

# Jules Verne

## The Mysterious Island

### PART I

### SHIPWRECKED IN THE AIR

#### CHAPTER I

THE HURRICANE OF 1865-CRIES IN THE AIR-A  
BALLOON CAUGHT BY A WATERSPOUT-ONLY THE  
SEA IN SIGHT-FIVE PASSENGERS-WHAT TOOK  
PLACE IN THE BASKET-LAND AHEAD! — THE END.

“Are we going up again?”

“No. On the contrary; we are going down!”

“Worse than that, Mr. Smith, we are falling!”

“For God’s sake throw over all the ballast!”

“The last sack is empty!”

“And the balloon rises again?”

“No!”

“I hear the splashing waves!”

“The sea is under us!”

“It is not five hundred feet off!”

Then a strong, clear voice shouted:-

“Overboard with all we have, and God help us!”

Such were the words which rang through the air

above the vast wilderness of the Pacific, towards 4 o'clock in the afternoon of the 23d of March, 1865:-

Doubtless, no one has forgotten that terrible northeast gale which vented its fury during the equinox of that year. It was a hurricane lasting without intermission from the 18th to the 26th of March. Covering a space of 1,800 miles, drawn obliquely to the equator, between the 35° of north latitude and 40° south, it occasioned immense destruction both in America and Europe and Asia. Cities in ruins, forests uprooted, shores devastated by the mountains of water hurled upon them, hundreds of shipwrecks, large tracts of territory desolated by the waterspouts which destroyed everything in their path, thousands of persons crushed to the earth or engulfed in the sea; such were the witnesses to its fury left behind by this terrible hurricane. It surpassed in disaster those storms which ravaged Havana and Guadeloupe in 1810 and 1825.

While these catastrophes were taking place upon the land and the sea, a scene not less thrilling was enacting in the disordered heavens.

A balloon, caught in the whirl of a column of air, borne like a ball on the summit of a waterspout, spinning around as in some aerial whirlpool, rushed through space with a velocity of ninety miles an hour. Below the balloon, dimly visible through the dense vapor, mingled with spray, which spread over the ocean, swung a basket containing five persons.

From whence came this aerial traveller, the sport of the awful tempest? Evidently it could not have been launched during the storm, and the storm had been raging five days, its symptoms manifesting themselves on the 18th. It must, therefore, have come from a great distance, as it could not have traversed less than 2,000 miles in twenty-four hours. The passengers, indeed, had been unable to determine the course traversed, as they had nothing with which to calculate their position; and it was a necessary effect, that, though borne along in the midst of this tempest; they were unconscious of its violence. They were whirled and spun about and carried up and down without any sense of motion. Their vision could not penetrate the thick fog massed together under the balloon. Around them everything was obscure. The clouds were so dense that they could not tell the day from the night. No reflection of light, no sound from the habitations of men, no roaring of the ocean had penetrated that profound obscurity in which they were suspended during their passage through the upper air. Only on their rapid descent had they become conscious of the danger threatening them by the waves.

Meanwhile the balloon, disencumbered of the heavy articles, such as munitions, arms, and provisions, had risen to a height of 4,500 feet, and the passengers having discovered that the sea was beneath them, and realizing that the dangers above were less formidable than those below, did not hesitate to throw overboard

everything, no matter how necessary, at the same time endeavoring to lose none of that fluid, the soul of the apparatus, which sustained them above the abyss.

The night passed in the midst of dangers that would have proved fatal to souls less courageous; and with the coming of day the hurricane showed signs of abatement. At dawn, the emptied clouds rose high into the heavens; and, in a few hours more, the whirlwind had spent its force. The wind, from a hurricane, had subsided into what sailors would call a "three reef breeze."

Toward eleven o'clock, the lower strata of the air had lightened visibly. The atmosphere exhaled that humidity which is noticeable after the passage of great meteors. It did not seem as if the storm had moved westward, but rather as if it was ended. Perhaps it had flowed off in electric sheets after the whirlwind had spent itself, as is the case with the typhoon in the Indian Ocean.

Now, however, it became evident that the balloon was again sinking slowly but surely. It seemed also as if it was gradually collapsing, and that its envelope was lengthening and passing from a spherical into an oval form. It held 50,000 cubic feet of gas, and therefore, whether soaring to a great height or moving along horizontally, it was able to maintain itself for a long time in the air. In this emergency the voyagers threw overboard the remaining articles which weighed down

the balloon, the few provisions they had kept, and everything they had in their pockets, while one of the party hoisted himself into the ring to which was fastened the cords of the net, and endeavored to closely tie the lower end of the balloon. But it was evident that the gas was escaping, and that the voyagers could no longer keep the balloon afloat.

They were lost!

There was no land, not even an island, visible beneath them. The wide expanse of ocean offered no point of rest, nothing upon which they could cast anchor. It was a vast sea on which the waves were surging with incomparable violence. It was the limitless ocean, limitless even to them from their commanding height. It was a liquid plain, lashed and beaten by the hurricane, until it seemed like a circuit of tossing billows, covered with a net-work of foam. Not even a ship was in sight.

In order, therefore, to save themselves from being swallowed up by the waves it was necessary to arrest this downward movement, let it cost what it might. And it was evidently to the accomplishment of this that the party were directing their efforts. But in spite of all they could do the balloon continued to descend, though at the same time moving rapidly along with the wind toward the southwest.

It was a terrible situation, this, of these unfortunate men. No longer masters of the balloon,

their efforts availed them nothing. The envelope collapsed more and more, and the gas continued to escape. Faster and faster they fell, until at 1 o'clock they were not more than 600 feet above the sea. The gas poured out of a rent in the silk. By lightening the basket of everything the party had been able to continue their suspension in the air for several hours, but now the inevitable catastrophe could only be delayed, and unless some land appeared before nightfall, voyagers, balloon, and basket must disappear beneath the waves.

It was evident that these men were strong and able to face death. Not a murmur escaped their lips. They were determined to struggle to the last second to retard their fall, and they tried their last expedient. The basket, constructed of willow osiers, could not float, and they had no means of supporting it on the surface of the water. It was 2 o'clock, and the balloon was only 400 feet above the waves.

Then a voice was heard-the voice of a man whose heart knew no fear-responded to by others not less strong:-

“Everything is thrown out?”

“No, we yet have 10,000 francs in gold.”

A heavy bag fell into the sea.

“Does the balloon rise?”

“A little, but it will soon fall again.”

“Is there nothing else we can get rid of?”

“Not a thing.”

“Yes there is; there’s the basket!”

“Catch hold of the net then, and let it go.”

The cords which attached the basket to the hoop were cut, and the balloon, as the former fell into the sea, rose again 2,000 feet. This was, indeed, the last means of lightening the apparatus. The five passengers had clambered into the net around the hoop, and, clinging to its meshes, looked into the abyss below.

Every one knows the statical sensibility of a balloon. It is only necessary to relieve it of the lightest object in order to have it rise. The apparatus floating in air acts like a mathematical balance. One can readily understand, then, that when disencumbered of every weight relatively great, its upward movement will be sudden and considerable. It was thus in the present instance. But after remaining poised for a moment at its height, the balloon began to descend. It was impossible to repair the rent, through which the gas was rushing, and the men having done everything they could do, must look to God for succor.

At 4 o’clock, when the balloon was only 500 feet above the sea, the loud barking of a dog, holding itself crouched beside its master in the meshes of the net, was heard.

“Top has seen something!” cried one, and immediately afterwards another shouted:-

“Land! Land!”

The balloon, which the wind had continued to

carry towards the southwest, had since dawn passed over a distance of several hundred miles, and a high land began to be distinguishable in that direction. But it was still thirty miles to leeward, and even supposing they did not drift, it would take a full hour to reach it. An hour! Before that time could pass, would not the balloon be emptied of what gas remained? This was the momentous question.

The party distinctly saw that solid point which they must reach at all hazards. They did not know whether it was an island or a continent, as they were uninformed as to what part of the world the tempest had hurried them. But they knew that this land, whether inhabited or desert, must be reached.

At 4 o'clock it was plain that the balloon could not sustain itself much longer. It grazed the surface of the sea, and the crests of the higher waves several times lapped the base of the net, making it heavier; and, like a bird with a shot in its wing, could only half sustain itself.

A half hour later, and the land was scarcely a mile distant. But the balloon, exhausted, flabby, hanging in wrinkles, with only a little gas remaining in its upper portion, unable to sustain the weight of those clinging to the net, was plunging them in the sea, which lashed them with its furious billows. Occasionally the envelope of the balloon would belly out, and the wind taking it would carry it along like a ship. Perhaps by

this means it would reach the shore. But when only two cables' length away four voices joined in a terrible cry. The balloon, though seemingly unable to rise again, after having been struck by a tremendous wave, made a bound into the air, as if it had been suddenly lightened of some of its weight. It rose 1,500 feet, and encountering a sort of eddy in the air, instead of being carried directly to land, it was drawn along in a direction nearly parallel thereto. In a minute or two, however, it reapproached the shore in an oblique direction, and fell upon the sand above the reach of the breakers. The passengers, assisting each other, hastened to disengage themselves from the meshes of the net; and the balloon, relieved of their weight, was caught up by the wind, and, like a wounded bird recovering for an instant, disappeared into space.

The basket had contained five passengers and a dog, and but four had been thrown upon the shore. The fifth one, then, had been washed off by the great wave which had struck the net, and it was owing to this accident that the lightened balloon had been able to rise for the last time before falling upon the land. Scarcely had the four castaways felt the ground beneath their feet than all thinking of the one who was lost, cried:-“Perhaps he is trying to swim ashore. Save him! Let us save him!”

## CHAPTER II

AN EPISODE OF THE REBELLION-THE  
ENGINEER CYRUS SMITH-GIDEON SPILETT-THE  
NEGRO NEB-THE SAILOR PENCROFF-THE YOUTH,  
HERBERT-AN UNEXPECTED  
PROPOSAL-RENDEZVOUS AT 10 O'CLOCK  
P.M.-DEPARTURE IN THE STORM.

They were neither professional aeronauts nor amateurs in aerial navigation whom the storm had thrown upon this coast. They were prisoners of war whose audacity had suggested this extraordinary manner of escape. A hundred times they would have perished, a hundred times their torn balloon would have precipitated them into the abyss, had not Providence preserved them for a strange destiny, and on the 20th of March, after having flown from Richmond, besieged by the troops of General Ulysses Grant, they found themselves 7,000 miles from the Virginia capital, the principal stronghold of the Secessionists during that terrible war. Their aerial voyage had lasted five days.

Let us see by what curious circumstances this escape of prisoners was effected, — an escape which resulted in the catastrophe which we have seen.

