufficiently for the accommodation of 15 people.

Briant made a careful list of the things it contained. These were not many. The unfortunate man had been almost destitute. What had he secured from the wreck? Nothing but odds and ends, broken spars, pieces of plank that he had made up into the pallet, the table, the box, and the benches, which formed the only furniture. Less favored than the survivors of the schooner, he had not had a regular workshop ready at hand. A few tools, a pickaxe, an axe, two or three cooking utensils, a little cask of brandy, a hammer, two cold chisels, a saw—these were all that were found. They had been saved doubtless in the boat, the remains of which lay near the dam.

But who was this man, whose bones lay here? Where was he born? When was he wrecked? No doubt many years had passed since his death. The state of the bones found at the foot of the tree showed that only too well! Besides, there was the rust on the pickaxe and the ring, the thicket of bushes at the entrance of the cave, all tending to show that the man must have died years ago. Would any new discovery change this hypothesis into a certainty.

The search continued. A few other objects were brought to light—a second knife with the blades broken, a pair of compasses, a kettle, an iron ring, a marlin-spike. But there was no nautical instrument, no telescope, no mariner's compass, not even a musket.

As the man had to live, it seemed as though he must have snared his food instead of shot it. But an explanation of the difficulty offered itself when Wilcox exclaimed:

"What is that?"

"That?" answered Service.

"It is a game at bowls," said Wilcox.

"A game at bowls?" asked Briant in surprise. But in a moment he recognized the use of the two round stones which Wilcox had picked up. It was one of those implements of the chase known as the bolas, which consists of two balls tied together with a cord, and is used by the Indians of South America. When a skilful hand throws the bolas they encircle the limbs of the animal, and for a moment paralyze it so that it falls an easy prey to the hunter.

Evidently the inhabitant of the cave had made this bolas and also a lasso, a long loop of leather used at shorter distances.

But who was this man? Was he an officer or a common seaman who had put his reading to profit in this way? It would be very difficult to say without further discovery.

At the head of the bed, under a rag of the clothes that Briant had thrown aside, Wilcox found a watch hung on a nail fixed in the wall.

This watch was not a common watch such as sailors usually wear, but was of finer workmanship, and had a double case of silver and a key and chain of the same metal.

"The time! See the time!" said Service.

"The time will tell you nothing," said Briant. "The watch probably stopped days before the unfortunate man died."

Briant opened the case, not without difficulty, for the hinges were rusty, and he saw that the hands pointed to 3.27.

"But," said Donagan, "the watch has the maker's name. That might tell us—"

"You are right," said Briant.

And looking inside the case, he managed to read these words engraved on the plate:

"Delpeuch, Saint-Malo."

The name of the maker and his address.

"Then he was a Frenchman!" exclaimed Briant.

There seemed little doubt that a Frenchman had lived in this cavern until death put an end to his misery.

To this proof another was soon added when Donagan, who had turned over the pallet, found a notebook with its yellow pages covered with pencil writing.

Unfortunately most of the writing was illegible. A few words could, however, be deciphered, and among others were—Francois Baudoin.

Two names, the initials of which were the same as those the man had cut on the tree. The notebook was the daily journal of his life from the day he had been cast ashore. And in the fragments of phrases that time had not entirely effaced Briant managed to read "Duguay-Trouin," evidently the name of the ship that had been lost in this distant corner of the Pacific.

At the commencement was a date—1827—the same as that which had been cut under the initials on the tree.

It was, then, 55 years since Francois Baudoin had been thrown on this coast, and since his shipwreck he had received no help from without. If Francois Baudoin had not moved to some other place on the continent, was it because the obstacles were insurmountable?

More than ever the boys thought of the gravity of their situation. How could they do what this man had not done—a man accustomed to hard work and broken to fatigue?

Another discovery was to show them that all attempts to leave the country would be in vain.

As Donagan turned over the notebook he found a folded paper between the leaves. It was a map, drawn in ink, made probably

from north to south, and 25 wide from east to west. Reckoning the irregularities of its shape, it was 150 miles in circumference. But there was no knowing to which of the Polynesian group it belonged, or if it lay by itself in the Pacific. One thing was certain—that the boys would have to stay on it. There was no getting away. And as the cave afforded an excellent refuge, it was best to bring all their goods to it before the storms had broken up the schooner.

At present the best thing to be done was to return to the camp without delay. Gordon would be getting anxious. Three days had elapsed since Briant and his comrades left him, and he would be fearing that misfortune had happened to them.

Briant suggested that they should start that very day at 11 o'clock. There was no good in climbing the cliff, as the map showed the shortest way was to follow the right bank of the river to the bay which ran from east to west. At the most this would be about seven miles, and take but a few hours.

But before leaving the boys paid the last mark of respect to the shipwrecked Frenchman. With the pickaxe they dug a grave at the foot of the tree on which Francois Baudoin had cut his initials, and a wooden cross marked the spot.

This pious ceremony over, they returned to the cave and closed the entrance so that animals could not get in. Then, having finished what was left of their provisions, they started along the right bank of the stream by the base of the cliff. In an hour they reached the spot where the high ground trended off to the northwest. Along the river the road was easy, for the bank was clear of shrubs and trees.

At 8 o'clock the night had become so dark that it was impossible to see ahead of them, and the end of the forest seemed as far off as ever.

Suddenly through a gap in the trees a bright light shot through the air.

"What is that?" asked Service.

"A meteorite, probably," said Wilcox.

"No; it was a rocket," answered Briant.

"A rocket from the schooner!"

"And consequently a signal!" exclaimed Donagan, firing his gun in answer to Gordon.

A star was recognized ahead. From it a new departure was being taken when a second rocket sped through the darkness. Briant and his companions directed their course towards it, and three-quarters of an hour afterwards they were aboard.

[CONTINUED TOMORROW.]

ADRIFF IN THE PACIFIC;

--OR--

The Strange Adventures of a Schoolboy Crew.

By JULES VERNE.

CHAPTER X. THE RAFT.

The reception the explorers met with can be imagined. Gordon, Cross, Baxter, Garnett and Webb clasped them in their arms, while the little ones throw their arms around their necks and shouted for joy. Fan took part in the rejoicing, and barked as loudly as the youngsters cheered. It seemed so long since Briant and his companions had gone away.

"Were they lost? Had they fallen among savages? Had they been attacked by cannibals? Such were the questions those who remained behind had asked themselves.

But Briant, Donagan, Wilcox and Service had come back again to tell them the story of their exploration. As, however, they were very tired after their long day's work, the story was postponed until the morning.

"We are on an island."

That was all Briant said, and that was enough to reveal the troubles in store for them, although Gordon received the news without betraying much discouragement.

"Good! I'll wait," he seemed to say to himself, "and not trouble myself about it till it comes."

Next morning—the 5th of April—Gordon, Briant, Donagan, Baxter, Cross, Wilcox, Service, Webb, Garnet, and also Moko, whose advice was always valuable, gathered together in the bow of the yacht while the others were still asleep. In turn Briant and Donagan told their comrades all that had happened.

The story was told in full, neither Briant nor Donagan omitting the smallest detail; and now all who looked at the map understood only too well that help could come to them but from the sea.

However, if the future presented itself in the gloomiest colors, and the boys could only place their help in God, there was one who felt much less alarmed than the others, and that was Gordon. The young American had no relatives in New Zealand.

"The best thing to do," said Briant, "is to move into the cave near the lake. It would make a capital place to live in."

"And in the meantime where shall we live?" asked Donagan.

"In a tent," answered Gordon. "In a tent under the trees by the riverside."

"That is the best thing," said Briant, "and let us begin without losing an hour."

The demolition of the yacht, the unloading of the material and provisions, the construction of a raft for the transport of the cargo, would take at least a month of hard work, and before leaving the bay it would be the first week of May, which corresponds to the first week in November in the northern hemisphere, that is to say, the beginning of winter.

The days that followed were employed in arranging the camp at the side of the river. The lower branches of two beeches were united by long spars with the branches of a third, and were used to hold up the yacht's spare mainsail, which fell down on each side to the ground. Into this tent, which was firmly stayed and strutted, the boys transported the bedding and furniture, the weapons and ammunition and the bales of provisions. As the raft was to be built of the timbers of the yacht, they had to wait till they had demolished the wreck before they began to build it.

By the 15th of April there only remained on the schooner such things as were too heavy to move until she had broken up, among them the pigs of lead used for ballast, the water tanks in the hold, the windlass and the galley, which were too heavy to be taken away without apparatus. The spars and rigging, shrouds and stays, chains, anchors, ropes, hawsers, lines, yarns and such things, of which there was a great quantity on the yacht, were gradually removed to the ground near the tent.

When the schooner had been emptied of all it contained the hull, which had broken apart in many places, was attacked. The sheets of copper sheathing were taken off very carefully. Then the pincers and crow-bars and hammers were brought into play to rip off the planks which the nails and trenails fastened to the frame. This was a troublesome task for inexperienced hands, and not very vigorous arms. And the breaking up went on very slowly, until on the 25th of April a storm came to help.

During the night, although they were already in the cold season, a thunder storm occurred. The lightning played across the sky, and the rolling of the thunder lasted from midnight to sunrise, to the great terror of the little ones. It did not rain, fortunately, but twice or thrice it was necessary to support the tent against the fury of the wind. Owing to its being fixed to the trees it remained undamaged; not so the yacht, which lay directly exposed to the gusts from the offing and the full force of the waves. The demolition was complete. The planks were torn off, the frame broken up, the keel smashed, and the whole thing reduced to wreckage. And there was nothing to complain of in the way it was done, for the waves as they retired carried off but a small portion of the wreck, which for the most part was kept back by the reef. The iron work was easily picked up out of the sand, and all the boys set to work during the next day or so to collect it. The beams, planks, water tanks and other things, which had not been swept away, lay scattered on the beach, and all that had to be done was to transport them to the right bank of the stream, a few yards from the tent.

In short, on the evening of the 28th, all that remained of the schooner had been taken to the place of embarkation; and without doubt the worst of the enterprise was over, for the river was to take the material up to French Den.

"Tomorrow," said Gordon, "we will begin to build the raft."

"Yes," said Baxter, "and to save any trouble in launching it, I propose to build it in the river."

"That will not be easy," said Donagan.

"Never mind," said Gordon, "we will try. If it gives us more trouble to get together it will not trouble us to get it afloat."

There could be no doubt this was the best way, and next morning they began the framework of the raft, which was to be of sufficiently large dimensions to receive a heavy and crowded cargo.

The beams from the schooner, the keel broken in two pieces, the foremast, what remained of the mainmast broken three feet above the deck, the ribs and the midship beam, the bowsprit, the foreyard, the mainboom and the gaff had been taken to a part of the river beach which the water only covered at high tide. The boys waited till the tide rose, and then the wood was brought out into the stream. There the largest pieces were placed side by side, and lashed together, with the others placed crossways.

In this way a solid framework was obtained, measuring about 30 feet long and 15 feet wide. All day long the boys worked hard at the raft, and by nightfall the framework was complete. Briant then took care to moor it to the trees on the bank, so that the rising tide could not carry it up stream, or the ebb take it out to sea. Then every one, thoroughly tired out after such a laborious day, sat down to supper with a formidable appetite, and slept soundly until the morning.

At dawn they again set to work. A platform had now to be built on the framework. The deck planks and streaks of the schooner's hull soon came into use. Nails driven in with heavy hammer strokes and ropes passed over and under fastened everything firmly together.

Working at the hardest, this took three days, although there was not an hour to lose. A little ice had already appeared on the surface of the pools among the reefs and along the edge of the stream. The shelter of the tent became insufficient in spite of the fire. Sleeping close to each other, covered with the thickest wraps, Gordon and his companions found it difficult to put up with the cold. Hence the necessity of rushing on with the work for taking up their quarters in the cave, where they hoped to defy the winter, which in these latitudes is very severe.

The deck had been fixed on as firmly as possible, so that it should not be displaced

on the voyage; for that meant the swallowing up of the cargo in the bed of the stream; and to save such a catastrophe it was better to delay the departure for a day.

"However," said Briant, "we must not delay our departure beyond the 6th of May."

"Why not?" asked Gordon.

"Because the day after tomorrow is new moon, and the tides will be higher for a few days after that. The higher they are, the easier we shall get up the river. Just think what a fix we shall be in if we have to tow this heavy raft or pole it up! We could never do it against the current!"

"You are right," said Gordon. "We must be off in three days at least."

On the 3d of May they began to load the raft, being careful to trim it so as to keep it level. Every one was occupied in this work according to his strength. Jenkins, Iverson, Dole and Costar took charge of the lighter things, the utensils, tools and instruments, and laid them on the deck, where Briant and Baxter stored them under Gordon's directions. The bigger boys busied themselves about the heavier things, such as the stove, the water tanks, the windlass, the ironwork, the sheathing, etc., the rest of the timbers of the schooner, the ribs, the planking, the deck rails, etc. In the same way were brought on board the bales of provisions, the casks of wine, etc., not forgetting several sacks of salt that had been found among the rocks. To assist in the loading, Baxter had erected two spars, which were kept in position by means of four stays. To the end of this crab was fastened a tackle working round one of the yacht's winches, so that the things could be lifted off the ground and laid on the deck gently and quietly.

All went on with so much prudence and zeal that in the afternoon of the 5th of May everything was in its place on board, and nothing remained but to cast off the raft's moorings. That would be done next morning about 8 o'clock when the tide began to rise at the mouth of the stream.

The boys doubtless imagined that their task being over they were to spend the rest of the day in taking things easy. They were destined to be disappointed, for Gordon made a proposition which gave them something else to do.

"My comrades," he said, "we are now going away from this bay, and will no more be able to look out over the sea, and if any ship comes in sight of the island we shall not be able to signal to her. It will therefore be best, I think, to rig up a mast on the cliff, and hoist one of our flags and keep it flying. That will probably be enough to attract the attention of any ship that may pass within sight of it."

Next morning at sunrise all were astir. The tent was taken down and the bedding carried on board the raft, with the sail put over it to protect it from the weather, which, however, promised to be favorable enough, although a change in the direction of the wind had brought a good deal of mist in it from the sea.

By 7 o'clock everything was ready. The raft had been so loaded that it gave accommodation for the company for two or three days, and Moko had cooked enough food to last, so that a fire would not be needed.

At 8 o'clock the boys all gathered on the raft. The bigger ones, armed with poles and spars, took up their places ready to steer it, for a rudder would have been no use in going with the stream.

A little before 9 o'clock the tide began to make itself felt, and the framework began to creak and groan.

"Attention!" shouted Briant.

"Ready!" said Baxter.

These were at the hawsers which moored the raft fore and aft by the river bank.

"We are all ready," said Donagan, who with Wilcox was in front of the raft.

Soon the raft was afloat.

"Cast off!" said Briant.

Away went the hawsers, and the heavily-loaded mass began to drift up stream, towing the yawl astern.

Everyone was pleased when the raft began to move. If the boys had built a sea-going ship they could not have been more satisfied with themselves. And their little sentiment of vanity may be forgiven them.

The right bank of the river, as we know, was bordered with trees, and higher than the left, which ran along by the marsh. Briant, Baxter, Donagan, Wilcox and Moko used every effort to keep the raft away from the banks, for it would never do to run aground, but at the same time they did not cross the stream, for the tide was stronger along the right bank, and the height of the bank gave better holding to their poles.

Two hours after their departure they had floated about a mile. They had not grounded once or run ashore. But according to Briant's estimate the river was quite six miles long, and as they could not hope to advance more than two miles with each tide it would take them several tides to reach their destination.

In fact, about 11 o'clock the ebb began to declare itself, and the boys had to bestir themselves to get the raft moored so that it did not drift back to the sea.

Evidently the raft would make a fresh start in the evening, but to venture with it then would be dangerous.

"I think it would be unwise," said Gordon, "we should expose the raft to the chances of collision or grounding, and the shock might smash it up. I think we had better wait till tomorrow, and go on with the day tide."

The proposition was too sensible not to meet with general approval. They might have to wait 24 hours, but the delay was preferable to risking the safety of the valuable cargo.

Half a day and the whole of the night were thus passed in this place.

Donagan and his sporting friends, accompanied by Fan, were soon ashore on the river bank.

Gordon advised them not to get far away, and they adopted his advice; and as they brought back two brace of fat bustards and a string of tinamous, their vanity was satisfied. Moko took charge of the game to keep it for the first meal—breakfast, dinner, or supper—after reaching French Den.

During the night Baxter, Webb and Cross were on the lookout, ready, if necessary, to double the hawsers, or give them a little slack when the tide turned. All went well. Next morning at 9.45 the tide had risen high enough for the navigation to be resumed. The night had been cold, so was the day. The sooner the raft reached its destination the better. What would the boys do if the river froze, or if an iceberg came down from the lake to enter the bay?

At length, in the afternoon of the next day, with the aid of the tide, which lasted till 1.30 in the afternoon, the raft arrived in sight of the lake, and was run aground in front of the entrance to French Den.

[CONTINUED TOMORROW.]

ADRIFF IN THE PACIFIC;

—OR—

The Strange Adventures of a Schoolboy Crew.

By JULES VERNE.

CHAPTER XL

A CAPTURE.

The landing took place amid shouts of joy from the youngsters. To them any change from the ordinary life was as good as a new game. Dole capered about on the bank; Iverson and Jenkins ran to the side of the lake; while Costar took Moko aside and said:

"Didn't you promise us a good dinner?"

"Yes, but you will have to do without that," said Moko.

"And why?"

"Because I shall have no time to get dinner today."

"What! No dinner?"

"No, but there will be supper. And the bustards will be just as good for supper."

And Moko grinned and showed his white teeth.

The youngster gave him a punch in token of good will, and ran off to join his friends, whom Briant had warned not to get out of sight.

"Are you not gone with them?" he asked his brother.

"No. I would rather stop here!" answered Jack.

"You had much better take a little exercise," said Briant. "I am not at all easy about you, Jack. You have something you are hiding from me. Are you ill?"

"No! There is nothing the matter with me."

Always the same reply, which never satisfied Briant, who was resolved to have the matter cleared up some day, even at the cost of a scene with the obstinate boy.

But there was no time to lose if the night was to be spent in French Den.

At the outset the cave had to be visited by those who did not know it. And as soon as the raft was securely moored to the bank in a backwater away from the current, Briant asked his friends to accompany him. Moko had provided himself with one of the ship's lamps, in which the flame, greatly increased by the power of the lenses, gave a remarkably bright light.

At first the boys had to clear away the entrance. As the branches had been placed by Briant and Donagan so were they found; and consequently no human being, no animal had tried to enter the cave.

After the boughs were cleared away the boys glided through the narrow entrance. In the glare of the lantern the cave was much better lighted than by the resinous torches of the shipwrecked man's candles.

"Eh! we shall find this a tight fit," said Baxter, who had begun to measure the cave.

"Bah!" exclaimed Garnett. "If we put the beds one over the other like they do on board ship—"

"Why?" asked Wilcox. "We have only got to put them side by side on the ground—"

"And then," said Webb, "we shall have no room to move about."

"Well," said Briant, "you won't move about, that is all. Have you a better place to offer us, Webb?"

"No—but—"

"But," said Service, "the important thing is to have a place to shelter us. I did not suppose that Webb imagined he would find a complete mansion—with drawing-room, dining-room, bedroom, bathroom—"

"No, of course not," said Cross. "But is there any place where you can cook?"

"Yes; outside," said Moko.

"That will be very inconvenient in bad weather," said Briant. "I thought we should bring the stove inside tomorrow."

"The cooking stove in the cave, where we sleep!" exclaimed Donagan, in a tone of unmistakable disgust.

"Well, you can use your smelling salts, Lord Donagan," exclaimed Service, laughing loudly.

"If I like, I will, Mr. Cook's Mate," responded Donagan, with a frown.

"All right! all right!" said Gordon.

"Whether the thing is nice or not, we shall have to decide about it at once. If the stove is used for cooking, it will also do to keep us warm. As to getting some room by digging out chambers in the rock, we shall have all the winter for the work, if it can be done. But now let us take French Den as it is, and get into it as soon as possible."

The beds were then brought in and laid in order on the sand. Close as they were, the boys, accustomed to the small cabin of the schooner, did not find them any too close.

This occupied the rest of the day. The large table of the yacht was then placed in the middle of the cave, and Garnett and the youngsters laid the cloth.

Moko and Service had done their work well. A fireplace had been made between two large stones at the foot of the cliff, the fire being fed with dry wood gathered by Webb and Wilcox under the trees. About 6 o'clock the soup—that is to say, the meat biscuit which had to be boiled only for a few minutes—was giving forth a pleasing fragrance, a dozen unanimous, spitted on an iron bar, were roasting before a brisk fire over a dripping-pan, in which Costar would very much have liked to put his fingers; and while Dole and Iverson acted as turnspits, Fan followed their movements with significant interest.

Before 7 o'clock the boys were gathered round the table in the cave, which was their refectory and their dormitory. The benches, folding seats, and wicker chairs of the schooner had been brought in.

The day had been a trying one. When hunger was satisfied the boys thought of little but going to sleep. But Gordon proposed that they should visit the tomb of Baudem, whose dwelling they now occupied. Night was darkening the horizon of the lake, and its waters were reflecting the last rays of the sun as they found the little mound and stood by the wooden cross.

At 9 o'clock the beds were occupied, and all were asleep except Donagan and Wilcox, whose turn it was to watch, and who kept up a large fire at the mouth of the cave to scare away dangerous visitors.

The next day, the 10th of May, and the three days that followed, were spent by all hands in unloading the raft. Already the mist rising up with the west wind announced a period of rain or snow. The temperature scarcely rose above freezing, and it was important that everything should be got into the cave as soon as possible.

During the following week Donagan, Webb, Wilcox, and Cross together with Garnett and Service, had quite enough shooting to satisfy them. One day they had penetrated into the forest of birches and beeches by the side of the lake about half a mile from the cave. Here and there traces of the work of man were very evident. There were ditches dug in the ground, covered with a network of branches, and too deep for animals falling into them to escape. But the state of these ditches showed that they dated from years ago, and one of them contained the remains of an animal which they failed to identify.

"Anyhow they are the bones of a good-sized animal," said Wilcox, who had slipped down into the ditch and picked up the bones that had been bleached by time.

"And it was a quadruped, for here are the bones of the four paws," added Webb.

It must have been a strong one," said Donagan. "Look at the size of its head, and its jaw and teeth."

"Do you think," asked Webb of Donagan, "it was a carnivore?"

"Yes, there is no doubt of it."

"A lion? a tiger?" asked Cross, who did not seem at all eas.

"If not a tiger or a lion," answered Donagan, "at least a jaguar or a cougar."

"We must be on our guard," said Webb.

"And not venture too far away," said Cross.

"Do you hear, Fan?" said Service, turning towards the dog. "There are big beasts here."

Fan gave a cheery bark, which certainly betrayed no anxiety.

The boys turned back to go to the cave.

"An idea," said Wilcox. "If you cover this ditch with new brushwood we might catch something!"

"As you please, Wilcox," said Donagan, "though I would rather shoot a thing in the open than massacre it at the bottom of a pit."

Thus spoke the sportsman. But Wilcox, with his natural aptitude for trapping, showed himself more practical than Donagan, and began to put his idea into execution. His companions helped him to cut some twigs from the neighboring trees, and these were placed across the mouth of the

pit so as to hide it completely. It was a rudimentary snare, no doubt, but such a one is often used with success by trappers of the Pampas.

To recognize the position of the pit Wilcox broke off a few branches from the trees at the edge of the forest. And then they all returned to the cave.

These expeditions were not unproductive. Feathered game abounded. Besides the bustards and tinamous, there were a number of those martinets whose feathers, dotted with white, give them the look of guinea fowl. Wood pigeons there were in flocks. Antarctic geese, making passable eating when cooking has got rid of their oily flavor. Furred game was represented by incutucos, a kind of rodent as good as rabbit in a stew; maras, russet-grey hares with a black moon on the tail and having all the edible qualities of agouti; pichis with scaly coats, a kind of tatou, whose flesh is delicious; peccaries, a kind of small hog, and guaculis, animals like deer and just as active.

Donagan tried to stalk some of these, but as they were difficult to get at the consumption of powder and shot was not in proportion to the results obtained, much to the disgust of the sportsman. And this waste of ammunition evoked a few remarks from Gordon, which were received by Donagan's partisans with as ill a grace as by himself.

During one of these excursions a supply was collected of two precious plants discovered by Briant on the first expedition to the lake. These were the wild celery, which grew in great abundance on the wet soil, and a cross, whose young shoots formed an excellent antiscorbutic. These two vegetables figured at all the meals, being eaten for the sake of health.

As the cold had not yet frozen the surface of the lake and stream, a few trout were taken with the hook, besides a species of pike, very pleasant eating, providing the eater was not choked with the numerous bones. (One day Iverson returned triumphant, carrying a good-sized salmon which had nearly broken his line.)

Meanwhile many visits had been paid to the pit, branched over by Wilcox, but no animal was taken, although a big piece of meat had been laid on it as a bait.

On May 17, however, something did happen. On that day Briant and a few others had gone off into the forest near the cliff. Their object was to see if there was any other cave close to French den which might do as a storehouse.

As they were approaching the pit, they heard a loud noise proceeding from it. Briant struck off into the wood, and was soon joined by Donagan, who did not care to be behindhand. The others followed a few yards in the rear, with their guns at the ready, while Fan marched with her ears cocked and her tail stiff.

They were about 20 yards from the pit when the noise began. In the middle of the branches was a hole through which some animal had fallen.

What the animal was not apparent. In any case the boys thought it best to be ready to defend themselves.

"Seize it, Fan, seize it!" said Donagan, and the dog ran off, barking, without any sign of fear.

Briant and Donagan ran toward the pit, and as soon as they reached it they shouted: "Come! Come!"

[CONTINUED TOMORROW.]

ADRIFT IN THE PACIFIC;

—Or—

The Strange Adventures of a Schoolboy Crew.

By JULES VERNE.

CHAPTER XI.—CONTINUED.

"It is not a jaguar?" asked Webb.
"Nor a cougar!" said Cross.
"No," said Donagan; "it is an ostrich."
It was indeed an ostrich, and the boys congratulated themselves that such birds frequented the forest; for their flesh is excellent—particularly in the fat part of the breast.
Although there was no doubt it was an ostrich, yet its small size, its head like a goose's head, the coat of small plumes which enveloped its body like a grayish white fleece showed that it belonged to the species of nandu, so numerous on the Pampas of South America. The nandu cannot be compared with the African ostrich, but it was an honor to the island fauna.

"We ought to take it alive!" said Wilcox.
"Rather!" said Service.
"That will not be easy," said Cross.
"We'll try," said Briant.
The bird could not escape, because its wings did not allow it to rise to the level of the ground, and its legs could not get a footing on the vertical walls. Wilcox was consequently obliged to slip down into the pit at the risk of receiving a few blows from the bird's beak, which might wound him severely. However, as he managed to throw his coat over the bird, so as to muffle its head, he escaped unharmed; and it was easy for him to tie its legs, with two or three pocket-handkerchiefs tied end to end, and then with a strong pull all together the ostrich was hauled up to the bank.

"Now we have got it," said Webb.
"And what shall we do with it?" asked Cross.
"That is simple enough," said Service, who was never at a loss. "We will take it to the cave, we will tame it, and we'll use it to ride upon. I'll look after it, like my friend Jack in the Swiss Family Robinson."

That it was possible to use the ostrich in this fashion was doubtful, notwithstanding the precedent cited by Service; but as there was no difficulty in taking it to the cave, this was done.

When Gordon saw the nandu arrive he was a little alarmed at having another mouth to feed, but bethinking himself that the bird was a vegetarian he gave it a cordial welcome. As to the youngsters, they were delighted to be near the bird—not too near, however—after it had been tied up with a long line. And when they heard that Service intended to train it for riding, the made him promise to give them a mount.