This same year, in the month of February, 1865, in one of those surprises by which General Grant, though in vain, endeavored to take Richmond, many of

his officers were captured by the enemy and confined within the city. One of the most distinguished of those taken was a Federal staff officer named Cyrus Smith.

Cyrus Smith was a native of Massachusetts, an engineer by profession, and a scientist of the first order, to whom the Government had given, during the war, the direction of the railways, which played such a great strategic part during the war.

A true Yankee, thin, bony, lean, about forty-five years old, with streaks of grey appearing in his close cut hair and heavy moustache. He had one of those fine classical heads that seem as if made to be copied upon medals; bright eyes, a serious mouth, and the air of a practiced officer. He was one of these engineers who began of his own wish with the pick and shovel, as there are generals who have preferred to rise from the ranks. Thus, while possessing inventive genius, he had acquired manual dexterity, and his muscles showed remarkable firmness. He was as much a man of action as of study; he moved without effort, under the influence of a strong vitality and his sanguine temperament defied all misfortune. Highly educated, practical, "clear-headed," his temperament was superb, and always retaining his presence of mind he combined in the highest degree the three conditions whose union regulates the energy of man: activity of body, strength of will, and determination. His motto might have been that of William of Orange in the XVIIth century—"I can

undertake without hope, and persevere through failure.”

Cyrus Smith was also the personification of courage. He had been in every battle of the war. After having begun under General Grant, with the Illinois volunteers, he had fought at Paducah, at Belmont, at Pittsburg Landing, at the siege of Corinth, at Port Gibson, at the Black River, at Chattanooga, at the Wilderness, upon the Potomac, everywhere with bravery, a soldier worthy of the General who said “I never counted my dead.” And a hundred times Cyrus Smith would have been among the number of those whom the terrible Grant did not count; but in these combats, though he never spared himself, fortune always favored him, until the time he was wounded and taken prisoner at the siege of Richmond.

At the same time with Cyrus Smith another important personage fell into the power of the Southerners. This was no other than the honorable Gideon Spilett, reporter to the New York Herald, who had been detailed to follow the fortunes of the war with the armies of the North.

Gideon Spilett was of the race of astonishing chroniclers, English or American, such as Stanley and the like, who shrink from nothing in their endeavor to obtain exact information and to transmit it to their journal in the quickest manner. The journals of the United States, such as the New York *Herald*, are true powers, and their delegates are persons of importance.

Gideon Spilett belonged in the first rank of these representatives.

A man of great merit; energetic, prompt, and ready; full of ideas, having been all over the world; soldier and artist; vehement in council; resolute in action; thinking nothing of pain, fatigue, or danger when seeking information, first for himself and afterwards for his journal; a master of recondite information of the unpublished, the unknown, the impossible. He was one of those cool observers who write amid the cannon balls, "reporting" under the bullets, and to whom all perils are welcome.

He also had been in all the battles, in the front rank, revolver in one hand and notebook in the other, his pencil never trembling in the midst of a cannonade. He did not tire the wires by incessant telegraphing, like those who speak when they have nothing to say, but each of his messages was short, condensed, clear, and to the purpose. For the rest, he did not lack humor. It was he who, after the affair of Black river, wishing at any price to keep his place at the telegraph wicket in order to announce the result, kept telegraphing for two hours the first chapters of the Bible. It cost the *New York Herald* \$2,000, but the *New York Herald* had the first news.

Gideon Spilett was tall. He was forty years old or more. Sandy-colored whiskers encircled his face. His eye was clear, lively, and quick moving. It was the eye

of a man who was accustomed to take in everything at a glance. Strongly built, he was tempered by all climates as a bar of steel is tempered by cold water. For ten years Gideon Spilett had been connected with the New York *Herald*, which he had enriched with his notes and his drawings, as he wielded the pencil as well as the pen. When captured he was about making a description and a sketch of the battle. The last words written in his note-book were these:—"A Southerner is aiming at me and-." And Gideon Spilett was missed; so, following his invariable custom, he escaped unscratched.

Cyrus Smith and Gideon Spilett, who knew each other only by reputation, were both taken to Richmond. The engineer recovered rapidly from his wound, and it was during his convalescence he met the reporter. The two soon learned to appreciate each-other. Soon their one aim was to rejoin the army of Grant and fight again in the ranks for the preservation of the Union.

The two Americans had decided to avail themselves of any chance; but although free to go and come within the city, Richmond was so closely guarded that an escape might be deemed impossible.

During this time Cyrus Smith was rejoined by a devoted servant. This man was a negro, born upon the engineer's estate, of slave parents, whom Smith, an abolitionist by conviction, had long since freed. The negro, though free, had no desire to leave his master, for whom he would have given his life. He was a man

of thirty years, vigorous, agile, adroit, intelligent, quick, and self-possessed, sometimes ingenuous always smiling, ready and honest. He was named Nebuchadnezzar, but he answered to the nickname of Neb.

When Neb learned that his master had been taken prisoner he left Massachusetts without waiting a moment, arrived before Richmond, and, by a ruse, after having risked his life twenty times, he was able to get within the besieged city. The pleasure of Cyrus Smith on seeing again his servant, and the joy of Neb in finding his master, cannot be expressed. But while he had been able to get into Richmond it was much more difficult to get out, as the watch kept upon the Federal prisoners was very strict. It would require an extraordinary opportunity in order to attempt an escape with any chance of success; and that occasion not only did not present itself, but it was difficult to make. Meanwhile, Grant continued his energetic operations. The victory of Petersburg had been vigorously contested. His forces, reunited to those of Butler, had not as yet obtained any result before Richmond, and nothing indicated an early release to the prisoners. The reporter, whose tiresome captivity gave him no item worthy of note, grew impatient. He had but one idea; to get out of Richmond at any risk. Many times, indeed, he tried the experiment, and was stopped by obstacles insurmountable.

Meanwhile, the siege continued, and as the prisoners were anxious to escape in order to join the army of Grant, so there were certain of the besieged no less desirous to be free to join the army of the Secessionists; and among these was a certain Jonathan Forster, who was a violent Southerner. In truth, the Confederates were no more able to get out of the city than the Federal prisoners, as the army of Grant invested it around. The Mayor of Richmond had not for some time been able to communicate with General Lee, and it was of the highest importance to make the latter aware of the situation of the city, in order to hasten the march of the rescuing army. This Jonathan Forster had conceived the idea of passing over the lines of the besiegers in a balloon, and arriving by this means in the Confederate camp.

The Mayor authorized the undertaking, a balloon was made and placed at the disposal of Forster and five of his companions. They were provided with arms as they might have to defend themselves in descending, and food in case their aerial voyage should be prolonged. The departure of the balloon had been fixed for the 18th of March. It was to start in the night, and with a moderate breeze from the northeast, the party expected to arrive at the quarters of General Lee in a few hours. But the wind from the northeast was not a mere breeze. On the morning of the 18th there was every symptom of a storm, and soon the tempest broke

forth, making it necessary for Forster to defer his departure, as it was impossible to risk the balloon and those whom it would carry, to the fury of the elements.

The balloon, inflated in the great square of Richmond, was all ready, waiting for the first lull in the storm; and throughout the city there was great vexation at the settled bad weather. The night of the 19th and 20th passed, but in the morning the storm was only developed in intensity, and departure was impossible.

On this day Cyrus Smith was accosted in one of the streets of Richmond by a man whom he did not know. It was a sailor named Pencroff, aged from thirty-five to forty years, strongly built, much sun-burnt, his eyes bright and glittering, but with a good countenance.

This Pencroff was a Yankee who had sailed every sea, and who had experienced every kind of extraordinary adventure that a two-legged being without wings could encounter. It is needless to say that he was of an adventurous nature, ready to dare anything and to be astonished at nothing. Pencroff, in the early part of this year, had come to Richmond on business, having with him Herbert Brown, of New Jersey, a lad fifteen years old, the son of Pencroff's captain, and an orphan whom he loved as his own child. Not having left the city at the beginning of the siege, he found himself, to his great displeasure, blocked. He also had but one idea: to get out. He knew the reputation of the

engineer, and he knew with what impatience that determined man chafed at his restraint. He did not therefore hesitate to address him without ceremony.

“Mr. Smith, have you had enough of Richmond?”

The engineer looked fixedly at the man who spoke thus, and who added in a low voice:-

“Mr. Smith, do you want to escape?”

“How?” answered the engineer, quickly, and it was evidently an inconsiderate reply, for he had not yet examined the man who spoke.

“Mr. Smith, do you want to escape?”

““Who are you?” he demanded, in a cold voice.

Pencroff made himself known.

“Sufficient,” replied Smith. “And by what means do you propose to escape?”

“By this idle balloon which is doing nothing, and seems to me all ready to take us!”-

The sailor had no need to finish his sentence. The engineer had understood all in a word. He seized Pencroff by the arm and hurried him to his house. There the sailor explained his project, which, in truth, was simple enough:-They risked only their lives in carrying it out. The storm was at its height, it is true; but a skilful and daring engineer like Smith would know well how to manage a balloon. He, himself, would not have hesitated to have started, had he known how-with Herbert, of course. He had seen many storms and he thought nothing of them.

Cyrus Smith listened to the sailor without saying a word, but with glistening eyes. This was the opportunity, and he was not the man to let it escape him. The project was very dangerous, but it could be accomplished. During the night, in spite of the guards, they might reach the balloon, creep into the basket, and then cut the lines which held it! Certainly they risked being shot, but on the other hand they might succeed, and but for this tempest-but without this tempest the balloon would have been gone and the long-sought opportunity would not have been present.

“I am not alone,” said Smith at length.

“How many would you want to take?” demanded the sailor.

“Two; my friend Spilett, and my man Neb.”

“That would be three,” replied Pencroff; “and, with Herbert and myself, five. Well, the balloon can carry six?”

“Very well. We will go!” said the engineer.

This “we” pledged the reporter, who was not a man to retreat, and who, when the project was told him, approved of it heartily. What astonished him was, that so simple a plan had not already occurred to himself. As to Neb, he followed his master wherever his master wanted to go.

“To-night, then,” said Pencroff.

“To-night, at ten o’clock,” replied Smith; “and pray heaven that this storm does not abate before we

get off.”

Pencroff took leave of the engineer, and returned to his lodging, where he found young Herbert Brown. This brave boy knew the plans of the sailor, and he was not without a certain anxiety as to the result of the proposal to the engineer. We see, therefore, five persons determined to throw themselves into the vortex of the storm.

The storm did not abate. And neither Jonathan Forster nor his companion dreamed of confronting it in that frail basket. The journey would be terrible. The engineer feared but one thing; that the balloon, held to the ground and beaten down under the wind, would be torn into a thousand pieces. During many hours he wandered about the nearly deserted square, watching the apparatus. Pencroff, his hands in his pockets, yawning like a man who is unable to kill time, did the same; but in reality he also feared that the balloon would be torn to pieces, or break from its moorings and be carried off.