"Yes, if you are very good, babies," said Service, whom the youngsters already looked upon as a hero.

"We are sure to be that," said Costar.
"What, you, Costar!" said Service; "you daring to ride this terrible animal!"
"Behind you—and holding on to you. Yes!"

"Do you remember how you felt when you were on the back of the turtle?"
"That is not the same thing," said Costar. "This thing doesn't go into the water."
"But it goes into the air!" said Dole.

And the two little fellows walked off to think about this.

As may be imagined, as soon as they got things in order at the cave, Gordon and his comrades had organized the daily life in a regular way, giving every one something to do, and taking particular care that the little ones were not left to themselves. They, of course, asked for nothing better than to be set to work as far as their strength permitted, but why should they not continue the lessons they had begun at Charman's school?

"We have the books to help us go on with the work," said Gordon. "And what we have learned we can teach, and it is only right we should give our little friends the benefit of it."

"Yes," answered Briant, "and if we leave the island and get back to our friends we can show them that we have not wasted any time."

It was agreed that a scheme of work should be drawn up, and that, after it had been submitted for general approval, it should be scrupulously adhered to. During the winter there would be many days when some of the boys would not be able to go out, and it was desirable that they should be profitably employed. But the smallness of the cave was a great inconvenience, and it was resolved to set to work forthwith to increase its dimensions.

CHAPTER XII.

THE COLONY ACROSS THE LAKE.

The boys had often looked along the cliffs in the hope of finding another cave. If they had discovered one they would have used it as a general store for what had now to be left out in the open air. But the search had been in vain, and they had to return to the scheme of enlarging their dwelling-place by digging into the walls.

The bad weather had set in a week before. Violent storms had swept across the island, but the cave had not had to face them, owing to its lying north and south. The rain and snow passed away over the crest of the cliff. The sportsmen had to leave the game alone in the vicinity of the lake, and the ducks, snipe, lapwing, rail, coot and pigeon remained undisturbed. The lake and the river had not yet been frozen, but it only required a quiet night when the first dry cold would succeed the storm for them to be covered with ice.

The work of enlarging the cave could thus be conveniently begun, and a start was made on the 27th of May.

The right wall was first attacked.
"If we dig on the slant," said Briant, "we may come out by the lake side, and so get a second entrance. That would give us a better lookout, and if the bad weather kept us in on one side we might get out on the other."

For three days from the 27th to the 30th of May, the work went on favorably. The friable limestone could be cut with a knife, and the rubble had to be used to support the roof of the gallery, but that was easily managed. The rubbish was taken outside so as not to encumber the floor of the cave.

The work of boring advanced gradually and not without many a stoppage to sound and make sure that progress was safe. Four or five feet had been excavated when, in the afternoon of the 30th, something very unexpected happened.

Briant, on his knees in the hole like a hower in a coal mine, thought he heard a slight noise in the interior of the rock.
He stopped his picking and listened. Again the sound reached his ear.
"To get out of the hole and tell Gordon and Baxter, who were standing at the entrance, was the work of an instant."

"It is an illusion," said Gordon. "You imagined you heard it."
"Take my place then; put your ear to the wall and listen."
Gordon got into the hole and stayed there a few minutes.

"You are right," said he, "I hear a sort of distant growling."
Baxter went in and confirmed this.
"What can it be?" he asked.
"I cannot think," said Gordon. "We must tell Donagan and the others."
"Not the youngsters," said Briant; "it would give them a scare."
But as they all came in to dinner at the moment, the secret could not be kept.

Donagan, Wilcox, Webb and Garnett, one after the other, went into the cavity and listened. But the sound had ceased probably for they heard nothing, and concluded that their comrades had been mistaken.

Mistake or no mistake, it was resolved to continue the work, and as soon as the meal was over the digging recommenced. During the afternoon no noise was heard, but about 9 o'clock in the evening the growling was distinctly heard through the rock.

Fan ran into the hole, and immediately came out again with unmistakable signs of irritation: her coat bristling, her lips showing her teeth, and barking loudly, as if in reply to the growling in the rock.

And then the alarm mingled with surprise, that the smaller boys had hitherto felt, gave place to gentle fear. In vain Briant tried to soothe Dole, Costar, and even Jenkins and Iverson, until he at last got them to bed and to sleep.

Gordon and the others continued to discuss this strange phenomenon. Every now and then the growling would be heard, and Fan would reply to it with a loud bark. Fatigue at last overcame them, and they went to bed, leaving Briant and Moko to watch and till daylight profound silence reigned in French Den.

All were up early next morning. Baxter and Donagan crawled to the end of the hole. No sound could be heard. The dog ran to and fro without showing any uneasiness, and made no attempt to dash herself against the wall as she had done the night before.

"Let us resume work," said Briant.
"Yes," replied Baxter. "There will always be time to leave off if we hear any suspicious noise."
"Is it not possible," said Donagan, "that the growling was simply a spring in the rock?"

"Then we should hear it now," said Wilcox, "and we don't."
"That is so," said Gordon. "I think it more likely to have come from the wind in some fissure leading down from the top of the cliff."
"Let us go up on the top and see," said Service.

The proposition was agreed to.
About 50 yards away there was a winding path, giving easy access to the summit of the hill. In a few minutes Baxter and two or three others were walking up it over French Den. Their journey was useless. The ridge was clothed with short, close herbage, and no fissure was discoverable by which a current of air or a stream of water could find its way in. And when the boys got down again they knew no more about the strange phenomenon than the youngsters, who were explaining it to themselves as being supernatural.

The work of digging the hole was resumed and continued to the end of the day. There was no repetition of the noise of the evening before, but Baxter examined the wall, and found that it sounded hollow. Was the tunnel going to end in a cave? Was it in this cave that the mysterious sound had arisen? There was nothing inadmissible in the hypothesis of a second excavation contiguous to the cavern in which they were working, and it was to be hoped that such a thing existed, as it would greatly reduce the labor of enlargement. As may be imagined, the boys worked with extraordinary ardor, and the day was one of the most trying they had yet experienced. Nevertheless, it would have passed without adventure had not Gordon noticed that the dog had disappeared.

Generally at meal times Fan was to be found near her master's seat, but now her place was empty.

They called Fan. Fan did not answer.
Gordon went to the door. He called her again. Complete silence.

Donagan and Wilcox went out, one along the bank of the stream, the other along the shore of the lake—but they found no trace of the dog.

In vain was the search extended for a few hundred yards round French Den. Fan was not to be found.

It was evident that the dog was not within call, for if she had been, she would have answered. Had she strayed away? That was unlikely. Had she perished in the jaws of some wild beast? That was possible, and it was the best explanation of her disappearance that was offered.

It was 9 o'clock at night. Thick darkness enveloped the cliff and the lake. The search had to be given up.

The boys went back to the cave. They were uneasy, and not only uneasy but grieved to think that the dog had vanished, perhaps forever.

Some stretched themselves on their beds, other sat round the table, not thinking of sleep. It seemed that they were more alone than ever, more forsaken, more removed from the country and their friends.

Suddenly in the silence the noise broke out afresh. This time there was a long howl, and a cry of pain lasting for nearly a minute.

"It is from over there, over there, that it comes," exclaimed Briant, rushing to the tunnel.

They all rose as if waiting for an apparition. Terror had seized upon the little ones, who hid themselves under the bedclothes.

When Briant came back he said:
"There must be a cavern beyond, the entrance to which is at the foot of the cliff."
"And in which it is probable that animals take shelter during the night," added Gordon.

"That is it," said Donagan. "And tomorrow we must try and find it."
At this moment a bark was heard, and then a howling. The sound came from the interior of the rock.

"Can Fan be there?" asks Wilcox, "and fighting with some animal?"
Briant went back into the tunnel and listened with his ear against the wall. But there was nothing more. Whether Fan was there or not, it was evident that there must be a second excavation which ought to communicate with the exterior, probably by some gap in the thicket of brushwood.

The night passed without either barking or howling being again heard.

Next morning the search was begun at break of day, but with no more result than the day before. Fan sought for and shouted for all over the neighborhood, did not come back.

Briant and Baxter took turns at the digging. Pickaxe and shovel were kept constantly at work. During the morning the tunnel was made two feet longer. From time to time the boys stopped to listen, but nothing could they hear.

After dinner the digging began again. Precautions were taken in case a blow of the pickaxe knocked through the wall and gave passage to an animal. The younger boys were taken out to the bank of the river. Gun in hand, Donagan, Wilcox and Webb stood ready for anything that might happen.

About 2 o'clock Briant suddenly exclaimed. His pickaxe had gone through the limestone, which had fallen in and left a good-sized hole.

Immediately he returned to his comrades, who could only think—
"But before they had time to open their mouths an animal rushed down the tunnel and leaped into the cave."
It was Fan!

[CONTINUED TOMORROW.]

ADRIFF IN THE PACIFIC;

The Strange Adventures of a Schoolboy Crew.

By JULES VERNE.

CHAPTER XII.—CONTINUED.

Yes, Fan, whose first action was to rush to a bowl of water and drink greedily. Then she wagged her tail without showing the least anger, and began to jump about in front of Gordon. Evidently there was no danger.

Briant then took a lantern and entered the tunnel. Gordon, Donagan, Wilcox, Baxter and Moko followed him. Soon they were through the hole and in the middle of the gloomy excavation, to which no light from the outside penetrated.

It was a second cave, of the same height and width as French Den, but longer, and the floor was covered with fine sand for an area of about 50 square yards.

As the cavity seemed to have no communication with the exterior, it was to be feared that the air was not fit to breathe. But, as the lamp in the lantern burned clearly, there must be some opening to admit the air. If not, how could Fan have got in?

Wilcox suddenly kicked his foot against a body, which, feeling with his hand, he found to be cold and motionless.

Briant approached with a light.

"It is the corpse of a jackal," said Baxter.

"Yes! A jackal that our brave Fan has killed," said Briant.

"And that explains our difficulty," said Gordon.

But if one or many jackals had made this their haunt, how had they got in? The entrance could not be found.

Briant then returned into French Den, and came out and ran along the cliff by the side of the lake. As he ran he shouted, and the boys in the cave replied. In this way he found a narrow entrance among the bushes and level with the ground, through which the jackal had found admission. But since Fan had followed them a fall had taken place and shut up the opening. This was soon found out and everything was explained, the howling of the jackal and the barking of the dog, who for 24 hours had found it impossible to get out.

Vigorously they set to work to make the tunnel a practicable gangway. To the second excavation they gave the name of the "hall," and its dimensions justified them in doing so. It would do for the dormitory and workshop, while the first cave would serve as kitchen and refectory; but as they intended to make it a general magazine, Gordon proposed to call it the "store-room," and his suggestion was adopted.

Soon they set to work to shift the beds and arrange them symmetrically on the sand of the hall, where there was plenty of room for them. Then the furniture of the schooner, the couches, arm-chairs, tables, cupboards, etc., etc., and what was very important—the stoves from the yacht's day and night saloons were put in position. At the same time the entrance on the lake side was cleared out and enlarged so as to fit one of the schooner's doors—a job which cost Baxter a good deal of trouble. On each side of the door two new openings were made so as to give light until the evening, when a lamp hung from the centre illuminated the cave.

To do all this took a fortnight, and it was not finished any too soon. The weather had begun to change. It was not as yet very cold, but the weather had become so violent that outdoor excursions were not to be thought of.

In fact, such was the force of the wind that the waters of the lake were lashed into waves as if it were a sea. The waves broke angrily on the beach, and assuredly a fishing boat or wild man's pirogue would have sought to cross it in vain. The yawl had been dragged ashore to save its being washed away. At times the waters of the stream were held back by the wind and overflowed the banks. Fortunately neither the storeroom nor the hall was directly exposed to the fury of the gale, which blew from the west, and the stoves and cooking apparatus worked admirably, being fed with dry wood, of which ample provision had been gathered.

When things were fairly in order Gordon proposed drawing up a programme, to which all would have to submit when it had been approved by all. How long was their stay to be on this island? When they came to leave it, would it not be a satisfaction to think that the time had not been wasted? With the books from the schooner's library the bigger boys could increase their knowledge at the same time as they taught the younger ones. An excellent task, which would usefully and agreeably occupy the long hours of winter.

However, before the programme was finished another measure was adopted, under the following circumstances:

On the night of June 10, after supper, all were in the hall, seated round the stove, when the conversation turned on the chance that offered to give names to the chief geographical portions of the island.

"That would be very useful," said Briant.

"Yes, let's have names," said Iverson, "and let's have good ones."

"Let us do the same as has been done by other Crusoes, real or imaginary," said Webb.

"And in reality," said Gordon, "we are nothing more than—"

"A Crusoe school!" interrupted Service.

"Besides," continued Gordon, "with names given to the bay, the stream, the forest, the lake, the cliff, the marshes and capes, we shall find it easier to identify them."

The motion was consequently adopted at once and there was nothing left to do but to think of suitable designations.

"We have Schooner bay, on which the yacht was wrecked," said Donagan, "and I think we might as well keep up the name we are used to."

"Right you are," said Cross.

"And in the same way I'll keep up the name of French Den for our cave, in memory of poor Baudoin, whose place we have taken."

There was no objection to this proposal, even from Donagan, although the suggestion came from Briant.

"And now," said Wilcox, "what shall we call the river which flows into Schooner bay?"

"/eland river," said Baxter; "the name will remind us of our country."

"Agreed. Agreed!"

Carried unanimously.

"And the lake?" asked Garnett.

"As you gave the name of /eland to the river in memory of your country," said Donagan, "you might as well call the lake Family lake, in memory of your relatives."

This was also agreed to without a dissent; and in the same way the name of Auckland hill was given to the cliff, the cape at the end whence Briant thought he had seen the sea to the eastward was called at his suggestion False Point.

The other names adopted, one after the other, were: Trap woods for the part of the forest where the trap had been found; Box woods, for the other part between Schooner Bay and the cliff; South Moors for the marsh covering the whole of the brook of the island; Dike creek for the brook which they had found the causeway; Wreck coast for the coast on which the yacht had come ashore; Game Terrace, for the space between the banks of the river and lake where the games on the programme were to take place.

But what of the island? The island was not named in the programme.

"Here! Here! I know what to call it," said Cross.

"You know, do you?" said Donagan.

"You are getting on, little Costar," said Garnett.

"Of course you'll call it Baby Island?" said Service.

"Come, don't chaff him," said Briant, "let us hear what he has to say."

The little fellow did not speak.

"Speak up, Costar," said Briant. "I'm sure your idea is a good one. What is it?"

"Well," said Costar, "as we all came from Charman's school, we ought to call it Charman Island!"

Then this they could not do better, and the name was received with general approval—which made Costar feel quite important.

Charman Island! Really the name had the true geographical ring about it, and would not disgrace any atlas!

The ceremony being at an end—to the general satisfaction—the time had come to go to bed, when Briant begged to be allowed to speak.

"My friends," he said, "noting that we have named our island, it is not fitting that we should choose a chief to rule it!"

"A chief?" asked Donagan.

"Yes. It seems to me that things would go better," continued Briant, "if one of us had authority over the other. What is done in every other country ought to be done in Charman Island!"

"Yes. A chief! Let us have a chief!" said the little and big together.

"Let us have a chief," said Donagan, "but

on condition that it is only for a stated time—say a year for example—"

"An one who can be re-elected," added Briant.

"Agreed! Who is it to be?" asked Donagan, in an anxious tone.

And it seemed that the jealous lad had only one fear, that in spite of him the choice of his companions would fall on Briant. He was quickly undeceived.

"Who is it to be?" replied Briant. "Why the wisest of us, to be sure—our friend Gordon!"

"Yes! Yes! Hurray for Gordon!"

And that is how Gordon was proclaimed chief of the little colony of Charman Island.

It was now nearly 10 months since the boys had been wrecked and thrown on this island, 1800 leagues away from New Zealand. During this time their position had gradually improved, and it seemed as though now they were at least secure of the necessities of life.

But an exploring expedition was urgently called for to explore the whole of the unknown territory of Charman Island, but those only to the east of Family lake. Did these consist of forest, marsh or sand hills? Had they any new resources which might be utilized?

One day Briant had a talk with Gordon on the subject, treating it from a new point of view.

"Although Baudoin's map may be fairly correct," said he, "it is desirable that we should explore the eastern side for ourselves. We have good glasses, which Baudoin did not have and who knows if we might not see land that he could not? His map makes Charman Island a solitary one, and it may not be so."

"Always the same idea," said Gordon. "and you are miserable at not getting away!"

"Yes, and at heart, I am sure you feel the same as I do. Ought we not to do all we can to get home again as soon as possible?"

"Well," said Gordon, "we will organize an expedition in which we can all take part!"

"No. It seems to me that six or seven of us—"

"That would be too many."

"What then do you propose?"

"I propose to cross the lake in the yawl, and, to do that, only two or three need go."

"And who will have charge of the yawl?"

"Moko," said Briant. "He knows how to manage a boat, and I understand a little about it. With the sail if the wind is fair, and with the oars if it is against us, we might easily manage the five or six miles across the lake and reach the watercourse which according to the map runs through the eastern forest, and we could go down that to its mouth."

"Agreed. I approve of your idea. But who will go with Moko?"

"I will, for I did not take part in the expedition to the north of the lake. It is my turn to be of use."

"To be of use!" said Gordon. "Have you not done more than any of the others?"

"Well, we have all done our duty," said Briant. "So it is agreed then?"

"Yes, it is agreed. But who is to go with you? I should not propose Donagan, for you do not get on well together."

"Oh, I would agree to that willingly," said Briant. "Donagan is not a bad-hearted fellow. If he is brave, he is a lover, and it is not for his envious character he would be a capital companion. Besides, he will gradually reform when he sees that I really do not wish to put myself forward before any one, and we shall end, I am sure, in being the best friends in the world. But I was thinking of quite another travelling companion—"

"Who is that?"

"My brother Jack," said Briant. "I get more and more anxious about him. Evidently he has done something wrong which he will not tell us. Perhaps if he finds himself alone with me on this expedition—"

"That is so, Briant. Take Jack and begin your preparations at once."

"They will not take long," answered Briant. "We shall not be away more than two or three days."

When the others heard the news of the projected expedition, Donagan was very vexed at not being allowed to take part in it and went to Gordon, who explained that only three boys were wanted to do what was to be done, that the idea was Briant's, whose business it was to see it through, etc.

When Moko heard that he was going to change his employment as master-cook for that of master-mariner he made no secret of his gratification. "I go with Briant was an additional pleasure. His substitute would naturally be Service, who revelled in the idea that he would be able to roast and stew as he liked without any one to overlook him. And Jack seemed not at all unhappy at having to leave French Den for a day or two with his brother."

The yawl was got ready. She was rigged with a single lateen sail, which Moko bent and furled. Two guns, three revolvers, ammunition in sufficient quantity, three travelling wraps, provisions, waterproof capes in case of rain, two oars with a pair to spare, such was the outfit required for the short trip without forgetting the copy which had been made of Baudoin's map in which the new names were written as they were given.

Feb. 4, about 8 o'clock in the morning Briant, Jack and Moko bade good-by to their comrades and embarked. It was a splendid morning, with a light wind from the southwest. The sail was set and Moko took the helm, leaving Briant to look after the sheet. The surface of the lake was rippled by the intermittent breeze, and this the yawl felt more as she got further out.

It was nearly 6 o'clock when the yawl neared the shore at the foot of a bank above which spread the clustering branches of green oaks and sea pines. The bank was too high for the boys to land and they had to coast along for half a mile or so to the north.

"There is the river marked on the map," said Briant, pointing to an opening in the bank through which flowed the waters of the lake.

"All right," said Moko, "I think we ought to give it a name."

"All right," said Briant, "let us call it East river, as it flows to the east."

"That will do," said Moko. "And now we have only to get into the stream and drift down it."

"We will do that tomorrow, Moko. We had better camp here. We can start at dawn tomorrow and explore both banks of the river."

"Shall we go ashore?" asked Jack.

"Oh, yes," said Briant, "and camp under the trees."

The boys took the boat into a little creek and scrambled out on to the bank. They moored the yawl to a stump and took out of her the arms and provisions. A good fire of dry wood was lighted at the foot of a large green oak and they had a meal of biscuit and cold meat and were not at all sorry to get to sleep.

"Come, wake up; let us be moving," said Briant, who was the first to awake at 6 o'clock next morning. And in a few minutes all three were back in the boat and out in the stream.

The current was rather strong—the tide had turned about half an hour before—and the oars were not needed. Briant and Jack were in the bow of the yawl, while Moko, with one of the oars out astern, kept the boat in midstream.

"It is likely," said Moko, "that we shall get down to the sea in one tide if East river is only six miles long, as the current is much stronger than in /eland river."

"Let us hone so," said Briant. "When we come back, we may have to take two or three tides."

"That may be," said Moko, "and if you like we can start with the next tide."

"Yes," said Briant, "as soon as we have seen that there is no land to the eastward."

The boys were in a forest, in which the vegetation was very thick, the tree being similar to those in Trap Woods with this difference, the green-oaks, cork-oaks, pines and furs were in the majority.

Among others—although his knowledge of botany was much less than Gordon's—Briant recognized a certain tree which he had seen in New Zealand. The branches of this tree spread out in umbrella shape quite 30 feet above the ground, and bore conical fruits three or four inches long pointed at the end, and covered with glittering scales.

"That is a stone pine," said Briant.

"If so," said Moko, "let us stop for a minute or two. It will be worth while."

A movement of the oar steered the yawl into the left bank. Briant and Jack jumped out. A few minutes afterwards they came back with an armful of the fruits each of which contained a kernel of oval form, coated with a thin skin, and tasting like a hazelnut. It was a valuable find for the gourmands of French Den, and it was also valuable—as Gordon told Briant on his return—on account of the oil that the fruits yielded.

Towards 11 o'clock the trees began to open out. Here and there little maps and glades were noticed. The breeze was more and more impregnated with a saline odor indicating the nearness of the sea. A few minutes later, beyond a clump of superb green oaks, a bluish line appeared. It was the horizon.

The yawl still drifted down with the tide, but more slowly now than at first. The ebb was hardly perceptible now and East river had become only 50 feet wide.

They reached the rocks by the seashore; Moko steered the boat into the left bank, and then carrying the ground to land, he stuck it firmly into the channel.

Here was quite a different state of affairs from that on the other side of the island. It was a deep bay, but instead of the wide sandy beach and line of reefs and lofty cliffs as on Wreck Coast, there was a mass of

rocks among which, as Briant soon found, there were at least a score of caves.

Charman Island seemed to be as lonely in the east as it was in the west.

And that was why Baudoin's map showed no land in that direction. And Briant contented himself with naming the gap in the coast Deception bay.

"Come," said he, "it is not from this side we shall start when we go back."

"I think we had better have something to eat," replied Moko.

"Right," said Briant, "but be quick. When can we get back up the river?"

"If you want to go by this tide, you ought to start at once!"

"That is impossible. I must have a good look round the horizon from some high point."

"Then we shall have to wait for the next tide, and that means 10 o'clock tonight."

"Are you afraid to travel during the night?" asked Briant.

"No," said Moko, "and there would be no danger, for we shall have the moon. Besides, the course of the river is so straight that we can steer the boat with an oar all right. And if the stream meets us we can row up or if it is too strong we can run ashore and wait till it is day."

"Then let it be so," said Briant, "and now we have 12 hours before us let us make the most of them to complete our exploration."

He then turned his glasses to the east, where the horizon was now as clear as could be any land within seven or eight miles would certainly have been noticeable. There was nothing in that direction. Nothing but the sea and the unbroken line of sky.

For an hour Briant, Jack and Moko continued to look around them and they were about to desist to the beach again when Moko suddenly stretched out his hand to the north-east and asked:

"What is that?"

Briant brought his glasses to bear on the spot indicated.

A little above the horizon was a whitish stain that the eye might have taken for a cloud had not the sky been quite clear at the time. Briant kept it in the field of his glasses for a long time, and announced that it remained stationary, and its form did not alter.

"I do not know what that can be," he said, "unless it is a mountain, and a mountain would not look like that."

Soon all three were back at the mouth of East river, where the yawl was moored. Jack collected some dry wood from under the trees, and then he lighted the fire while Moko cooked the roast tinamous.

At 7 o'clock Jack and Briant were walking along the beach, waiting for the tide to turn, and Moko had gone off up the river bank in search of a stone pine from which he thought he would like a few fruits.

When he returned to the mouth of the river night had begun to close in. Away out at sea the waves were still lighted by the last rays of the sun but the shore was plunged in semi-darkness.

When Moko reached the boat, Briant and his brother had not returned. As they could not be far off he was in no way anxious about them.

But he was surprised to hear a violent sobbing, and then the sound of a loud voice. It was Briant's.

"Were the brothers in any danger? Moko did not hesitate to run off at once along the beach and round the rocks which shut in the little harbor.

Suddenly he saw something which made him halt.

Jack was on his knees before Briant. He seemed to be pleading with him, to be begging for pardon. And his were the sobs Moko had heard.

The cabin boy would have run back, but it was too late. He had heard and understood. He knew now what Jack had done, and what he had just confessed, and why Briant was exclaiming:

"You stupid boy! It was you—you who did it! You are the cause!"

"Forgive me! forgive me!"

"That is why you keep apart from the rest! That is why you are afraid of them! May they never know! No! Not a word—not a word—to any one!"

Moko would have given much not to have known the secret. But to pretend not to know it now he was face to face with Briant would never do. And a few minutes afterwards, when he found him alone by the boat, he said to him—

"I overheard—"

"What?" said Briant, "you know that it was Jack!"

"Yes, and you must forgive him."

"But will the others forgive him?"

"Perhaps," said Moko. "In any case, better they should know nothing. I'll keep silence, you may depend."

[CONTINUED MONDAY.] [Aht]

ADRIFF IN THE PACIFIC;

--OR--

The Strange Adventures of a Schoolboy Crew.

By JULES VERNE.

CHAPTER XIII.

A WOMAN.

During the first week of July the river began to freeze. A few icebergs formed in Family lake floated down with the current. In a short time they became heaped together a little below French Den, and formed an ice pack, above which the smooth water soon bore a thick coat of ice. The cold continued and the surface of the lake was frozen, and after a short spell of squalls which checked the freezing somewhat, the wind shifted round to the southwest, the sky cleared, and the temperature sunk below zero.

The last year's programme of work was adopted. Briant, who was Gordon's successor in command, kept his position without any abuse of authority. The boys obeyed him cheerfully, and Gordon helped much by setting an example of obedience. Donagan and his partisans showed no signs of actual insubordination. They occupied themselves in their daily task of looking to their traps and nets and snares, and kept much to themselves, talking together in a low voice, and rarely joining in the general conversation. Were they engaged in some plot? That would be seen in time. But no complaint could at present be made of them, and Briant had no cause to interfere. He continued to treat them with justice, and took the more difficult and unpleasant tasks on himself and his brother, who now rivalled him in zeal. Gordon soon noticed the change that was taking place in Jack's character, and Moko saw with pleasure that, since his explanation with his brother, the little fellow took part more frequently in the games of his comrades.

The long hours that the cold obliged them to spend in the cave were occupied in study. Jenkins, Iverson, Dole and Costar got on wonderfully. In teaching them, the bigger boys could not help teaching themselves. During the long evenings readings were made from books of travel, which Service, for one, did not find quite as entertaining as "Robinson Crusoe." Frequently Gannon's accordion would give forth its exasperating harmonies, as the unhappy melomaniac worked its bellows to the verge of ruin. And the boys would sing songs, and always manage to have a chorus. And then, the concert ended, all would go to bed.

On the morning of Oct. 14, the winter having passed in dissensions, Donagan and his friends were off at daybreak along the shore to the northward. For three miles or more the masses of rock lay strewn between the forest and the sea, leaving at their base a sandy strip about a hundred feet wide. It was noon when the last rock was reached and a halt made for lunch.