Evening arrived and the night closed in dark and threatening. Thick masses of fog passed like clouds low down over the earth. Rain mingled with snow fell. The weather was cold. A sort of mist enveloped Richmond. It seemed as if in the face of this terrible tempest a truce had been agreed upon between the besiegers and besieged, and the cannon were silent before the heavy detonations of the storm. The streets of the city were

deserted; it had not even seemed necessary, in such weather, to guard the square in which swung the balloon. Everything favored the departure of the prisoners; but this voyage, in the midst of the excited elements!-

“Bad weather,” said Pencroff, holding his hat, which the wind was trying to take off, firmly to his head, “but pshaw, it can’t last, all the same.”

At half-past 9, Cyrus Smith and his companions glided by different routes to the square, which the gas lights, extinguished by the wind, left in profound darkness. They could not see even the huge balloon, as it lay pressed over against the ground. Beside the bags of ballast which held the cords of the net, the basket was held down by a strong cable passed through a ring fastened in the pavement, and the ends brought back on board.

The five prisoners came together at the basket. They had not been discovered, and such was the darkness that they could not see each other. Without saying a word, four of them took their places in the basket, while Pencroff, under the direction of the engineer, unfastened successively the bundles of ballast. It took but a few moments, and then the sailor joined his companions. The only thing that then held the balloon was the loop of the cable, and Cyrus Smith had but to give the word for them to let it slip. At that moment, a dog leaped with a bound into the basket. It

was Top, the dog of the engineer, who, having broken his chain, had followed his master. Cyrus Smith, fearing to add to the weight, wanted to send the poor brute back, but Pencroff said, "Pshaw, it is but one more!" and at the same time threw overboard two bags of sand. Then, slipping the cable, the balloon, shooting off in an oblique direction, disappeared, after having dashed its basket against two chimneys, which it demolished in its rush.

Then the storm burst upon them with frightful violence. The engineer did not dare to descend during the night, and when day dawned all sight of the earth was hidden by the mists. It was not until five days later that the breaking of the clouds enabled them to see the vast sea extending below them, lashed by the wind into a terrific fury.

We have seen how, of these five men, who started on the 20th of March, four were thrown, four days later, on a desert coast, more than 6,000 miles from this country. And the one who was missing, the one to whose rescue the four survivors had hurried was their leader, Cyrus Smith.

[The 5th of April, Richmond fell into the hands of Grant, the Rebellion was repressed, Lee retreated into the West (*sic*) and the cause of the Union triumphed.]

### CHAPTER III

FIVE O’CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON-THE LOST ONE-THE DESPAIR OF NEB-SEARCH TO THE NORTHWARD-THE ISLAND-A NIGHT OF ANGUISH-THE FOG OF THE MORNING-NEB SWIMMING-SIGHT OF THE LAND-FORDING THE CHANNEL.

The engineer, on the giving way of the net, had been swept away by a wave. His dog had disappeared at the same time. The faithful animal had of its own accord sprung to the rescue of its master.

“Forward!” cried the reporter, and all four, forgetting weakness and fatigue, began their search. Poor Neb wept with grief and despair at the thought of having lost all that he loved in the world.

Not more than two minutes had passed between the moment that Smith had disappeared, and the instant of his companions landing. They were, therefore, hopeful of being in time to rescue him.

“Hunt, hunt for him,” cried Neb.

“Yes, Neb, and we will find him,” replied Spilett.

“Alive?”

“Alive!”

“Can he swim?” demanded Pencroff.

“Oh, yes,” responded Neb. “And, besides, Top is with him-”

The sailor, looking at the roaring sea, shook his

head.

It was at a point northward from this shore, and about half a mile from the place where the castaways had landed, that the engineer had disappeared, and if he had come ashore at the nearest point it was at least that distance from where they now were.

It was nearly 6 o'clock. The fog had risen and made the night very dark. The castaways followed northward along the shore of that land upon which chance had thrown them. A land unknown, whose geographical situation they could not guess. They walked upon a sandy soil, mixed with stones, seemingly destitute of any kind of vegetation. The ground, very uneven, seemed in certain places to be riddled with small holes, making the march very painful. From these holes, great, heavy-flying birds rushed forth, and were lost in the darkness. Others, more active, rose in flocks, and fled away like the clouds. The sailor thought he recognized gulls and sea-mews, whose sharp cries were audible above the raging of the sea.

From time to time the castaways would stop and call, listening for an answering voice from the ocean. They thought, too, that if they were near the place where the engineer had been, washed ashore, and he had been unable to make any response, that, at least, the barking of the dog Top would have been heard. But no sound was distinguishable above the roaring of the

waves and the thud of the surf. Then the little party would resume their march, searching all the windings of the shore.

After a walk of twenty minutes the four castaways were suddenly stopped by a foaming line of breakers. They found themselves upon the extremity of a sharp point upon which the sea broke with fury.

“This is a promontory,” said the sailor, “and it will be necessary to turn back, keeping to the right in order to gain the main land.”

“But if he is there!” cried Neb, pointing towards the ocean, whose enormous waves showed white through the gloom.

“Well, let us call again.”

And all together, uniting their voices, uttered a vigorous cry, but without response. They waited for a lull, and tried once more. And again there was no answer.

Then the castaways turned back, following the opposite side of the promontory over ground equally sandy and rocky. However, Pencroff observed that the shore was bolder, that the land rose somewhat, and he thought that it might gradually slope up to the high hill which was dimly visible through the darkness. The birds were less numerous on this shore. The sea also seemed less surging and tempestuous, and it was noticeable that the agitation of the waves was subsiding. They hardly heard the sound of the surf, and

doubtless, this side of the promontory formed a semi-circular bay, protected by its sharp point from the long roll of the sea.

But by following this direction they were walking towards the south, which was going away from that place where Smith would have landed. After a tramp of a mile and a half, the shore presented no other curve which would permit of a return towards the north. It was evident that this promontory, the point of which they had turned, must be joined to the mainland. The castaways, although much fatigued, pushed on courageously, hoping each moment to find a sudden turn which would take them in the desired direction. What, then, was their disappointment when, after having walked nearly two miles, they found themselves again arrested by the sea, upon a high promontory of slippery rocks.

“We are on an island,” exclaimed Pencroff; “and we have measured it from end to end!”

The words of the sailor were true. The castaways had been thrown, not upon a continent, but upon an island not more than two miles long, and of inconsiderable breadth.

This desert isle, covered with stones, without vegetation, desolate refuge of sea-birds, did it belong to a more important archipelago? They could not tell. The party in the balloon, when from their basket they saw the land through the clouds, had not been able to

determine its size. But Pencroff, with the eyes of a sailor accustomed to piercing the gloom, thought, at the moment, that he could distinguish in the west confused masses, resembling a high coast. But at this time they were unable, on account of the obscurity, to determine to what system, whether simple or complex, their isle belonged. They were unable to get off, as the sea surrounded them, and it was necessary to wait until the next day to search for the engineer; who, alas! had made no cry to signal his presence.

“The silence of Cyrus proves nothing,” said the reporter. “He may have fainted, or be wounded, and unable to reply, but we will not despair.”

The reporter then suggested the idea of lighting a fire upon the point of the island, which would serve as a signal for the engineer. But they searched in vain for wood or dry branches. Sand and stones were all they found.

One can understand the grief of Neb and his companions, who were strongly attached to their brave comrade. It was too evident that they could not help him now, and that they must wait till day. The engineer had escaped, and was already safe upon the land, or he was lost forever. The hours were long and dreadful, the cold was intense, and the castaways suffered keenly, but they did not realize it. They did not think of sleep. Thinking only of their chief, hoping, wishing to hope, they moved back and forth upon that arid island,

constantly returning to the northern end, where they would be closest to the place of the catastrophe. They listened, they shouted, they tried to catch some call, and, as a lull would come, or the roar of the surf fall with the waves, their hallooes must have sounded far into the distance.

Once the cry of Neb was answered by an echo; and Herbert made Pencroff notice it, saying:-“That proves that there is land not far to the west.”

The sailor nodded; he knew his eyes could not deceive him. He thought he had seen land, and it must be there. But this distant echo was the only answer to the cries of Neb, and the silence about the island remained unbroken. Meanwhile the sky was clearing slowly. Towards midnight, some stars shone out, and, had the engineer been there with his companions, he would have noticed that these stars did not belong to the northern hemisphere. The pole star was not visible in this new horizon, the constellations in the zenith were not such as they had been accustomed to see from North America, and the Southern Cross shone resplendent in the heavens.

The night passed; and towards 5 o'clock in the morning the middle heavens began to brighten, though the horizon remained obscure; until with the first rays of day, a fog rose from the sea, so dense that the eye could scarcely penetrate twenty paces into its depths, and separated into great, heavy-moving masses. This

was unfortunate, as the castaways were unable to distinguish anything about them. While the gaze of Neb and the reporter was directed towards the sea, the sailor and Herbert searched for the land in the west; but they could see nothing.

“Never mind,” said Pencroff, “if I do not see the land. I feel that it is there, — just as sure as that we are not in Richmond.”

But the fog, which was nothing more than a morning mist, soon rose. A clear sun warmed the upper air, its heat penetrating to the surface of the island. At half-past 6, three quarters of an hour after sunrise, the mist was nearly gone. Though still thick overhead, it dissolved, below, and soon all the island appeared, as from a cloud. Then the sea appeared, limitless towards the east, but bounded on the west by a high and abrupt coast.

Yes, the land was there! There, safety was at least provisionally assured. The island and the main land were separated by a channel half a mile wide, through which rushed a strong current. Into this current one of the party, without saying a word or consulting with his companions, precipitated himself. It was Neb. He was anxious to be upon that coast and to be pushing forward towards the north. No one could keep him back. Pencroff called to him in vain. The reporter prepared to follow, but the sailor ran to him, exclaiming:-

“Are you determined to cross this channel?”

“I am,” replied Spilett.

“Well, then, listen to me a moment. Neb can rescue his master alone. If we throw ourselves into the channel we are in danger of being carried out to sea by this strong current. Now, if I am not mistaken it is caused by the ebb. You see the tide is going out. Have patience until low water and then we may ford it.”

“You are right,” answered the reporter; “we will keep together as much as possible.”

Meantime, Neb was swimming vigorously in a diagonal direction, against the current; his black shoulders were seen rising with each stroke. He was drawn backward with swiftness, but he was gaining towards the other shore. It took him more than half an hour to cross the half mile which separated the isle from the mainland, and when he reached the other side it was at a place a long distance from the point opposite to that which he had left.

Neb, having landed at the base of a high rocky wall, clambered quickly up its side, and, running, disappeared behind a point projecting into the sea, about the same height as the northern end of the island.

Neb's companions had watched with anxiety his daring attempt, and, when he was out of sight, they fixed their eyes upon that land from which they were going to demand refuge. They ate some of the shellfish which they found upon the sands; it was a poor meal, but then it was better than nothing.

The opposite coast formed an immense bay, terminated to the south by a sharp point bare of all vegetation, and having a most forbidding aspect. This point at its junction with the shore was abutted by high granite rocks. Towards the north, on the contrary, the bay widened, with a shore more rounded, extending from the southwest to the northeast, and ending in a narrow cape. Between these two points, the distance must have been about eight miles. A half mile from the shore the island, like an enormous whale, lay upon the sea. Its width could not have been greater than a quarter of a mile.

Before the Island, the shore began with a sandy beach strewn with black rocks, at this moment beginning to appear above the receding tide. Beyond this rose, like a curtain, a perpendicular granite wall, at least 300 feet high and terminated by a ragged edge. This extended for about three miles, ending abruptly on the right in a smooth face, as if cut by the hand of man. To the left on the contrary, above the promontory, this kind of irregular cliff, composed of heaped-up rocks and glistening in the light, sank and gradually mingled with the rocks of the southern point.

Upon the upper level of the coast not a tree was visible. It was a table-land, as barren though not as extensive as that around Cape Town, or at the Cape of Good Hope. At least so it appeared from the islet. To the right, however, and back of the smooth face of rock,

some verdure appeared. The confused massing of large trees was easily distinguishable extending far as the eye could reach. This verdure gladdened the sight tired by the rough face of granite. Finally, back of and above the plateau, distant towards the northwest about seven miles, shone a white summit, reflecting the sun's rays. It was the snowy cap of some lofty mountain.

It was not possible at present to say whether this land was an island or part of a continent; but the sight of the broken rocks heaped together on the left would have proved to a geologist their volcanic origin, as they were incontestably the result of igneous action.

Gideon Spilett, Pencroff, and Herbert looked earnestly upon this land where they were to live, perhaps for long years; upon which, if out of the track of ships, they might have to die.

“Well,” demanded Herbert, “what do you think of it, Pencroff?”

“Well,” replied the sailor, “there's good and bad in it, as with everything else. But we shall soon see; for look; what I told you. In three hours we can cross, and once over there, we will see what we can do towards finding Mr. Smith.”

Pencroff was not wrong in his predictions. Three hours later, at low tide, the greater part of the sandy bed of the channel was bare. A narrow strip of water, easily crossed, was all that separated the island from the shore. And at 10 o'clock, Spilett and his two

companions, stripped of their clothing, which they carried in packages on their heads, waded through the water, which was nowhere more than five feet deep. Herbert, where the water was too deep, swam like a fish, acquitting himself well; and all arrived without difficulty at the other shore. There, having dried themselves in the sun, they put on their clothes, which had not touched the water, and took counsel together.

## CHAPTER IV

THE LITHODOMES-THE MOUTH OF THE RIVER-THE "CHIMNEYS"-CONTINUATION OF THE SEARCH-THE FOREST OF EVERGREENS-GETTING FIREWOOD-WAITING FOR THE TIDE-ON TOP OF THE CLIFF-THE TIMBER-FLOAT-THE RETURN TO THE COAST.

Presently the reporter told the sailor to wait just where he was until he should come back, and without losing a moment, he walked back along the coast in the direction which Neb had taken some hours before, and disappeared quickly around a turn in the shore.

Herbert wished to go with him.

"Stay, my boy," said the sailor. "We must pitch our camp for the night, and try to find something to eat more satisfying than shellfish. Our friends will need

food when they come back.”

“I am ready, Pencroff,” said Herbert.

“Good,” said the sailor. “Let us set to work methodically. We are tired, cold, and hungry: we need shelter, fire, and food. There is plenty of wood in the forest, and we can get eggs from the nests; but we must find a house.”

“Well,” said Herbert, “I will look for a cave in these rocks, and I shall certainly find some hole in which we can stow ourselves.”

“Right,” said Pencroff; “let us start at once.”

They walked along the base of the rocky wall, on the strand left bare by the receding waves. But instead of going northwards, they turned to the south. Pencroff had noticed, some hundreds of feet below the place where they had been thrown ashore, a narrow inlet in the coast, which he thought might be the mouth of a river or of a brook. Now it was important to pitch the camp in the neighborhood of fresh water; in that part of the island, too, Smith might be found.

The rock rose 300 feet, smooth and massive. It was a sturdy wall of the hardest granite, never corroded by the waves, and even at its base there was no cleft which might serve as a temporary abode. About the summit hovered a host of aquatic birds, mainly of the web-footed tribe, with long, narrow, pointed beaks. Swift and noisy, they cared little for the unaccustomed presence of man. A shot into the midst of the flock

would have brought down a dozen; but neither Pencroff nor Herbert had a gun. Besides, gulls and sea-mews are barely eatable, and their eggs have a very disagreeable flavor.

Meanwhile Herbert, who was now to the left, soon noticed some rocks thickly strewn with sea weed, which would evidently be submerged again in a few hours. On them lay hosts of bivalves, not to be disdained by hungry men. Herbert called to Pencroff, who came running to him.

“Ah, they are mussels,” said the sailor. “Now we can spare the eggs.”

“They are not mussels,” said Herbert, examining the mollusks carefully, “they are lithodomes.”

“Can we eat them?” said Pencroff.

“Certainly.”

“Then let us eat some lithodomes.”

The sailor could rely on Herbert, who was versed in Natural History and very fond of it. He owed his acquaintance with this study in great part to his father, who had entered him in the classes of the best professors in Boston, where the child’s industry and intelligence had endeared him to all.

These lithodomes were oblong shell-fish, adhering in clusters to the rocks. They belonged to that species of boring mollusk which can perforate a hole in the hardest stone, and whose shell has the peculiarity of being rounded at both ends.

Pencroff and Herbert made a good meal of these lithodomes, which lay gaping in the sun. They tasted like oysters, with a peppery flavor which left no desire for condiments of any kind.

Their hunger was allayed for the moment, but their thirst was increased by the spicy flavor of the mollusks. The thing now was to find fresh water, which was not likely to fail them in a region so undulating. Pencroff and Herbert, after having taken the precaution to fill their pockets and handkerchiefs with lithodomes, regained the foot of the hill.

Two hundred feet further on they reached the inlet, through which, as Pencroff had surmised, a little river was flowing with full current. Here the rocky wall seemed to have been torn asunder by some volcanic convulsion. At its base lay a little creek, running at an acute angle. The water in this place was 100 feet across, while the banks on either side were scarcely 20 feet broad. The river buried itself at once between the two walls of granite, which began to decline as one went up stream.

“Here is water,” said Pencroff, “and over there is wood. Well, Herbert, now we only want the house.”

The river water was clear. The sailor knew that as the tide was now low there would be no influx from the sea, and the water would be fresh. When this important point had been settled, Herbert looked for some cave which might give them shelter, but it was in vain.

Everywhere the wall was smooth, flat, and perpendicular.

However, over at the mouth of the watercourse, and above high-water mark, the detritus had formed, not a grotto, but a pile of enormous rocks, such as are often met with in granitic countries, and which are called *Chimneys* .

Pencroff and Herbert went down between the rocks, into those sandy corridors, lighted only by the huge cracks between the masses of granite, some of which only kept their equilibrium by a miracle. But with the light the wind came in, and with the wind the piercing cold of the outer air. Still, the sailor thought that by stopping up some of these openings with a mixture of stones and sand, the Chimneys might be rendered habitable. Their plan resembled the typographical sign, and by cutting off the upper curve of the sign, through which the south and the west wind rushed in, they could succeed without doubt in utilizing its lower portion.

“This is just what we want,” said Pencroff, and if we ever see Mr. Smith again, he will know how to take advantage of this labyrinth.”

“We shall see him again, Pencroff,” said Herbert, “and when he comes back he must find here a home that is tolerably comfortable. We can make this so if we can build a fireplace in the left corridor with an opening for the smoke.”

“That we can do, my boy,” answered the sailor, “and these Chimneys will just serve our purpose. But first we must get together some firing. Wood will be useful, too, in blocking up these great holes through which the wind whistles so shrilly.”

Herbert and Pencroff left the Chimneys, and turning the angle, walked up the left bank of the river, whose current was strong enough to bring down a quantity of dead wood. The return tide, which had already begun, would certainly carry it in the ebb to a great distance. “Why not utilize this flux and reflux,” thought the sailor, “in the carriage of heavy timber?”

After a quarter of an hour’s walk, the two reached the elbow which the river made in turning to the left. From this point onward it flowed through a forest of magnificent trees, which had preserved their verdure in spite of the season; for they belonged to that great cone-bearing family indigenous everywhere, from the poles to the tropics. Especially conspicuous were the “deodara,” so numerous in the Himalayas, with their pungent perfume. Among them were clusters of pines, with tall trunks and spreading parasols of green. The ground was strewn with fallen branches, so dry as to crackle under their feet.

“Good,” said the sailor, “I may not know the name of these trees, but I know they belong to the genus firewood, and that’s the main thing for us.”

It was an easy matter to gather the firewood.

They did not need even to strip the trees; plenty of dead branches lay at their feet. This dry wood would burn rapidly, and they would need a large supply. How could two men carry such a load to the Chimneys? Herbert asked the question.

“My boy,” said the sailor, “there’s a way to do everything. If we had a car or a boat it would be too easy.”

“We have the river,” suggested Herbert.

“Exactly,” said Pencroff. “The river shall be our road and our carrier, too. Timber-floats were not invented for nothing.”

“But our carrier is going in the wrong direction,” said Herbert, “since the tide is coming up from the sea.”

“We have only to wait for the turn of tide,” answered the sailor. “Let us get our float ready.”

They walked towards the river, each carrying a heavy load of wood tied up in fagots. On the bank, too, lay quantities of dead boughs, among grass which the foot of man had probably never pressed before. Pencroff began to get ready his float.

In an eddy caused by an angle of the shore, which broke the flow of the current, they set afloat the larger pieces of wood, bound together by liana stems so as to form a sort of raft. On this raft they piled the rest of the wood, which would have been a load for twenty men. In an hour their work was finished, and the float was moored to the bank to wait for the turn of the tide.

Pencroff and Herbert resolved to spend the mean time in gaining a more extended view of the country from the higher plateau. Two hundred feet behind the angle of the river, the wall terminating in irregular masses of rocks, sloped away gently to the edge of the forest. The two easily climbed this natural staircase, soon attained the summit, and posted themselves at the angle overlooking the mouth of the river.