Close by a stream ran into the bay, but as it flowed from northeast to northwest, it appeared not to come from the lake. The waters it brought down from the northern part of the island flowed into the sea through a narrow gully, and Donagan named it North creek, for it was not worth calling a river.

A few strokes of the paddle sent the india-rubber boat across it, and then the boys continued their way along its bank. It was about 3 o'clock. In following the creek Donagan had been thrown back towards the northwest more than he cared for, and was about to strike off to the north, when Cross suddenly shouted:

"Look, Donagan, look!"

And with his hand he pointed to a large reddish mass that was moving under the trees between the long grass and reeds of the creek.

Donagan made a sign to Webb and Wilcox not to stir, and accompanied by Cross, with his gun ready for action, he glided off silently in pursuit of the moving mass.

It was a large animal, which would have looked like a rhinoceros if it had had a horn, and if its lower lip had been longer.

There was the report of a gun, followed immediately by another. Donagan and Cross had fired. Evidently at the distance, about 50 yards, the bullets had produced no effect on the thick skin of the animal, which rushed from the reeds and disappeared in the forest.

Donagan recognized it. It was an amphibian, and perfectly inoffensive, a brown-coated "ana," otherwise one of those huge fauns frequently met with in the neighborhood of South American rivers. As nothing could be done with such an animal, its escape was not regretted, although the sportsmen were not particularly pleased.

In this part of the island the forest was very thick, and as the beech trees were in thousands, Donagan gave it the name of Beech Forest, which took its place on the map alongside those of Bear Rock and North Creek, already given.

As soon as the sun rose the boys were off. There were many reasons for not wasting time. The weather gave signs of changing. The wind, which blew from the west, began to freshen. Heavy clouds were racing along in the offing, and they were high up in the sky, and it was hoped that they would not bring rain. Facing the wind, even if it blew a storm, would not frighten the explorers, but a heavy squall, with its usual accompaniment of a deluge of rain, would have put an end to the expedition, and forced them to return to the shelter of Bear Rock.

They pressed on then, although the wind took them in the flank. The day was a very disagreeable one, and evidently a bad night was to follow. A storm was coming on, and at 5 o'clock the roll of thunder was heard, and the lightning flashes.

The boys, although very tired, were still able to keep on. They wanted to have at least a glimpse of this part of the Pacific while there was a light. Was it a boundless sea, or only a narrow channel separating the island from a continent or another island? Such a question could not fail to interest them.

Suddenly Wilcox, who was a little in advance, came to a halt and pointed to a dark mass on the edge of the shore. Was it a marine animal, some huge cetacean, such as a whale, wrecked on the sands? Was it not rather a boat, which had been thrown ashore after drifting through the breakers?

It was a boat thrown on its starboard side. And beyond, near the line of seaweed rolled up by the tide, Wilcox pointed out two bodies on the beach.

Donagan, Webb and Cross had at first stopped, but without thinking what they were doing they ran up to the two bodies on the sand--corpses perhaps.

And then seized with terror, and without thinking that a spark of life might linger, and that their immediate help might be necessary, they fled for refuge under the trees. The night was growing dark, although lighted every now and then by the lightning flashes, and in the darkness the growling of the tempest grew louder, as did the roar of the raging sea. The trees were being broken on all sides, not without danger to those sheltering beneath them, but to camp on the beach was impossible, for the sand driven by the wind, swept through the air as in volleys of grape. Throughout the night the boys remained in this place without being able to close their eyes for an instant. The cold tortured them cruelly, they were not able to light a fire, for it would have been blown about and scattered at the risk of burning the dead branches on the ground.

The first streaks of the dawn appeared in the east. The storm continued, and, as the clouds were low over the sea, rain was to be feared before they could get back to Bear Rock harbor.

But before they started they had to perform the last duty towards the shipwrecked men. As soon as the early morning light had penetrated the thick morning mists in the offing they went out on the beach, struggling not without difficulty against the blasts of the storm. Often they had to hold each other up to save themselves from being blown over. The boat had been left near a low ridge of sand, and they could see by the line of weed that the tide had risen and lashed it.

But the two bodies were no longer there. The boat was empty.

On the stern two figures showed the ship to which she belonged and the port of register.

"GREEN-SAN FRANCISCO."

Were then the colonists to pass another winter on Charman Island? Were they to have no help before then? Were not these parts of the Pacific visited during the sum-

mer by merchant vessels, and would they see the signal on the crest of Auckland Hill?

The signal was, it is true, hoisted only 200 feet above the level of the island, and could not be seen over a very wide radius. And after trying in vain with Baxter to devise some sort of boat which would be seaworthy, Briant had betaken himself to thinking out some means of raising a signal to a greater height. He spoke of this often, and one day he asked Baxter if it would not be possible to use a kite for the purpose.

But a storm came and the kite would have been smashed if it had been let up in such weather. This was the same storm which had burst on Donagan and his companions in the northern part of the island, and cast the boat and the shipwrecked Americans on the rocks to which there was afterwards given the name, Severn Shore.

On the 16th, although the weather was not stormy, the wind was too violent for the kite. But as the wind dropped in the afternoon there was good promise of an attempt being successful next day. This was Oct. 17, an important date in the annals of Charman Island.

Although it was Friday, Briant was not superstitious enough to wait a day.

The final preparations occupied the morning. At 1.30 the kite was laid on the ground, with its long tail stretched out, and only waiting for Briant's signal to be held up and started. But the signal he did not give.

At that very moment his attention had been called off by Fan who had rushed off into the forest and began to bark in such a strange plaintive way that every one was surprised.

"What is the matter with Fan?" asked Briant.

"Has she scented some animal in the wood?"

"No! She wouldn't bark like that."

"Let us go and see," said Service.

"Not without your weapons," said Briant.

Service and Jack ran into the cave, and came back with two loaded guns.

"Now come," said Briant.

Briant and his companions had not gone 50 yards before they saw the dog standing in front of a tree, at the foot of which was a human form.

A woman lay there, still as if she were dead, a woman, whose clothes--gown of some heavy fabric, and brown lined shawl tied round her waist--seemed to be in good repair. Her face showed signs of excessive suffering, although she was of robust constitution, being from 40 to 45 years of age.

"She breathes! She breathes!" exclaimed Gordon. "Hunger, perhaps thirst--"

Jack was off to the cave, to return with some biscuits and a flask of brandy.

Then Briant, leaning over the woman, opened her lips and poured a few drops into her mouth. She moved and raised her eyelids. Then her look brightened as she saw the boys round her. Then Jack held out a biscuit which she seized and ate greedily. Evidently the poor woman was dying more from want than fatigue.

Half an hour afterwards Briant and Baxter had brought her into the hall, and were there giving her all the attention they could.

As soon as she felt herself strong enough she told them her story, which was as follows, and our readers can judge how much it interested the young colonists.

[CONTINUED TOMORROW.]

ADRIFT IN THE PACIFIC;

--OR--

The Strange Adventures of a Schoolboy Crew.

By JULES VERNE.

CHAPTER XIII--CONTINUED.

The woman, an American by birth, had lived for more than 20 years as confidential servant in the family of William R. Penfield, at Albany, the state capital of New York. Her name was Catherine Ready, though she was generally called Kate.

A month since Mr. and Mrs. Penfield, wishing to go to Chili, where one of their relatives resided had come to San Francisco the chief seaport of California to embark on the merchant vessel *Severn*, commanded by Capt. John F. Turner. The ship was bound to Valparaíso, and Mr. and Mrs. Penfield and Kate who was so to speak, one of the family, took passage in her.

The *Severn* would doubtless have made an excellent passage if the eight men of the crew who had recently joined had not been scoundrels of the worst description. Nine days after sailing one of them, Walston, helped by his companions, Brandt, Rock, Henley, Cook, Forbes, Cope, and Pike, had broken out into mutiny and killed the captain, the second mate and Mr. and Mrs. Penfield, the object of the murderers being to seize the ship and use her in the slave trade, which then still existed with a few provinces of South America.

Only two persons on board had been spared; these were Kate, saved by the intercession of Forbes, who was less cruel than the rest, and Evans, the first mate of the *Severn*, who was kept to navigate the ship.

This horrible affair took place on the night of Oct. 7, when the *Severn* was about 200 miles from the Chilean coast.

On pain of death Evans was forced to lay the course towards Cape Horn, and cross the Atlantic to the west coast of Africa. But a few days afterwards--why, no one ever knew a fire broke out on board. In a few moments it became so fierce that Walston and his men found it hopeless to save the ship. One of the men, Henley, jumped overboard to escape the fire, and was drowned. The *Severn* had to be abandoned, the long boat was launched, and a few stores and weapons were thrown into her and she had only just time to steer off when the burning vessel foundered.

Two days after the loss of the ship a violent storm had come on and the boat with her sail torn to ribbons and her mast carried away, was driven on to Charman island. And on the night of the 15th she was thrown on the beach, and her side stove in.

Walston and his companions, exhausted by their long struggle with the storm, suffered so from cold and fatigue that they were almost dead when the boat ran on to the reef; five of them were swept out of her by a wave and a moment or so afterwards the two others were thrown on to the sand, while Kate fell on the opposite side of the boat.

The two men remained senseless for some time, as also did Kate. When she returned to consciousness she remained quiet and still, thinking that Walston and the others had perished, and waiting for daylight to begin her search for assistance in this unknown land. About 3 o'clock in the morning she heard footsteps near the boat.

Walston, Brandt and Rock had not been drowned in the wave that struck the boat when she was crossing the reef. They had come along the rocks to the help of their companions, Forbes and Pike, and were now in conversation with them, while Evans remained a few hundred yards away under guard of Cope and Cook.

And this is the conversation that passed--which Kate heard distinctly.

"Have you got the firearms?" asked Forbes.

"Yes and the ammunition is all right," said Walston, who took out of the locker five guns and several packets of cartridges.

"That is not much," said Rock, "in a wild country like this."

"Where is Evans?" asked Brandt.

"Over there," said Walston, "watched by Cope and Cook. He'll have to come with us, whether he likes it or not; and if he resists I'll settle him."

"What has become of Kate?" asked Rock.

"Kate?" replied Walston, "There is nothing to fear from her! I saw her go overboard before the boat ran ashore, and she is at the bottom of the sea now."

"That's a good job," said Rock, "She knew rather too much about us."

"She wouldn't have known it long," said Walston, of whose intentions there could be no doubt.

Kate, who had heard all this, made up her mind to escape as soon as the men went away.

It can now be understood why Donagan, Wilcox, Webb and Cross found the beach deserted when they returned to perform the last duty towards the shipwrecked men. Walston and his people had gone off to the east, while Kate, taking the opposite course, fled towards the northern point of Family lake. There she arrived in the afternoon of the 16th, exhausted by hunger and fatigue. A few wild fruits were all she had had to sustain her.

She had then followed the left bank, walking all through the night and all through the morning of the 17th, when she sank to the ground, where she had been found half dead.

Such was Kate's story--and a very serious state of affairs was revealed by it.

CHAPTER XIV.

"WALSTON IS THERE."

Only one thing Briant thought of--that Donagan, Wilcox, Webb and Cross were now in great peril. How could they be on their guard if they did not know of the presence of the survivors of the *Severn* in the very part of the island they were then exploring? The report of a gun fired by one of them would be enough to reveal their presence to Walston.

"We must go to their assistance," said Briant, "and let them know before tomorrow."

"And bring them back to French Den," added Gordon, "More than ever it's necessary for us to be united, so as to concert measures against an attack."

"Yes," said Briant, "and as it is necessary they should come back, they will come back. I will go after them."

"You, Briant?"

"Yes I Gordon."

"And how?"

"I'll go in the yawl with Moko. In a few hours we can cross the lake and go down East river, as we did before. There is every chance we shall find Donagan at its mouth."

"When will you go?"

"This evening," said Briant, "as soon as the darkness allows us to get across, without being seen."

"May I go with you?" asked Jack.

"No," said Briant, "It is imperative that we all come back in the boat, and we shall not have room for six."

It was in fact the best thing to do, not only for the sake of Donagan and his companions, but also for the rest. Four boys more, and those not the weakest of the party, were a reinforcement not to be despised.

There was now no talk of letting up the kite. It would be a signal, not to passing ships--if any were passing--but to Walston and his accomplices. Briant even thought it best that the mast on the Auckland Hill should be lowered.

Moko whom no danger could frighten, was delighted at having to accompany Briant. The two embarked, taking with them a few provisions and a revolver and cutlass each. When the sun set a gentle breeze had sprung up from the north, which, if it lasted, would suit the yawl, both outwards and homewards.

About 10.30 Briant, who was in the stern of the boat, touched Moko's arm. A few hundred feet away from East river a half-extinguished fire shed its expiring light through the darkness.

The yawl ran alongside the bank and Briant jumped ashore, after telling Moko to wait for him. He had his cutlass in his hand and in his belt was the revolver, which he had resolved not to use except in the last extremity. He climbed the bank and glided under the trees.

Suddenly they stopped. About 20 yards away, in the half light of the fire, he saw a shadow crouching in the grass. Immediately a formidable growl was heard and a dark mass leapt in front of him.

It was a jaguar of large size. Immediately there was a shout of--

"Help! Help!"

Briant recognized Donagan's voice, knocked over by the jaguar. Donagan was struggling unable to use his gun.

Wilcox, awakened by the shout, jumped up and brought his gun to the shoulder, ready to fire.

"Don't fire! Don't fire!" cried Briant, and before Wilcox could see him he had sprung at the wild beast, which turned against him and left Donagan free to get up. Luckily Briant was able to step aside and give it a thrust with his cutlass. The jaguar was mortally wounded, and rolled on to the ground as Webb and Cross rushed to Donagan's assistance.

But the victory might have cost Briant dear, for his shoulder was torn by the animal's claws, and began to bleed profusely.

"How did you come here?" exclaimed Wilcox.

"That you will know soon!" said Briant.

"But come with me! Come!"

"Not till I have thanked you, Briant!" said Donagan. "You have saved my life!"

"I only did what you would have done in my place," replied Briant; "but don't say any more about that. Come with me!"