Their first look was at that ocean over which they had been so frightfully swept. They beheld with emotion the northern part of the coast, the scene of the catastrophe, and of Smith's disappearance. They hoped to see on the surface some wreck of the balloon to which a man might cling. But the sea was a watery desert. The coast, too, was desolate. Neither Neb nor the reporter could be seen.

"Something tells me," said Herbert, "that a person so energetic as Mr. Smith would not let himself be drowned like an ordinary man. He must have got to shore; don't you think so, Pencroff?"

The sailor shook his head sadly. He never thought to see Smith again; but he left Herbert a hope.

"No doubt," said he, "our engineer could save himself where any one else would perish."

Meanwhile he took a careful observation of the coast. Beneath his eyes stretched out the sandy beach, bounded, upon the right of the river-mouth, by lines of breakers. The rocks which still were visible above the

water were like groups of amphibious monsters lying in the surf. Beyond them the sea sparkled in the rays of the sun. A narrow point terminated the southern horizon, and it was impossible to tell whether the land stretched further in that direction, or whether it trended southeast and southwest, so as to make an elongated peninsula. At the northern end of the bay, the outline of the coast was continued to a great distance. There the shore was low and flat, without rocks, but covered by great sandbanks, left by the receding tide.

When Pencroff and Herbert walked back towards the west, their looks fell on the snowcapped mountain, which rose six or seven miles away. Masses of tree-trunks, with patches of evergreens, extended from its first declivities to within two miles of the coast. Then from the edge of this forest to the coast stretched a plateau strewn at random with clumps of trees. On the left shore through the glades the waters of the little river, which seemed to have returned in its sinuous course to the mountains which gave it birth.

“Are we upon an island?” muttered the sailor.

“It is big enough, at all events,” said the boy.

“An island’s an island, no matter how big,” said Pencroff.

But this important question could not yet be decided. The country itself, isle or continent, seemed fertile, picturesque, and diversified in its products. For that they must be grateful. They returned along the

southern ridge of the granite plateau, outlined by a fringe of fantastic rocks, in whose cavities lived hundreds of birds. A whole flock of them soared aloft as Herbert jumped over the rocks.

“Ah!” cried he, “these are neither gulls nor sea-mews.”

“What are they?” said Pencroff. “They look for all the world like pigeons.”

“So they are,” said Herbert, “but they are wild pigeons, or rock pigeons.” I know them by the two black bands on the wing, the white rump, and the ash-blue feathers. The rock pigeon is good to eat, and its eggs ought to be delicious; and if they have left a few in their nests—”

“We will let them hatch in an omelet,” said Pencroff, gaily.

“But what will you make your omelet in?” asked Herbert; “in your hat?”

“I am not quite conjurer enough for that,” said the sailor. “We must fall back on eggs in the shell, and I will undertake to despatch the hardest.”

Pencroff and the boy examined carefully the cavities of the granite, and succeeded in discovering eggs in some of them. Some dozens were collected in the sailor’s handkerchief, and, high tide approaching, the two went down again to the water-course.

It was 1 o’clock when they arrived at the elbow of the river, and the tide was already on the turn.

Pencroff had no intention of letting his timber float at random, nor did he wish to get on and steer it. But a sailor is never troubled in a matter of ropes or cordage, and Pencroff quickly twisted from the dry lianas a rope several fathoms long. This was fastened behind the raft, and the sailor held it in his hand, while Herbert kept the float in the current by pushing it off from the shore with a long pole.

This expedient proved an entire success. The enormous load of wood kept well in the current. The banks were sheer, and there was no fear lest the float should ground; before 2 o'clock they reached the mouth of the stream, a few feet from the Chimneys.

## CHAPTER V

ARRANGING THE CHIMNEYS-THE IMPORTANT QUESTION OF FIRE-THE MATCH BOX-SEARCH OVER THE SHORE-RETURN OF THE REPORTER AND NEB-ONE MATCH-THE CRACKLING FIRE-THE FISH SUPPER-THE FIRST NIGHT ON LAND.

The first care of Pencroff, after the raft had been unloaded, was to make the Chimneys habitable, by stopping up those passages traversed by the draughts of air. Sand, stones, twisted branches, and mud, hermetically sealed the galleries of the open to the

southerly winds, and shut out its upper curve. One narrow, winding passage, opening on the side; was arranged to carry out the smoke and to quicken the draught of the fire. The Chimneys were thus divided into three or four chambers, if these dark dens, which would hardly have contained a beast, might be so called. But they were dry, and one could stand up in them, or at least in the principal one, which was in the centre. The floor was covered with sand, and, everything considered, they could establish themselves in this place while waiting for one better.

While working, Herbert and Pencroff chatted together.

“Perhaps,” said the boy, “our companions will have found a better place than ours.”

“It is possible.” answered the sailor, “but, until we know, don’t let us stop. Better have two strings to one’s bow than none at all!”

“Oh,” repeated Herbert, “if they can only find Mr. Smith, and bring him back with them, how thankful we will be!”

“Yes,” murmured Pencroff. “He was a good man.”

“Was!” said Herbert. “Do you think we shall not see him again?”

“Heaven forbid!” replied the sailor.

The work of division was rapidly accomplished, and Pencroff declared himself satisfied. “Now,” said

he, "our friends may return, and they will find a good enough shelter."

Nothing remained but to fix the fireplace and to prepare the meal, which, in truth, was a task easy and simple enough. Large flat stones were placed at the mouth of the first gallery to the left, where the smoke passage had been made; and this chimney was made so narrow that but little heat would escape up the flue, and the cavern would be comfortably warmed. The stock of wood was piled up in one of the chambers, and the sailor placed some logs and broken branches upon the stones. He was occupied in arranging them when Herbert asked him if he had some matches.

"Certainly," replied Pencroff, "and moreover, fortunately; for without matches or tinder we would indeed be in trouble."

"Could not we always make fire as the savages do," replied Herbert, "by rubbing two bits of dry wood together?"

"Just try it, my boy, some time, and see if you do anything more than put your arms out of joint."

"Nevertheless, it is often done in the islands of the Pacific."

"I don't say that it is not," replied Pencroff, "but the savages must have a way of their own, or use a certain kind of wood, as more than once I have wanted to get fire in that way and have never yet been able to. For my part, I prefer matches; and, by the way, where

are mine?"

Pencroff, who was an habitual smoker, felt in his vest for the box, which he was never without, but, not finding it, he searched the pockets of his trowsers, and to his profound amazement, it was not there.

"This is an awkward business," said he, looking at Herbert. "My box must have fallen from my pocket, and I can't find it. But you, Herbert, have you nothing: no steel, not anything, with which we can make fire?"

"Not a thing, Pencroff."

The sailor, followed by the boy, walked out, rubbing his forehead.

On the sand, among the rocks, by the bank of the river, both of them searched with the utmost care, but without result. The box was of copper, and had it been there, they must have seen it.

"Pencroff," asked Herbert, "did not you throw it out of the basket?"

"I took good care not to," said the sailor. "But when one has been knocked around as we have been, so small a thing could easily have been lost; even my pipe is gone. The confounded box; where can it be?"

"Well, the tide is out; let us run to the place where we landed," said Herbert.

It was little likely that they would find this box, which the sea would have rolled among the pebbles at high water; nevertheless, it would do no harm to search. They, therefore, went quickly to the place where they

had first landed, some 200 paces from the Chimneys. There, among the pebbles, in the hollows of the rocks, they made minute search, but in vain. If the box had fallen here it must have been carried out by the waves. As the tide went down, the sailor peered into every crevice, but without Success. It was a serious loss, and, for the time, irreparable. Pencroff did not conceal his chagrin. He frowned, but did not speak, and Herbert tried to console him by saying, that, most probably, the matches would have been so wetted as to be useless.

“No, my boy,” answered the sailor. “They were in a tightly closing metal box. But now, what are we to do?”

“We will certainly find means of procuring fire,” said Herbert. “Mr. Smith or Mr. Spilett will not be as helpless as we are.”

“Yes, but in the meantime we are without it,” said Pencroff, “and our companions will find but a very sorry meal on their return.”

“But,” said Herbert, hopefully, “it is not possible that they will have neither tinder nor matches.”

“I doubt it,” answered the sailor, shaking his head. “In the first place, neither Neb nor Mr. Smith smoke, and then I’m afraid Mr. Spilett has more likely kept his notebook than his match-box.”

Herbert did not answer. This loss was evidently serious. Nevertheless, the lad thought surely they could make a fire in some way or other, but Pencroff, more

experienced, although a man not easily discouraged, knew differently. At any rate there was but one thing to do:-to wait until the return of Neb and the reporter. It was necessary to give up the repast of cooked eggs which they had wished to prepare, and a diet of raw flesh did not seem to be, either for themselves or for the others, an agreeable prospect.

Before returning to the Chimneys, the companions, in case they failed of a fire, gathered a fresh lot of lithodomes, and then silently took the road to their dwelling. Pencroff, his eyes fixed upon the ground, still searched in every direction for the lost box. They followed again up the left bank of the river, from its mouth to the angle where the raft had been built. They returned to the upper plateau, and went in every direction, searching in the tall grass on the edge of the forest, but in vain. It was 5 o'clock when they returned again to the Chimneys, and it is needless to say that the passages were searched in their darkest recesses before all hope was given up.

Towards 6 o'clock, just as the sun was disappearing behind the high land in the west, Herbert, who was walking back and forth upon the shore, announced the return of Neb and of Gideon Spilett. They came back alone, and the lad felt his heart sink. The sailor had not, then, been wrong in his presentiments; they had been unable to find the engineer.

The reporter, when he came up, seated himself upon a rock, without speaking. Fainting from fatigue, half dead with hunger, he was unable to utter a word. As to Neb, his reddened eyes showed how he had been weeping, and the fresh tears which he was unable to restrain, indicated, but too clearly, that he had lost all hope.

The reporter at length gave the history of their search. Neb and he had followed the coast for more than eight miles, and, consequently, far beyond the point where the balloon had made the plunge which was followed by the disappearance of the engineer and Top. The shore was deserted. Not a recently turned stone, not a trace upon the sand, not a footprint, was upon all that part of the shore. It was evident that nobody inhabited that portion of the island. The sea was as deserted as the land; and it was there, at some hundreds of feet from shore, that the engineer had found his grave.

At that moment Neb raised his head, and in a voice which showed how he still struggled against despair, exclaimed:-

“No, he is not dead. It is impossible. It might happen to you or me, but never to him. He is a man who can get out of anything!”

Then his strength failing him, he murmured, “But I am used up.”

Herbert ran to him and cried:-

“Neb, we will find him; God will give him back to us; but you, you must be famishing; do eat something.”

And while speaking the lad offered the poor negro a handful of shell-fish—a meagre and insufficient nourishment enough.

But Neb, though he had eaten nothing for hours, refused them. Poor fellow! deprived of his master, he wished no longer to live.

As to Gideon Spilett, he devoured the mollusks, and then laid down upon the sand at the foot of a rock. He was exhausted, but calm. Herbert, approaching him, took his hand.

“Mr. Spilett,” said he, “we have discovered a shelter where you will be more comfortable. The night is coming on; so come and rest there. To-morrow we will see—”

The reporter rose, and, guided by the lad, proceeded towards the Chimneys. As he did so, Pencroff came up to him, and in an off-hand way asked him if, by chance, he had a match with him. The reporter stopped, felt in his pockets, and finding none, said:-

“I had some, but I must have thrown them all away.”

Then the sailor called Neb and asked him the same question, receiving a like answer.

“Curse it!” cried the sailor, unable to restrain the

word.

The reporter heard it, and going to him said:-“Have you no matches?”

“Not one; and, of course, no fire.”

“Ah,” cried Neb, “if he was here, my master, he could soon make one.”

The four castaways stood still and looked anxiously at each other. Herbert was the first to break the silence, by saying:-

“Mr. Spilett, you are a smoker, you always have matches about you; perhaps you have not searched thoroughly. Look again; a single match will be enough.”

The reporter rummaged the pockets of his trowsers, his vest, and coat, and to the great joy of Pencroff, as well as to his own surprise, felt a little sliver of wood caught in the lining of his vest. He could feel it from the outside, but his fingers were unable to disengage it. If this should prove a match, and only one, it was extremely necessary not to rub off the phosphorus.

“Let me try,” said the lad. And very adroitly, without breaking it, he drew out this little bit of wood, this precious trifle, which to these poor men was of such great importance. It was uninjured.

“One match!” cried Pencroff.” “Why, it is as good as if we had a whole ship-load!”

He took it, and, followed by his companions,

regained the Chimneys. This tiny bit of wood, which in civilised lands is wasted with indifference, as valueless, it was necessary here to use with the utmost care. The sailor, having assured himself that it was dry, said:-

“We must have some paper.”

“Here is some,” answered Spilett, who, after a little hesitation, had torn a leaf from his note-book.

Pencroff took the bit of paper and knelt down before the fire-place, where some handfuls of grass, leaves, and dry moss had been placed under the faggots in such a way that the air could freely circulate and make the dry wood readily ignite. Then Pencroff shaping the paper into a cone, as pipe-smokers do in the wind, placed it among the moss. Taking, then, a slightly rough stone and wiping it carefully, with beating heart and suspended breath, he gave the match a little rub. The first stroke produced no effect, as Pencroff fearing to break off the phosphorus had not rubbed hard enough.

“Ho, I won’t be able to do it,” said he; “my hand shakes-the match will miss-I can’t do it-I don’t want to try!” And, rising, he besought Herbert to undertake it.

Certainly, the boy had never in his life been so affected. His heart beat furiously. Prometheus, about to steal the fire from heaven, could not have been more excited.

Nevertheless he did not hesitate, but rubbed the stone with a quick stroke. A little sputtering was heard,

and a light blue flame sprung out and produced a pungent smoke. Herbert gently turned the match, so as to feed the flame, and then slid it under the paper cone. In a few seconds the paper took fire, and then the moss kindled. An instant later, the dry wood crackled, and a joyous blaze, fanned by the breath of the sailor, shone out from the darkness.

“At length,” cried Pencroff, rising, “I never was so excited in my life!”

It was evident that the fire did well in the fireplace of flat stones. The smoke readily ascended through its passage; the chimney drew, and an agreeable warmth quickly made itself felt. As to the fire, it would be necessary to take care that it should not go out, and always to keep some embers among the cinders. But it was only a matter of care and attention as the wood was plenty, and the supply could always be renewed in good time.

Pencroff began at once to utilize the fire by preparing something more nourishing than a dish of lithodomes. Two dozen eggs were brought by Herbert, and the reporter, seated in a corner, watched these proceedings without speaking. A triple thought held possession of his mind. Did Cyrus still live? If alive, where was he? If he had survived his plunge, why was it he had found no means of making his existence known? As to Neb, he roamed the sand like one distracted.

Pencroff, who knew fifty-two ways of cooking eggs, had no choice at this time. He contented himself with placing them in the hot cinders and letting them cook slowly. In a few minutes the operation was finished, and the sailor invited the reporter to take part in the supper. This was the first meal of the castaways upon this unknown coast. The hard eggs were excellent, and as the egg contains all the elements necessary for man's nourishment, these poor men found them sufficient, and felt their strength reviving.

Unfortunately, one was absent from this repast. If the five prisoners who had escaped from Richmond had all been there, under those piled-up rocks, before that bright and crackling fire upon that dry sand, their happiness would have been complete. But the most ingenious, as well as the most learned—he who was undoubtedly their chief, Cyrus Smith—alas! was missing, and his body had not even obtained burial.

Thus passed the 25th of March. The night was come. Outside they heard the whistling of the wind, the monotonous thud of the surf, and the grinding of the pebbles on the beach.

The reporter had retired to a dark corner, after having briefly noted the events of the day—the first sight of this new land, the loss of the engineer, the exploration of the shore, the incidents of the matches, etc.; and, overcome by fatigue, he was enabled to find some rest in sleep.

Herbert fell asleep at once. The sailor, dozing, with one eye open, passed the night by the fire, on which he kept heaping fuel.

One only of the castaways did not rest in the Chimneys. It was the inconsolable, the despairing Neb, who, during the whole night, and in spite of his companions' efforts to make him take some rest, wandered upon the sands calling his master.

## CHAPTER VI

THE CASTAWAYS' INVENTORY-NO EFFECTS  
— THE CHARRED LINEN-AN EXPEDITION INTO THE  
FOREST-THE FLORA OF THE WOODS-THE FLIGHT  
OF THE JACAMAR-TRACKS OF WILD BEASTS-THE  
COUROUCOUS-THE HEATH-COCK-LINE-FISHING  
EXTRAORDINARY.

The inventory of the castaways can be promptly taken. Thrown upon a desert coast, they had nothing but the clothes they wore in the balloon. We must add Spilett's watch and note-book, which he had kept by some inadvertence; but there were no firearms and no tools, not even a pocket knife. Every thing had been thrown overboard to lighten the balloon. Every necessary of life was wanting!

Yet if Cyrus Smith had been with them, his

practical science and inventive genius would have saved them from despair. But, alas! they could hope to see him no more. The castaways could rely on Providence only, and on their own right hands.

And, first, should they settle down on this strip of coast without an effort to discover whether it was island or continent, inhabited or desert? It was an urgent question, for all their measures would depend upon its solution. However, it seemed to Pencroff better to wait a few days before undertaking an exploration. They must try to procure more satisfying food than eggs and shellfish, and repair their strength, exhausted by fatigue and by the inclemency of the weather. The Chimneys would serve as a house for a while. Their fire was lit, and it would be easy to keep alive some embers. For the time being there were plenty of eggs and shell-fish. They might even be able to kill, with a stick or a stone, some of the numerous pigeons which fluttered among the rocks. They might find fruit-trees in the neighboring forest, and they had plenty of fresh water. It was decided then to wait a few days at the Chimneys, and to prepare for an expedition either along the coast or into the interior of the country.

This plan was especially agreeable to Neb, who was in no hurry to abandon that part of the coast which had been the scene of the catastrophe. He could not and would not believe that Smith was dead. Until the waves should have thrown up the engineer's body-until Neb

should have seen with his eyes and handled with his hands his master's corpse, he believed him alive. It was an illusion which the sailor had not the heart to destroy; and there was no use in talking to Neb. He was like the dog who would not leave his master's tomb, and his grief was such that he would probably soon follow him.

Upon the morning of the 26th of March, at daybreak, Neb started along the coast northward to the spot where the sea had doubtless closed over the unfortunate engineer.

For breakfast that morning they had only eggs and lithodomes, seasoned with salt which Herbert had found in the cavities of the rocks. When the meal was over they divided forces. The reporter stayed behind to keep up the fire, and in the very improbable case of Neb's needing him to go to his assistance. Herbert and Pencroff went into the forest.

"We will go hunting, Herbert," said the sailor. "We shall find ammunition on our way, and we will cut our guns in the forest."

But, before starting, Herbert suggested that as they had no tinder they must replace it by burnt linen. They were sorry to sacrifice a piece of handkerchief, but the need was urgent, and a piece of Pencroff's large check handkerchief was soon converted into a charred rag, and put away in the central chamber in a little cavity of the rock, sheltered from wind and dampness.

By this time it was 9 o'clock. The weather was

threatening and the breeze blew from the southeast. Herbert and Pencroff, as they left the Chimneys, cast a glance at the smoke which curled upwards from amid the rocks; then they walked up the left bank of the river.

When they reached the forest, Pencroff broke from the first tree two thick branches which he made into cudgels, and whose points Herbert blunted against a rock. What would he not have given for a knife? Then the hunters walked on in the high grass along the bank of the river, which, after its turn to the southwest, gradually narrowed, running between high banks and over-arched by interlacing trees. Pencroff, not to lose his way, determined to follow the course of the stream, which would bring him back to his point of departure. But the bank offered many obstacles. Here, trees whose flexible branches bent over to the brink of the current; there, thorns and lianas which they had to break with their sticks. Herbert often glided between the broken stumps with the agility of a young cat and disappeared in the copse, but Pencroff called him back at once, begging him not to wander away.

Meanwhile, the sailor carefully observed the character and peculiarities of the region. On this left bank the surface was flat, rising insensibly towards the interior. Sometimes it was moist and swampy, indicating the existence of a subterranean network of little streams emptying themselves into the river. Sometimes, too, a brook ran across the copse, which

they crossed without trouble. The opposite bank was more undulating, and the valley, through whose bottom flowed the river, was more clearly defined. The hill, covered with trees rising in terraces, intercepted the vision. Along this right bank they could hardly have walked, for the descent was steep, and the trees which bent over the water were only sustained by their roots. It is needless to say that both forest and shore seemed a virgin wilderness. They saw fresh traces of animals whose species was unknown to them. Some seemed to them the tracks of dangerous wild beasts, but nowhere was there the mark of an axe on a tree-trunk, or the ashes of a fire, or the imprint of a foot. They should no doubt have been glad that it was so, for on this land in the mid-Pacific, the presence of man was a thing more to be dreaded than desired.

They hardly spoke, so great were the difficulties of the route; after an hour's walk they had but just compassed a mile. Hitherto their hunting had been fruitless. Birds were singing and flying to and fro under the trees; but they showed an instinctive fear of their enemy man. Herbert descried among them, in a swampy part of the forest, a bird with narrow and elongated beak, in shape something like a kingfisher, from which it was distinguished by its harsh and lustrous plumage.