Briant's wound, however, was noticed. Although it was not a serious one, it had to be bound up tightly with a handkerchief, and while Wilcox was doing this Donagan was told what had taken place.

And so these men they had taken for enemies were alive! They were wandering about the island! They were scoundrels stained with murder! A woman had been

wrecked with them in the boat; and this woman was now at French Den! There was now no safety on Charman island! That was why Briant had told Wilcox not to fire at the jaguar for fear the report would be heard, and that was why Briant had trusted only to the cutlass!

French Den was in serious danger. It was exposed to the attack of these seven well-armed scoundrels, obviously. Walston's best course was to leave the island as soon as he could, but if he came to suspect the existence of a little colony well provided with all that he wanted, he would not refrain from an attack in which he had almost every chance of success. The boys would be obliged to be most careful not to go far from inland river or the lake so long as he was in the island.

Donagan was asked if he had seen any trace of the sailors on his journey back to Lear Rock.

"No," said he, "But when we went back we did not go the same way as at first."

"But we are sure that Walston went off to the eastward," said Gordon.

"Agreed," answered Donagan, "but he went along the shore, while we came through Beech forest. If you look at the map you will see there is a very bold curve just above Deception bay, and there is a good stretch of country there where the men could take refuge without going too far away from their boat. But perhaps Kate can tell us whereabouts Charman island is?"

Kate had already been asked by Gordon and Briant, and could tell them nothing. After the burning of the *Severn* Mr. Evans had laid the course of the boat straight for the American continent, and consequently Charman island could not be very far away from it. But the name of the island on which he had been cast he had never mentioned during the storm. The numerous archipelagos on the coast must be within a short distance, and there were very plausible reasons for Walston to try and reach them, and in the meantime to stay on the eastern shore. If he could only get his boat into a seaworthy state, he would not have much trouble in reaching the South American coast.

"Unless," said Briant, "he comes to the mouth of East river, and finding there traces of your camp, Donagan, resolves to search farther inland."

"But what traces?" replied Donagan. "A few cinders! what would that tell him? that the island is inhabited! and if so, the scoundrels would only think of hiding themselves."

"Exactly," said Briant, "Until they discovered that the population of the island consists of a parcel of boys. We must do nothing to let him know who we are, and that reminds me, Donagan, did you fire your gun on your journey back to Deception bay?"

"No; and that is rather strange," said Donagan, smiling. "For I am rather inclined to burn too much powder. When we left the shore we had a good supply of game, and no shooting took place to reveal our presence. Last night Wilcox was going to fire at the jaguar, but luckily you arrived in-time and saved my life at the risk of your own."

"You need say no more about that, Donagan," said Briant, "But don't let us have another gun fired; let us keep away from the Trap woods, and let us live on our reserves!"

November had begun, and there was still no trace of suspicious characters round French Den. Briant even doubted if the survivors of the *Severn* were still on the island. But had not Donagan seen with his own eyes that the boat was in a bad way, with her broken mast, tattered sails and shattered side? It is true--and Mr. Evans would know this--if Charman island had been near a continent or archipelago, the boat might have been sufficiently put to rights and gone to sea. It was possible for Walston to have left the island. Had he done so? That would have to be discovered before the usual round of life was resumed.

It will be remembered that the flying of the kite had been postponed. After the arrival of Kate with the news of the survivors of the *Severn* at large on the eastern shore, the project of sending up into the air something that could be seen from all points of the island had been abandoned.

But if the kite could not be used as a signal, could it not be used for the purpose of a reconnaissance so necessary to the colony's safety?

Yes! And that is what seized on Briant's imagination. He remembered having read in an English paper of a lady being lifted from the ground hanging to the tail of a kite specially made for the purpose. Well! what a lady had done surely a boy could do!

That there was a certain danger in the attempt mattered little. The risk would be nothing compared to the result which might be obtained. If all precautions were taken that prudence required, was there not a chance that the operation would succeed? That is why Briant, although he was not in position to calculate mathematically, the ascensional force required by such an apparatus, convinced himself that the apparatus would do if made larger and stronger than it had been. And then in the middle of the night he could be lifted a few hundred feet in the air, and perhaps detect the light of the fire somewhere in the district between the lake and Deception Bay.

It was the evening of the 4th of November when he asked Gordon, Donagan, Wilcox, Webb and Baxter to come and talk over something with him.

He told them he proposed to make use of the kite.

"What use?" asked Wilcox. "By letting it up?"

"Certainly," said Briant. "It was made to be let up."

"During the day?" asked Baxter.

"No," said Briant, "for Walston would see it, while during the night--"

"But if you hang the lantern to it," said Donagan, "it will attract his attention just as much."

"But I am not going to send up the lantern!"

"Then what are you going to do?" said Gordon.

"I am going to see if the *Severn* people are still on the island."

And then Briant, not without some uneasiness, lost his plan should be received unfavorably, unfolded it in a few words.

His comrades did not laugh. Gordon asked if he was speaking seriously, and the others seemed to approve of the notion. They saw nothing improbable in a nocturnal ascent of such a character. If everything was done that could be done to ensure safety they were willing to try it.

[CONTINUED TOMORROW.]

ADRIFT IN THE PACIFIC;

—OR—

The Strange Adventures of a Schoolboy Crew.

By JULES VERNE.

CHAPTER XIV.—CONTINUED.

When the kite was finished it presented a surface of about 80 square yards, in the form of an octagon four feet on the side, with a radial length of about 15. With its strong ribs, and its impermeable covering, it could easily lift a weight of 120 pounds.

The car in which the observer was to take up his position was one of those wicker baskets that serve so many purposes on board a yacht. It was deep enough to reach up to the armpits of an ordinary-sized boy, large enough to give him full liberty of movement, and open enough for him to get out of easily, if he wanted to do so.

As may be imagined, this was not all done in a day, nor even in two days. It was begun on the morning of the 5th, and it was finished in the afternoon of the 7th. And the trial trip was put off till the evening.

Everything being ready, the preliminary ascent was begun. The moon would not rise till nearly two o'clock in the morning, and a good breeze was blowing from the southwest, so that the conditions were favorable.

The schooner's winch had been fixed firmly in the ground on the terrace. The long line had been carefully wound on so as to run out easily with the signal-string. In the car Briant had put a bag of mould weighing 120 pounds, which was greater than the weight of any of the boys.

"Are you ready?" asked Briant.

"Ready!" answered Donagan.

"Let go!"

The kite rose a little, quivered in the wind, and assumed the angle at which it was intended it should fly.

"Let out! Let out!" exclaimed Wilcox; and immediately the winch spun round under the tension of the line, while the kite and the basket slowly rose into space.

Although it was a dangerous thing to do, the boys cheered as the "Giant of the Air" left the ground. But soon it disappeared in the darkness, to the great disappointment of Iverson, Jenkins, Dole and Costar, who did not want to lose sight of it while it flew over Family lake.

Although it could not be seen, the boys felt that the kite was drawing steadily, showing that the wind was blowing in the higher zones, and that the kite was properly balanced.

Briant being anxious that the experiment should be as complete as circumstances permitted, let the string run out to the end. He could then find out the degree of tension, which was nothing unusual. The winch had let out 1200 feet, and the kite was probably at a height of from 700 to 800 feet in 10 minutes.

The experiment having been completed the boys seized hold of the handles of the winch and began to wind in. This second part of the performance took much longer than the first, and it was quite an hour before the winding in was over.

As in the case of a balloon, the bringing of the kite to the ground without a shock is the most delicate part of the manoeuvre. But the wind was so steady that it was accomplished with great success. The octagon came again into sight, and fell gently to the ground, close to the spot from which it had started. And cheers greeted its arrival as they had saluted its departure.

All that remained to be done was to keep it on the ground; and Baxter and Wilcox volunteered to keep guard over it till daylight.

"Let us go in," said Gordon, "it is late."

"One moment," said Briant, "Gordon! Donagan! I have a proposal to make. We have tried the kite, and the trial has succeeded because the circumstances were favorable, the wind being steady and being neither too weak nor too strong. How do we know what the weather may be like tomorrow? It seems to me it would be better not to postpone an attempt. Who will go up?"

"I will!" said Jack.

And immediately, "I will!" was shouted by Donagan, Baxter, Wilcox, Cross and Service.

Then came silence, which Briant was in no hurry to break.

Jack was the first to speak.

"Let me go, brother: it is for me to run the risk! Let me go!"

"And why you rather than I?" asked Donagan, "Why you any more than any one else?"

"Because I ought to go," said Jack.

"You ought to go?" asked Gordon.

"Yes!"

"Answer, Briant!" said Donagan. "Jack says he has a right to run the risk! But what right has he got that we have not? What does he mean?"

"For what I did," said Jack. "For what I did—I will tell you—"

"Jack!" said Briant, hoping to keep his brother from explaining.

"No," said Jack, in a voice broken by emotion. "Let me confess! It weighs too heavily on me! Gordon, Donagan, that you are here—all of you—far from your friends on this island—is owing to me—I alone am the cause. The schooner drifted out to sea, because I imprudently—no, jokingly—no, foolishly—cast off the ropes by which she was moored to the quay at Auckland. Yes! I intended it for a joke—but when I saw the yacht drifting away I lost my head—I did not call out when there was time—and an hour afterwards, in the middle of the night—we were out in the open sea. Oh, forgive me, forgive me!"

And the boy burst into tears, while Kate tried all she could to console him.

"Well, Jack," said Briant, "you have confessed your fault, and now you would risk your life to atone for it, or rather atone for some of the evil you have done."

"But has he not done that already?" asked Donagan, letting his natural generosity get the better of him. "Has he not often run into danger to do us a service? Oh, Briant, I understand now why you were always putting your brother forward when there was danger to be found, and why he was always so ready to go. That is why he came after Cross and me in the fog—at the risk of his life! Yes! My dear friend Jack, we'll forgive you, and your fault wants no more atonement."

A few minutes afterwards Briant, having refused positively to allow Jack to accompany him, was in the car, and as soon as he had fixed himself comfortably, he gave the order to let the kite go.

A strange feeling had Briant at first, when he felt himself suspended in space from this huge inclined plane which rustled in the wind. It seemed as though he were being lifted by some fantastic bird of prey, or rather an enormous black bat.

Ten minutes after the kite had left the ground a slight shock indicated that its ascensional movement was about to cease. Arrived at the end of the string, it began to rise, not without a few jerks.

Briant coolly caught hold of the string run through the ball, and began his observations. Holding on with one hand to the suspension-cord, with the other he held his night-glasses.

Below him all was darkness. The lake, the forests, the cliff, formed a confused mass, in which he could distinguish no detail; but he could trace the whole coastline of the island.

In the west, and the north, and the south, the sky was too misty for him to see anything, but in the east, where a little corner of the firmament was temporarily free from clouds, a few stars appeared.

And exactly in that direction a bright light, reflecting on to the lower banks of cloud attracted his attention.

"It is the light of a fire!" he exclaimed. "Has Walston camped over there? No! The fire is much too far away, and it is certainly beyond the island! Can it be a volcano in eruption? Is there land over there?"

It occurred to Briant's memory that on his first expedition to Deception bay a whitish patch had appeared on the field of his glasses. "Yes," said he, "and it was over there! Can it have been a glacier? If so, land ought to be near us in the east."

Briant brought his glasses to bear on the light which the darkness made more apparent. There could be no doubt that it was a volcano, and that a glacier was close by which belonged either to a continent or archipelago not more than 30 miles away.

As Briant settled this in his mind he was conscious of another light, much nearer to him—five or six miles away only—and consequently on the island among the trees.

"It is in the forest this time," he said, "and on the skirts of it, on the seashore!"

His heart beat so violently, and his hand trembled so, that he could not hold his glasses so as to catch it in their held!

So Walston and his men were camped near Bear Rock harbor. The mutineers of the Severn had not abandoned Charman island. The colonists were exposed to their attack, and were no longer in safety at French Den.

judged it useless to prolong his aerial exploration. He prepared to descend. The wind was increasing. Already the oscillations of the car had become greater, and the car swung in a way that would make landing difficult.

Making sure that the signal-cord was clear, he let go the ball, which in a few seconds slipped down into Garnett's hand.

Immediately the winch began to wind in the string.

But as the kite went down Briant kept watching the lights he had seen. Again he saw that of the eruption and that of the camp fire.

The winch spun round as hard as the boys could drive it, but to get in 1200 feet of cord took much time. The wind kept rising, and three quarters of an hour after the signal had been given it was blowing quite fresh.

The kite at the time was more than 100 feet above the lake.

Suddenly there was a violent jerk. Wilcox, Donagan, Service, Webb and Baxter found resistance gone, and fell forward on to the ground.

The string had broken!

And amid the cries of terror there were shouts of:

"Briant! Briant!"

A few minutes afterwards Briant gained the beach and shouted loudly.

"Brother!" said Jack, who was the first to rush to his arms.

"Walston is there!"

Those were Briant's first words as soon as his comrades had gathered round him.

CHAPTER XV.

A DARING ESCAPE.

Three days after a more significant event happened to increase their apprehensions, and show that their safety was more endangered than ever.

On the 24th, about 9 o'clock in the morning, Briant and Gordon had gone out across the Zealand river to see if they could throw up a sort of entrenchment across the narrow foot-path which ran between the lake and the marsh. Behind this entrenchment it would be easy for Donagan, the best shot of the party, to lie in ambush if Walston's advance was discovered in time.

They had gone about 300 yards from the river when Briant stepped on something which broke under his foot. He took no notice of this, thinking it was one of the thousands of shells rolled up by the spring tides when they covered the plain, but Gordon, who was walking behind him, stopped and exclaimed:

"Look here, Briant, look here!"

"What's the matter?"

Gordon stooped and picked up what had been broken.

"Look!" he said.

"That is not a shell," said Briant. "That is—"

"A pipe!"

Gordon held in his hand a black pipe with the stem broken off at the bowl.

"As none of us smoke," said he, "this pipe must have been lost—"

"By one of the men unless it belonged to the Frenchman who was here before us?"