“That must be a jacamar,” said Herbert, trying to get within range of the bird.

“It would be a good chance to taste jacamar,” answered the sailor, “if that fellow would only let himself be roasted.”

In a moment a stone, adroitly aimed by the boy, struck the bird on the wing; but the jacamar took to his legs and disappeared in a minute.

“What a muff I am,” said Herbert. “Not at all,” said the sailor. “It was a good shot, a great many would have missed the bird. Don’t be discouraged, we’ll catch him again some day.”

The wood opened as the hunters went on, and the trees grew to a vast height, but none had edible fruits. Pencroff sought in vain for some of those precious palm trees, which lend themselves so wonderfully to the needs of mankind, and which grow from 40° north latitude to 35° south. But this forest was composed only of conifers, such as the deodars, already recognized by Herbert; the Douglas pines, which grow on the northeast coast of America; and magnificent fir trees, 150 feet high. Among their branches was fluttering a flock of birds, with small bodies and long, glittering tails. Herbert picked up some of the feathers, which lay scattered on the ground, and looked at them carefully.

“These are ‘couroucous,’” said he.

“I would rather have a guinea-hen, or a heath-cock,” said Pencroff, “but still, if they are good to eat”-

“They are good to eat,” said Herbert; “their meat

is delicious. Besides, I think we can easily get at them with our sticks.”

Slipping through the grass, they reached the foot of a tree whose lower branches were covered with the little birds, who were snapping at the flying insects. Their feathered claws clutched tight the twigs on which they were sitting. Then the hunters rose to their feet, and using their sticks like a scythe, they mowed down whole rows of the couroucous, of whom 105 were knocked over before the stupid birds thought of escape.

“Good,” said Pencroff, “this is just the sort of game for hunters like us. We could catch them in our hands.”

They skewered the couroucous on a switch like field-larks, and continued to explore. The object of the expedition was, of course, to bring back as much game as possible to the Chimneys. So far it had not been altogether attained. They looked about everywhere, and were enraged to see animals escaping through the high grass. If they had only had Top! But Top, most likely, had perished with his master.

About 3 o'clock they entered a wood full of juniper trees, at whose aromatic berries flocks of birds were pecking. Suddenly they heard a sound like the blast of a trumpet. It was the note of those gallinaceæ, called “tetas” in the United States. Soon they saw several pairs of them, with brownish-yellow plumage and brown tails. Pencroff determined to capture one of

these birds, for they were as big as hens, and their meat as delicious as a pullet. But they would not let him come near them. At last, after several unsuccessful attempts, he said,

“Well, since we can’t kill them on the wing, we must take them with a line.”

“Like a carp,” cried the wondering Herbert.

“Like a carp,” answered the sailor, gravely.

Pencroff had found in the grass half-a-dozen tetras nests, with two or three eggs in each.

He was very careful not to touch these nests, whose owners would certainly return to them. Around these he purposed to draw his lines, not as a snare, but with hook and bait. He took Herbert to some distance from the nests, and there made ready his singular apparatus with the care of a true disciple of Isaac Walton. Herbert watched the work with a natural interest, but without much faith in its success. The lines were made of small lianas tied together, from fifteen to twenty feet long, and stout thorns with bent points, broken from a thicket of dwarf acacias, and fastened to the ends of the lianas, served as hooks, and the great red worms which crawled at their feet made excellent bait. This done, Pencroff, walking stealthily through the grass, placed one end of his hook-and-line close to the nests of the tetras. Then he stole back, took the other end in his hand, and hid himself with Herbert behind a large tree. Herbert, it must be said, was not sanguine of

success.

A good half hour passed, but as the sailor had foreseen, several pairs of tetras returned to their nests. They hopped about, pecking the ground, and little suspecting the presence of the hunters, who had taken care to station themselves to leeward of the gallinaceæ. Herbert held his breath with excitement, while Pencroff, with dilated eyes, open month, and lips parted as if to taste a morsel of tetras, scarcely breathed. Meanwhile the gallinaceæ walked heedlessly among the hooks. Pencroff then gave little jerks, which moved the bait up and down as if the worms were still alive. How much more intense was his excitement than the fisherman's who cannot see the approach of his prey!

The jerks soon aroused the attention of the gallinaceæ, who began to peck at the bait. Three of the greediest swallowed hook and bait together. Suddenly, with a quick jerk, Pencroff pulled in his line, and the flapping of wings showed that the birds were taken.

"Hurrah!" cried he, springing upon the game, of which he was master in a moment. Herbert clapped his hands. It was the first time he had seen birds taken with a line; but the modest sailor said it was not his first attempt, and, moreover, that the merit of the invention was not his.

"And at any rate," said he, "in our present situation we must hope for many such contrivances."

The tetras were tied together by the feet, and

Pencroff, happy that they were not returning empty handed, and perceiving that the day was ending, thought it best to return home.

Their route was indicated by the river, and following it downward, by 6 o'clock, tired out by their excursion, Herbert and Pencroff re-entered the Chimneys.

## CHAPTER VII

NEB HAS NOT YET RETURNED-THE REFLECTIONS OF THE REPORTER-THE SUPPER-PROSPECT OF A BAD NIGHT-THE STORM IS FRIGHTFUL-THEY GO OUT INTO THE NIGHT-STRUGGLE WITH THE RAIN AND WIND.

Gideon Spilett stood motionless upon the shore, his arms crossed, gazing on the sea, whose horizon was darkened towards the east by a huge black cloud mounting rapidly into the zenith. The wind, already strong, was freshening, the heavens had an angry look, and the first symptoms of a heavy blow were manifesting themselves.

Herbert went into the Chimneys, and Pencroff walked towards the reporter, who was too absorbed to notice his approach.

“We will have a bad night, Mr. Spilett,” said the

sailor. "Wind and rain enough for Mother Cary's chickens."

The reporter turning, and perceiving Pencroff, asked this question:-

"How far off from the shore do you think was the basket when it was struck by the sea that carried away our companion?"

The sailor had not expected this question. He reflected an instant before answering:-

"Two cables' lengths or more."

"How much is a cable's length?" demanded Spilett.

"About 120 fathoms, or 600 feet."

"Then," said the reporter, "Cyrus Smith would have disappeared not more than 1,200 feet from the shore?"

"Not more than that."

"And his dog, too?"

"Yes."

"What astonishes me," said the reporter, "admitting that our companion and Top have perished, is the fact that neither the body of the dog nor of his master has been cast upon the shore."

"That is not astonishing with so heavy a sea," replied the sailor. "Moreover, it is quite possible that there are currents which have carried them farther up the coast."

"Then it is really your opinion that our

companion has been drowned?" asked, once more, the reporter.

"That is my opinion."

"And my opinion, Pencroff," said Spilett, "with all respect for your experience, is, that in this absolute disappearance of both Cyrus and Top, living or dead, there is something inexplicable and incredible."

"I wish I could think as you do, sir," responded Pencroff, "but, unhappily, I cannot."

After thus speaking the sailor returned to the Chimneys. A good fire was burning in the fireplace. Herbert had just thrown on a fresh armful of wood, and its flames lit up the dark recesses of the corridor.

Pencroff began at once to busy himself about dinner. It seemed expedient to provide something substantial, as all stood in need of nourishment, so two tetras were quickly plucked, spitted upon a stick, and placed to roast before a blazing fire. The couroucous were reserved for the next day.

At 7 o'clock Neb was still absent, and Pencroff began to be alarmed about him. He feared that he might have met with some accident in this unknown land, or that the poor fellow had been drawn by despair to some rash act. Herbert, on the contrary, argued that Neb's absence was owing to some fresh discovery which had induced him to prolong his researches. And anything new must be to Cyrus Smith's advantage. Why had not Neb come back, if some hope was not detaining him?

Perhaps he had found some sign or footprint which had put him upon the track. Perhaps, at this moment he was following the trail. Perhaps, already, he was beside his master.

Thus the lad spoke and reasoned, unchecked by his companions. The reporter nodded approval, but Pencroff thought it more probable that Neb, in his search, had pushed on so far that he had not been able to return.

Meantime, Herbert, excited by vague presentiments, manifested a desire to go to meet Neb. But Pencroff showed him that it would be useless in the darkness and storm to attempt to find traces of the negro, and, that the better course was, to wait. If, by morning, Neb had not returned, Pencroff would not hesitate joining the lad in a search for him.

Gideon Spilett concurred with the sailor in his opinion that they had better remain together, and Herbert, though tearfully, gave up the project. The reporter could not help embracing the generous lad.

The storm began. A furious gust of wind passed over the coast from the southeast. They heard the sea, which was out, roaring upon the reef. The whirlwind drove the rain in clouds along the shore. The sand, stirred up by the wind, mingled with the rain, and the air was filled with mineral as well as aqueous dust. Between the mouth of the river and the cliff's face, the wind whirled about as in a maelstrom, and, finding no

other outlet than the narrow valley through which ran the stream, it rushed through this with irresistible violence.

Often, too, the smoke from the chimney, driven back down its narrow vent, filled the corridors, and rendered them uninhabitable. Therefore, when the tetras were cooked Pencroff let the fire smoulder, only preserving some clear embers among the ashes.

At 8 o'clock Neb had not returned; but they could not help admitting that now the tempest alone was sufficient to account for his non-appearance, and that, probably, he had sought refuge in some cavern, waiting the end of the storm, or, at least, daybreak. As to going to meet him under present circumstances, that was simply impossible.

The birds were all they had for supper, but the party found them excellent eating. Pencroff and Herbert, their appetite sharpened by their long walk, devoured them. Then each one retired to his corner, and Herbert, lying beside the sailor, extended before the fireplace, was soon asleep.

Outside, as the night advanced, the storm developed formidable proportions. It was a hurricane equal to that which had carried the prisoners from Richmond. Such tempests, pregnant with catastrophes, spreading terror over a vast area, their fury withstood by no obstacle, are frequent during the equinox. We can understand how a coast facing the east, and exposed to

the full fury of the storm, was attacked with a violence perfectly indescribable.

Happily the heap of rocks forming the Chimneys was composed of solid, enormous blocks of granite, though some of them, imperfectly balanced, seemed to tremble upon their foundations. Pencroff, placing his hand against the walls, could feel their rapid vibrations; but he said to himself, with reason, that there was no real danger, and that the improvised retreat would not tumble about their ears. Nevertheless, he heard the sound of rocks, torn from the top of the plateau by the gusts, crashing upon the shore. And some, falling perpendicularly, struck the Chimneys and flew off into fragments. Twice the sailor rose, and went to the opening of the corridor, to look abroad. But there was no danger from these inconsiderable showers of stones, and he returned to his place before the fire, where the embers glowed among the ashes.