No! The pipe had not belonged to Boudoin, who had died 20 years before. It had been dropped very recently, as the fragments of tobacco inside it clearly showed. A few days before, perhaps a few hours before, one of Walston's companions, or perhaps Walston himself, had been on this side of the lake.

Gordon and Briant returned at once to the cave. There Kate stated that she had seen this very pipe in Walston's possession.

Under such alarming circumstances Briant agreed with his comrades that a more active watch should be arranged. During the day an outpost was permanently stationed on Auckland hill, so as to command the approaches from all sides. During the night two of the bigger boys mounted guard at the entrance to the cave.

That afternoon the boys were startled by a shout in the distance. Donagan stepped towards the door of the hall and Moko towards the door of the store room. They listened at the threshold, but not a sound did they hear outside, although Fan began to bark loudly. This was most unfortunate, and Gordon tried in vain to keep her quiet.

Suddenly there was the report of a gun, which must have been fired within 200 yards of French Den.

Donagan, Baxter, Wilcox and Cross picked up their rifles and stood ready at the doors to open fire on whoever approached. The others had begun to heap up the stones and form the barricade, when a voice outside was heard shouting:

"Help! Help!"

"There was a man in danger of his life, undoubtedly."

"Help!" repeated the voice, this time but a few yards away.

Kate was listening near the door.

"It is he!" she said.

"He!" exclaimed Briant.

"Open the door! Open the door!" said Kate. The door was opened, and a man dripping with water rushed in amongst them. It was Evans of the Severn.

At the unexpected appearance of Evans the boys for a moment stood motionless. Then with a common impulse they rushed towards him, as though he had been sent to deliver them.

He was a man just under 30, broad-shouldered and athletic, with a firm and resolute step, a keen eye, an open brow, an intelligent, sympathetic face, half hidden by the curly hair and beard that had remained uncut since the shipwreck.

"Kate!" he exclaimed. "What! Kate alive?"

And he seized her hands, as though to make sure she was really living.

"Yes! as much alive as you are, Evans. Heaven saved me as you have been saved, and sent to the help of these children."

Briant at once took him into the store-room, where Gordon soon fitted him with a suit of clothes, and Moko meanwhile put on the table some cold venison, some biscuit, and some freshly-made tea.

[CONTINUED TOMORROW.]

ADRIFF IN THE PACIFIC;

—OR—

The Strange Adventures of a Schoolboy Crew.

By JULES VERNE.

CHAPTER XV.—CONTINUED

A quarter of an hour afterwards Evans was seated before the table, relating what had happened since he reached the island.

"A few moments before the boat struck the beach," said he, "five of the men—myself among them—jumped out on the reef. None of us were seriously hurt. But it was not an easy thing in the darkness to get through the furious surf. However, we at last got through safely. Two of us were missing—Forbes and Pike—taken on in the boat, and perhaps dashed out of her. As to Kate, I thought she had been lost in the sea, and I never expected to see her again. When we reached the beach, it took us some time to find the boat. She had come ashore about 7, and it was nearly 12 before we found her. We had first gone along the coast of—"

"Seven Shores," said Briant. "That is the name some of us gave it when they discovered the boat, before even Kate had told us about the wreck."

"Before?" said Evans, looking surprised.

"Yes, Mr. Evans," said Donagan. "We were on the spot the very night of the wreck, while your two companions were lying on the sand. But when the daylight came and went to bury them, we found they had disappeared."

"I see how that was," said Evans. "Forbes and Pike, whom we thought drowned, had been thrown out some distance from the boat, and there Walston and the others found them and brought them back to consciousness. Happily for them—unfortunately for us—the boat lockers had not been smashed nor touched by the sea. The stores, weapons, five guns and what remained of the provisions thrown in hurriedly when the Severn was afloat were taken out of the boat, which we thought would be destroyed next tide. And that done, we left the place and journeyed eastwards along the coast. Soon one of the men—Rock, I think—remarked that we had not found Kate, and Walston replied, 'She has been carried away by the tide, and a good riddance, too!' And this made me think that if they were glad to get rid of Kate, now she could be of no use to them, so would it be with me when I was of no use."

"An hour after we left the boat we reached a clump of trees, where we camped. Next day and for many days we returned to the place where the boat had been wrecked, and we tried to repair her. But we had no tools except an axe, and with that it was impossible to replace the damaged strakes and make her seaworthy even for a little while. Besides, the place was most unsuitable for work of the sort. So we started to find another encampment in a less arid region, where we might boot enough to feed us, and at the same time be near a river that would supply us with fresh water. After walking a dozen miles along the coast we reached a small river.

There was no difficulty in finding a camping place there. And if we could have got the boat round we could, perhaps, in time have repaired her sufficiently. So off we went, and although she was more than half full of water, we managed to tow her round to the harbor, where she is now safe.

"The boat is at Bear Rock?" asked Briant.

"Yes, my boy, and I do not think it would be impossible to repair her if we only had the tools."

"But we have the tools, Mr. Evans," said Donagan interrupting.

"So Walston supposed that when he accidentally discovered that the island was inhabited and who were its inhabitants."

"How did he do that?" asked Gordon.

"Eight days ago," said Evans, "Walston and all of us—for I was never left alone—were out exploring in the forest. After three or four hours' walking up the bank of East river we reached the shore of a large lake, out of which the stream flowed. And then judge of our surprise when we found a curious apparatus washed up on to the beach. It was a framework of canes, on which there was stretched—"

"Our kite!" exclaimed Donagan.

"Our kite," added Briant, "which fell into the lake."

"Oh, it was a kite, was it?" said Evans. "We did not think of that; and the machine bothered us a good deal I can tell you. Anyhow, we saw it could not have made itself. Then it must have been made on the island. Then the island was inhabited! By whom? That was what Walston wanted to know. As for me, from that very day I resolved to escape. Who were the inhabitants of this island? Even if they were savages they could not be worse than the murderers of the Severn."

"From that moment, however, I was guarded night and day."

"You will understand, then, that Walston had only one thing to trouble about after that, and that was to discover who were the inhabitants of this island. If they were natives could he enter into communication with them? If they had been shipwrecked, had they got the tools we wanted? In that case he would not refuse their help in repairing the boat. So we began to find out—very cautiously, I need hardly say. We advanced slowly, carefully exploring the right bank of the lake till we reached the south corner. But not a human being did we see, not a sound did we hear."

"That," said Briant, "was because we kept to French Den and orders were given not to fire a gun under any circumstances."

"Nevertheless, we found you out," said Evans, "and how could it be otherwise? It was on the night of the 23d that one of the men arrived in sight of French Den by the south shore of the lake. Ill luck had it that a beam of light for a moment shot out on to the cliff—probably from your lantern when the door opened for a moment. Next morning Walston came away to reconnoitre, and during a part of the evening he remained hidden among the high grass a few yards from the stream—"

"We knew that," said Briant.

"How?"

"Gordon and I found the fragments of a pipe that Kate recognized as being Walston's."

"Right!" said the sailor; "Walston lost it while he was away, and he made a deal of fuss about it when he came back. So you see we knew of the existence of your little colony, and while he lay in the grass he saw you running about on the opposite side of the stream—and he came back to the camp and told his companions what he had seen. A conversation between him and Briant I happened to overhear, and it told me what was in preparation."

"Well about 12 hours ago I took advantage of the absence of Walston and the others who had left me in charge of Forbes and Rock, and I got away. To throw the scoundrels off the scent, or rather to have a good start, I went on some distance in advance. It was about 10 o'clock when I started in earnest. They found me out almost immediately, and gave chase. They had their guns, I had only my sailor's knife. The chase lasted all day. By cutting off on the sly through the woods I struck the left bank of the lake, so that I had to get around to the south end, for I knew from what I had overheard that you had your camp on the bank of a stream flowing westward. I rounded the lake and got up along this shore but I found Forbes and Brock at my heels all the time. The storm came on. It made my flight more difficult, for by the light of the lightning my pursuers could see me. At length I reached the stream. If I could put it between myself and the villains I might consider myself safe. So I ran, and I was just turning in when a flash illuminated the sky. Immediately there was the report of a gun—a bullet grazed my shoulder. I jumped into the river, and in a few strokes I was on this side hidden among the bushes, while Brock and Forbes were on the other, shouting to each other. 'Did you hit him?' 'I believe you!' 'Then he is at the bottom!' 'Rather, and dead as dead!' 'And a good job, too!' And off they went. And it is a good job. They'll see if I am as dead as dead before long. I soon got out of the bushes and came up towards the angle of the cliff. I heard the dogs bark. I shouted—the door opened—and here I am in your midst to help you clear the scoundrels out of the island."

"Why," said Gordon, "should we have to do with such rascals instead of the honest folks we should be so glad to have come and help us? Our colony is not too strong! Henceforth a fight is in store for us, a fight for our very lives, and none can say what will be the issue."

"Heaven has protected you till now, my

children," said Kate, "and will not abandon you at last. Here has this man been sent." "You can depend on me, my boys, and I depend on you, and I promise you we will not make a bad defence of it."

"But," said Gordon, "is it not possible to avoid fighting altogether if Walston would agree to leave the island?"

"What do you mean, Gordon?" asked Briant.

"I mean that he and his friends would have gone already if they had been able to use their boat! Is that not so, Mr. Evans?"

"Certainly!"

"Well, then, if you were to enter into negotiations with them, and give them the tools they want, would they accept the offer? I know it may be repugnant to you to enter into negotiations with murderers, but to get rid of them, to avoid an attack that may cause much bloodshed, it might be worth our while. What do you say, Mr. Evans?"

"It is not only tools they want, but ammunition! That they have enough to attack you is true; but to go away to other lands they would want much more. They will ask for it! They will demand it! Will you give it to them?"

"Certainly not," said Gordon.

"Do you trust to the boat to take us off the island?" asked Gordon.

"I do."

"How," asked Baxter, "can that boat be made to carry us several hundred miles?"

"Several hundred miles!" exclaimed Evans. "Only thirty, you mean!"

"Is it not the sea, then, that extends all round this island?" asked Donagan.

"On the west, yes," said Evans, "but on the south, north and east, only channels that you can cross in a few hours."

"Then we were not wrong in thinking land was near us," asked Gordon.

"No," said Evans. "And there is a good-sized land to the east."

"Yes!" said Briant. "In the east where I saw the white patch, and the glare—"

"A white patch did you say? That was a glacier. And a glare? That was the flame of a volcano, whose position is given on the maps. You know where you are, don't you?"

"On one of the isolated islands of the Pacific ocean," said Gordon.

"On an island? Yes! Isolated? No! It belongs to one of the numerous archipelagos off the coast of South America! And as you have given names to the capes and bays and streams, I suppose you have named the island. What do you call it?"

"Charman island, after the name of our school," said Donagan.

"Charman island!" replied Evans. "Well, then, it has two names, for it is already called Hanover island!"

CHAPTER XVI.

PREPARING FOR AN ATTACK.

The first thing Evans did was to take stock of the force and material under his command. Store-room and hall seemed to him to be well adapted for defence.

"You consider their desperate scoundrels?" asked Gordon.

"Yes," said Evans, "very desperate."

"Except one, who is not quite as bad as the rest," said Kate. "That's Forbes, who saved my life."

Next morning passed without adventure. Evans, with Donagan and Baxter, went out for half a mile, as far as Trap woods, keeping well under the trees at the base of Auckland hill. They saw nothing unusual, and Ian, who accompanied them, gave no alarm.

But in the evening, just before sunset, Webb and Cross came in hurriedly from their post on the hill and announced the approach of two men along the south side of the lake, on the other side of Zealand river.

Kate and Evans, not wishing to be observed, at once hurried into the storeroom, and looking through the embrasures, soon caught sight of Rock and Forbes.

"Evidently," said the sailor, "they are going to try treachery. They are coming as shipwrecked sailors—"

"What shall we do?" asked Briant.

"Take them in!" said Evans.

"Welcome those scoundrels!" said Briant.

"I never can."

"I can," said Gordon.

"Well, then, do so!" said Evans. "But don't let them have a suspicion of our presence. Kate and I will appear when it is time."

Evans and Kate retired into the cupboard in the passage between the rooms.

A few minutes afterwards Gordon, Briant, Donagan and Baxter ran out on to the river bank. The two men, now close to the other side, feigned immense surprise when they saw them. And Gordon looked even more surprised.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"We have been wrecked on the south of this island in the boat of the ship Severn."

"Are you English?"

"No, Americans."

"Where are your companions?"

"All lost. We alone escaped the wreck, and we are almost done up. Who are you, please?"

"The colonists of Charman island."

"Perhaps, the colonists, then, will take pity on us and help us, for we have got nothing."

"All who are wrecked have a right to be helped," said Gordon. "You are welcome."

At a sign from him Moko entered the vault, which was moored close by, and in a few strokes of the oar the two men were across the river.

They were conducted to the cove, but as soon as Rock lifted the bar and opened the door a hand was placed upon his shoulder. He turned and recognized Evans.

"Evans!" he gasped. "Evans here!"

"Come along, boys!" shouted Evans.

Instantly Briant and his companions rushed in. Forbes, seized by the four strongest, was thrown down and secured.

Rock, with a rapid movement, shook himself clear of Evans, wounding him slightly with his knife and fled through the open door. He had gone 10 yards before there was a shot. It was Evans who had fired. To all appearance the fugitive was unhurt, as no cry was heard.

"Missed him!" said the sailor. "But there's the other. We can settle one of them."

And cutlass in hand he stepped up to Forbes.

"Mercy! Mercy!" said the wretch, whom the boys were holding down on the ground.

"Yes! Mercy, Evans!" said Kate, throwing herself in front of him. "Spare him, for he spared me."

"Be it so," said Evans. "I consent Kate—at least for the present."

And Forbes was bound and placed in one of the cavities in the passage.

After dinner Evans told the boys of his intention to go out towards Trap woods, with a view of ascertaining if the pirates were still near French Den. The proposition having been accepted without discussion, arrangements were made to run the minimum of danger.

It was decided, therefore, that while Iverson, Jenkins and Dole remained in the cave with Kate, Moko and Jack in charge of Baxter, the bigger boys Briant, Gordon, Donagan, Cross, Service, Webb, Wilcox and Garnett should accompany Evans.

It was 2 o'clock when Evans and his troop set out. Baxter, Jack, Moko, Kate and the little ones immediately returned to the cave and shut, but did not barricade, both doors, in case the scouting party had to run for shelter. There was nothing to fear on the southern side, or even on the western. After Forbes' answer that they had come down to the shore of the lake, and knew nothing of the western district, Evans had no fear of an attack in the rear.

Evans went in front.

Ian, whom Gordon did his utmost to hold back, seemed to be searching for something, cocked her ears, sniffed with her nose on the ground, and had apparently struck a trail.

"Wait!" said Briant.

"Yes," said Gordon. "It is a man's trail. I look at the dog's behavior."

"Step along under the bushes," said Evans, "and you, Donagan, who are such a good shot, if you get one of the ruffians within range, be sure you don't miss him."

A few seconds afterwards they had reached the first group of trees. There, just on the skirt of the forest, were the traces of a recent camp—twigs half burnt, ashes still warm.

"Here's where Walston passed last night," said Gordon.

"And perhaps he was here a short time ago. I think we had better get back," said Evans.

He had hardly finished when there was the report of a gun to the right of him. A bullet pinged past Briant's ear and lodged in a tree. Almost simultaneously there was another report, followed by a cry of agony, not 50 yards away, and something fell heavily among the bushes.

(CONCLUDED TOMORROW.)

ADRIFT IN THE PACIFIC;

--OR--

The Strange Adventures of a Schoolboy Crew.

By JULES VERNE.

CHAPTER XVII.

DELIVERED FROM MUTINEERS--HOMP.
 Donagan had fired as soon as he saw the sloop from the first gun.

The dog rushed to the front and Donagan in his excitement dashed after him. "Forward!" shouted Evans. "We mustn't leave him to fight them single-handed!"

A moment afterwards they had rejoined Donagan, and stood around a corpse in the grass. "That's Pike," said Evans. "The scoundrel is stone dead. He's one to you, Donagan!"

"The others cannot be far off," said Cross. "No, my boy, but keep under cover! Down with you! Down!"

There was a third bang, this time from the left. Nervo, who had not ducked quickly enough, had his forehead grazed by the bullet.

"You are hit!" said Gordon, rushing towards him. "It's nothing! It's nothing!" said Service. "It is only a scratch!"

It was imperative for the boys to keep together. Pike lay dead between them and Walston and the four men, who were probably posted behind the trees. And Evans and the others, crouching in the bushes, formed a compact group ready for an attack from any side.

Suddenly Garnett exclaimed: "Where is Briant?" "I don't see him," said Wilcox. Briant had disappeared. Fan began to bark loudly, and it seemed as though the boy was struggling with one of the pirates. "Briant! Briant!" shouted Donagan.

And away the boys all ran after the dog. Evans could not keep them back. They ran from tree to tree. "Look out, Mr. Evans!" shouted Cross, throwing himself flat on the ground.

Instinctively the sailor stooped, as a bullet plunged past a few inches above him. Blazing instantly, he saw one of Walston's men running off. It was Rock, whom he had missed the night before.

"There's one for you, Rock!" he shouted. Quickly he aimed and fired, and Rock disappeared as suddenly as if the earth had opened under his feet.

"Missed again, I suppose!" said Evans. All this took place in a few seconds. Immediately afterwards Donagan's voice was heard.

"Hold on, Briant! Hold on!" he shouted. Evans and the others dashed towards him, and found Briant struggling with Cope, who had thrown him down and was going to run him through with his cutlass, when Donagan jumped to the rescue just in time to turn the thrust into his own body and fall without uttering a sound.

Cope, seeing Evans, Garnett and Webb attempting to cut off his retreat, fled away to the north, receiving a straggling volley as he did so. He disappeared, and Fan returned without having reached him.

Briant rose from the ground and lifted Donagan's head, and tried to revive him. Evans and the others came round, after quickly loading their guns.

Donagan had been stabbed full in the chest, and, seemingly, mortally. Evans stooped, opened the boy's waistcoat, and tore open the shirt, which was wet with blood. There was a thin bleeding gash near the fourth rib, on the left side. Had the cutlass touched the heart? No, for Donagan still breathed. But it was to be feared that the lung had been pierced, for the respiration was extremely feeble.

"We must take him back to the cave," said Gordon. "That's the only place where we can look after him."

"And save him!" said Briant. "Oh, my poor friend! It was for me that you risked your life!"

There seemed to be an end to the battle, and Evans gave orders for Donagan to be taken at once to French Den. Apparently Walston had seen things going badly with him, and had retreated into the woods. But, strange to say--and this made Evans anxious--neither Walston, nor Brandt, nor Cook had been seen, and these were the most formidable of the gang.

Donagan's state required that he should be carried without being jolted, and Service and Wilcox made a litter of boughs, on which they laid him, still unconscious. In four of his companions gently bore it. The others walked on either side with their loads, and revolvers in hand.

They made their way for Auckland Hill. After that than following the path along the lake. Nothing happened to interfere with them, sometimes Donagan would give such a painful sigh that Gordon would signal a halt, in order to listen to the respiration, and a moment afterwards they would resume their progress.

Three-quarters of an hour had gone, and they were close to French Den, although the door was hidden by a shoulder of the cliff.

Suddenly there was a shout from Zealand river, and Fan sprang off towards it. French Den was being attacked by Walston and his two companions. While Rock, Cope and Pike lay in ambush in Trap Woods, Walston, Brandt and Cook had climbed Auckland Hill, up the dry bed of the torrent that fed Dike Creek. Rapidly running along the ridge, they had descended the gorge opening on to the river, near the store-room, and then, with a rush, had forced the door, which had not been barricaded.

Would Evans come up soon enough? His plan was formed instantly. Leaving Cross, Webb and Garnett to guard Donagan, who could not be left alone, he, with Gordon, Briant, Service and Wilcox, took the shortest cut to the cave.

In a few strides they could see the terrace, where a sight met their eyes that almost drove them to despair.

Walston was coming out of the door, dragging one of the boys towards the stream.

It was Jack. And in vain Kate strove to tear him from Walston.

A moment afterwards Brandt appeared, clutching young Costar and bearing him off in the same direction.

Baxter threw himself upon Brandt, who with a blow knocked him to the ground. The other boys were not to be seen. Had they been already dealt with in the cave?

Walston and Brandt ran quickly towards the river. And there was Cook waiting for them with the yawl, that he had dragged out of the store-room.

Once on the left bank, they would be out of reach. Before their retreat could be cut off they would have got back to Bear Rock, with Jack and Costar as hostages in their hands.

Evans, Briant, Gordon, Cross and Wilcox raced up, hoping to reach the bank before Walston's men crossed the river. To fire at such a distance was to risk hitting the prisoners.

But Fan was quicker than the boys, bounding on in front, she sprang full at Brandt's throat, and gripped it like a vice. To free himself from the dog Brandt had to trip the boy, while Walston got Jack almost to the water's edge.

Suddenly a man rushed from the hall. It was Forbes.

Would he join his old companions now he had forced the door of his prison? Walston thought so.

"Here, Forbes! Here!" he shouted, loudly. Evans stopped and was going to fire, when he saw Forbes dash on to Walston, who, taken by surprise, had to drop Jack and defend himself, and instantly thrust his cutlass into his antagonist.

Forbes fell at his feet. Walston snatched at Jack, who drew his revolver and shot him point blank in the throat. Brandt reached the boat, where Walston had but just strength enough to follow, and Cook pushed the boat off, when there was a loud report and a volley of shot rattled into the water all around him.

It was the cannon, which Moko had fired through the embrasure. Walston and Cook fell.

With the exception of the two scoundrels who had disappeared in Trap Woods, Charman Island was delivered from the mutineers.

After Moko's shower of grave, Briant had returned to the litter. A few minutes afterwards, Donagan had been laid in the hall without having recovered consciousness, while Forbes was laid on the floor of the store-room. All through the night Kate, Gordon, Briant, Wilcox, and Mr. Evans watched over the wounded.

That Donagan had been seriously hurt was only too evident. But as he respired regularly, it looked as though the lung had not been touched. To dress the wound, Kate had used certain leaves such as are used in Western America, which she found growing on some of the bushes at the river side. They were leaves of the alder tree, which, rubbed and made into compresses, are very efficacious for checking internal suppuration, in which the chief danger consisted. But with Forbes it was different. Walston had wounded him in the stomach. He knew the thrust was mortal and when he returned to consciousness, and saw Kate bandaging over him, he had murmured--

"Thank you, Kate! Thanks! It is useless! I am done for!"

And the tears welled into his eyes. "Hope, Forbes!" said Evans. "You have atoned for your crimes. You will live."

Not the unfortunate man was to die. In spite of all that was done he grew hourly worse, and about 4 o'clock his spirit passed away.

But the presence of Rock and Cope was dangerous; security could not be complete until they were unable to do injury. And Evans decided to have done with them before starting for Bear Rock. With Gordon, Briant, Baxter and Wilcox he went off that very day, fully armed and accompanied by Fan, to whose instinct they trusted to recover the trail.

volley in his back. Pike was found where he had been shot at the beginning of the battle, and the mystery of Rock's disappearance was soon solved by his being found in one of Wilcox's traps, which served for the grave of all three mutineers.

The yawl had been recovered in one of the backwaters of the river. The men had fallen out of her and been carried away out to sea, and she had been almost uninjured by Moko's volley which had passed just over her. She was brought back to French Den and loaded with tools and provisions, and with a favorable wind she was off on the 6th of December in Evans' charge.

She was soon across the lake, and before half past eleven Briant pointed out the creek by which the river entered. Running with the tide they were soon down the river. And on the sand near the Bear Rock they found the Severn boat high and dry.

Next morning the boat was got afloat and the yawl went ahead to tow her along. Hard work it was, and when the ebb made itself felt the work was harder, and it was not till five o'clock that evening that they got her into the lake.

Evans did not think it prudent to cross that night, and so he pitched his camp on the shore under a big beech tree, where all slept soundly till the morning.

"Then 'Aboard'" was the word, and the sail was set, and with the heavy boat behind her away went the yawl for French Den. The boat was full of water to the thwart, and if she had sunk would have dragged down the yawl with her, so that Evans stood ready all the time to cut the tow-rope. But, fortunately, all went well, and at 5 o'clock the boat and her tug were in Zealand river, moored off the pier.

While the boys had been away, Donagan had become a little better, and was now able to return the pressure of the hand that Briant gave him. His breathing came more easily, and evidently the lung was safe. Although he was kept on a low diet, his strength began to return, and under Kate's leaf compresses, which she renewed every two hours, the wound began to close. Probably his convalescence would take some time, but he had sufficient vitality to make his recovery almost a certainty.

The work of repairing the boat was begun in earnest next morning. It took 30 days, and was not over before the 8th of January. Donagan's convalescence had now sufficiently advanced for him to be taken out of doors, although he was still very weak. The fresh air and more substantial food visibly improved him, and his comrades had no intention of going away before he was able to endure a voyage of some weeks without fear of a relapse.

On the 3d of February all the cargo was in its place, and it only remained to fix the date of sailing, if Donagan was strong enough to stand the voyage. The brave fellow answered for himself that he was.

The departure was fixed for the 5th of February.

The evening before Gordon set at liberty all the domestic animals.

In the morning the boys embarked in the sloop, with the yawl in tow. Donagan was laid aft near Evans, who took charge of the tiller. In the bow Briant and Moko looked after the sails, although they trusted to the current to take them down the river.

The others, including Fan, were where fancy led them.

The moorings were cast off and the oars struck the water.

Three cheers saluted the hospitable cave which for so many months had afforded the boys a shelter, and it was not without emotion that they saw Auckland hill disappear behind the trees.

It was very late when the boat reached the river mouth; and as the darkness made the steering difficult through the reefs, Evans, cautious seaman as he was, thought he had better wait till daybreak.

The night was quiet enough. The wind dropped, and when the seabirds had got back to their holes in the rocks absolute silence reigned in Schooner Bay.

In the morning the land breeze blew, and the sea was calm to the very extreme point of South Moors. At daybreak Evans made sail, and the sloop headed out of Zealand river.

On one side the long Land of Desolation developed its flat and arid shore, showing no trace of the rich vegetation of Charman Island. On the other was the capriciously indented Crocker peninsula, along which Evans intended to coast so as to get round Cape Froward and run up the coast of the Brunswick peninsula to Punta Arena.

It was not necessary for him to go so far. In the morning of the 13th, Service, who was on the lookout in the bow, reported: "Smoke on the starboard bow."

"The smoke of a fisherman's fire?" asked Gordon.

"No," said Evans, "that is a steamer's smoke."

In that direction the land was too far off for the smoke from a camp to be seen. Immediately Briant climbed to the mast-head.

"A ship! a ship!" he shouted.

The ship was soon in sight from the deck. It was a steamer of about 800 tons, approaching at the rate of 11 knots an hour.

There were cheers from the sloop, and some of the guns were fired. She was sighted, and 10 minutes afterwards she was alongside the Grafton, bound to Australia.

Capt. Long of the Grafton was immediately told of the wreck of the schooner, the news of which had been very widely spread in England and America, and at once took the sloop's passengers on board. He even offered to take them on direct to Auckland, which would not be very far out of his road, for the Grafton's destination was Melbourne, in the south of Australia.

The voyage was a quick one, and on the 25th of February the steamer cast anchor in Auckland harbor, and our heroes were soon ashore.

Within a few days, two years had elapsed since the 15 pupils from Charman's School had been cast adrift in the Pacific.

We need not dwell on the joy of the families to whom the boys came back. Of all who had been carried away that long 1800 leagues from New Zealand, not one was missing. When the news spread that the Grafton was in the harbor with the boys on board, the whole town turned out to welcome them.

Kate and Evans had, of course, a grand reception. A public subscription was started, and a ship was bought and named the Charman, of which Evans was to be owner and captain, on condition that Auckland remained her headquarters. And when she returned from her voyages, Evans always met with the warmest of welcome from his friends, the boys.

[THE END.]