In spite of the fury and fracas of the tempest Herbert slept profoundly, and, at length, sleep took possession of Pencroff, whose sailor life had accustomed him to such demonstrations. Gideon Spilett, who was kept awake by anxiety, reproached himself for not having accompanied Neb. We have seen that he had not given up all hope, and the presentiments which had disturbed Herbert had affected him also. His thoughts were fixed upon Neb; why had not the negro returned? He tossed about on his sandy couch,

unheeding the warfare of the elements. Then, overcome by fatigue, he would close his eyes for an instant, only to be awakened by some sudden thought.

Meantime the night advanced; and it was about 2 o'clock when Pencroff was suddenly aroused from a deep sleep by finding himself vigorously shaken.

"What's the matter?" he cried, rousing and collecting himself with the quickness peculiar to sailors.

The reporter was bending over him and saying:-

"Listen, Pencroff, listen!"

The sailor listened, but could hear no sounds other than those caused by the gusts.

"It is the wind," he said.

"No," answered Spilett, listening again, "I think I heard-"

"What?"

"The barking of a dog!"

"A dog!" cried Pencroff, springing to his feet.

"Yes-the barking-"

"Impossible!" answered the sailor. "How, in the roarings of the tempest-"

"Wait-listen," said the reporter.

Pencroff listened most attentively, and at length, during a lull, he thought he caught the sound of distant barking.

"Is it?" asked the reporter, squeezing the sailor's hand.

“Yes-yes!” said Pencroff.

“It is Top! It is Top!” cried Herbert, who had just wakened, and the three rushed to the entrance of the Chimneys.

They had great difficulty in getting out, as the wind drove against them with fury, but at last they succeeded, and then they were obliged to steady themselves against the rocks. They were unable to speak, but they looked about them. The darkness was absolute. Sea, sky, and earth, were one intense blackness. It seemed as if there was not one particle of light diffused in the atmosphere.

For some moments the reporter and his two companions stood in this place, beset by the gusts, drenched by the rain, blinded by the sand. Then again, in the hush of the storm, they heard, far away, the barking of a dog. This must be Top. But was he alone or accompanied? Probably alone, for if Neb had been with him, the negro would have hastened, at once, to the Chimneys.

The sailor pressed the reporter's hand in a manner signifying that he was to remain without, and then returning to the corridor, emerged a moment later with a lighted fagot, which he threw into the darkness, at the same time whistling shrilly. At this signal, which seemed to have been looked for, the answering barks came nearer, and soon a dog bounded into the corridor, followed by the three companions. An armful of wood

was thrown upon the coals, brightly lighting up the passage.

“It is Top!” cried Herbert.

It was indeed Top, a magnificent Anglo-Norman, uniting in the cross of the two breeds those qualities—swiftness of foot and keenness of scent—indispensable in coursing dogs. But he was alone! Neither his master nor Neb accompanied him.

It seemed inexplicable how, through the darkness and storm, the dog’s instinct had directed him to the Chimneys, a place he was unacquainted with. But still more unaccountable was the fact that he was neither fatigued nor exhausted nor soiled with mud or sand. Herbert had drawn him towards him, patting his head; and the dog rubbed his neck against the lad’s hands.

“If the dog is found, the master will be found also,” said the reporter.

“God grant it!” responded Herbert. “Come, let us set out. Top will guide us!”

Pencroff made no objection. He saw that the dog’s cunning had disproved his conjectures.

“Let us set out at once,” he said; and covering the fire so that it could be relighted on their return, and preceded by the dog, who seemed to invite their departure, the sailor, having gathered up the remnants of the supper, followed by the reporter and Herbert, rushed into the darkness.

The tempest, then in all its violence, was,

perhaps, at its maximum intensity. The new moon had not sufficient light to pierce the clouds. It was difficult to follow a straight course. The better way, therefore, was to trust to the instinct of Top; which was done. The reporter and the lad walked behind the dog, and the sailor followed after. To speak was impossible. The rain, dispersed by the wind, was not heavy, but the strength of the storm was terrible.

Fortunately, as it came from the southeast, the wind was at the back of the party, and the sand, hurled from behind, did not prevent their march. Indeed, they were often blown along so rapidly as nearly to be overthrown. But they were sustained by a great hope. This time, at least, they were not wandering at random. They felt, no doubt, that Neb had found his master and had sent the faithful dog to them. But was the engineer living, or had Neb summoned his companions only to render the last services to the dead?

After having passed the smooth face of rock, which they carefully avoided, the party stopped to take breath. The angle of the cliff sheltered them from the wind, and they could breathe freely after this tramp, or rather race, of a quarter of an hour. They were now able to hear themselves speak, and the lad having pronounced the name of Smith, the dog seemed to say by his glad barking that his master was safe.

“Saved! He is saved! Isn’t he, Top?” repeated the boy. And the dog barked his answer.

It was half-past 2 when the march was resumed. The sea began to rise, and this, which was a spring tide backed up by the wind, threatened to be very high. The tremendous breakers thundered against the reef, assailing it so violently as probably to pass completely over the islet, which was invisible. The coast was no longer sheltered by this long breakwater, but was exposed to the full fury of the open sea.

After the party were clear of the precipice the storm attacked them again with fury. Crouching, with backs still to the wind, they followed Top, who never hesitated in his course. Mounting towards the north, they had upon their right the endless line of breakers deafening them with its thunders, and upon their left a region buried in darkness. One thing was certain, that they were upon an open plain, as the wind rushed over them without rebounding as it had done from the granite cliffs.

By 4 o'clock they estimated the distance travelled as eight miles. The clouds had risen a little, and the wind was drier and colder. Insufficiently clad, the three companions suffered cruelly, but no murmur passed their lips. They were determined to follow Top wherever he wished to lead them.

Towards 5 o'clock the day began to break. At first, overhead, where some grey shadowings bordered the clouds, and presently, under a dark band a bright streak of light sharply defined the sea horizon. The

crests of the billows shone with a yellow light and the foam revealed its whiteness. At the same time, on the left, the hilly parts of the shore were confusedly defined in grey outlines upon the blackness of the night. At 6 o'clock it was daylight. The clouds sped rapidly overhead. The sailor and his companions were some six miles from the Chimneys, following a very flat shore, bordered in the offing by a reef of rocks whose surface only was visible above the high tide. On the left the country sloped up into downs bristling with thistles, giving a forbidding aspect to the vast sandy region. The shore was low, and offered no other resistance to the ocean than an irregular chain of hillocks. Here and there was a tree, leaning its trunks and branches towards the west. Far behind, to the southwest, extended the borders of the forest.

At this moment Top gave unequivocal signs of excitement. He ran ahead, returned, and seemed to try to hurry them on. The dog had left the coast, and guided by his wonderful instinct, without any hesitation had gone among the downs. They followed him through a region absolutely devoid of life.

The border of the downs, itself large, was composed of hills and hillocks, unevenly scattered here and there. It was like a little Switzerland of sand, and nothing but a dog's astonishing instinct could find the way.

Five minutes after leaving the shore the reporter

and his companions reached a sort of hollow, formed in the back of a high down, before which Top stopped with a loud bark. The three entered the cave.

Neb was there, kneeling beside a body extended upon a bed of grass-

It was the body of Cyrus Smith.

## CHAPTER VIII

IS CYPRUS SMITH ALIVE? — NEB'S  
STORY-FOOTPRINTS — AN INSOLUBLE  
QUESTION-THE FIRST WORDS OF  
SMITH-COMPARE THE FOOTPRINTS-RETURN TO  
THE CHIMNEYS-PENCROFF DEJECTED.

Neb did not move. The sailor uttered one word.

“Living!” he cried.

The negro did not answer. Spilett and Pencroff turned pale. Herbert, clasping his hands, stood motionless. But it was evident that the poor negro, overcome by grief, had neither seen his companions nor heard the voice of the sailor.

The reporter knelt down beside the motionless body, and, having opened the clothing, pressed his ear to the chest of the engineer. A minute, which seemed an age, passed, daring which he tried to detect some movement of the heart.

Neb raised up a little, and looked on as if in a trance. Overcome by exhaustion, prostrated by grief, the poor fellow was hardly recognizable. He believed his master dead.

Gideon Spilett, after a long and attentive examination, rose up.

“He lives!” he said.

Pencroff, in his turn, knelt down beside Cyrus Smith; he also detected some heartbeats, and a slight breath issuing from the lips of the engineer. Herbert, at a word from the reporter, hurried in search of water. A hundred paces off he found a clear brook swollen by the late rains and filtered by the sand. But there was nothing, not even a shell, in which to carry the water; so the lad had to content himself with soaking his handkerchief in the stream, and hastened back with it to the cave.

Happily the handkerchief held sufficient for Spilett’s purpose, which was simply to moisten the lips of the engineer. The drops of fresh water produced an instantaneous effect. A sigh escaped from the breast of Smith, and it seemed as if he attempted to speak.

“We shall save him,” said the reporter. Neb took heart at these words. He removed the clothing from his master to see if his body was anywhere wounded. But neither on his head nor body nor limbs was there a bruise or even a scratch, an astonishing circumstance, since he must have been tossed about among the rocks;

even his hands were uninjured, and it was difficult to explain how the engineer should exhibit no mark of the efforts which he must have made in getting over the reef.

But the explanation of this circumstance would come later, when Cyrus Smith could speak. At present, it was necessary to restore his consciousness, and it was probable that this result could be accomplished by friction. For this purpose they made use of the sailor's pea-jacket. The engineer, warmed by this rude rubbing, moved his arms slightly, and his breathing began to be more regular. He was dying from exhaustion, and, doubtless, had not the reporter and his companions arrived, it would have been all over with Cyrus Smith.

“You thought he was dead?” asked the sailor.

“Yes, I thought so,” answered Neb. “And if Top had not found you and brought you back, I would have buried my master and died beside him.”

The engineer had had a narrow escape!

Then Neb told them what had happened. The day before, after having left the Chimneys at day-break, he had followed along the coast in a direction due north, until he reached that part of the beach which he had already visited. There, though, as he said, without hope of success, he searched the shore, the rocks, the sand for any marks that could guide him, examining most carefully that part which was above high-water mark, as below that point the ebb and flow of the tide would

have effaced all traces. He did not hope to find his master living. It was the discovery of the body which he sought, that he might bury it with his own hands. He searched a long time, without success. It seemed as if nothing human had ever been upon that desolate shore. Of the millions of shell-fish lying out of reach of the tide, not a shell was broken. There was no sign of a landing having ever been made there. The negro then decided to continue some miles further up the coast. It was possible that the currents had carried the body to some distant point. For Neb knew that a corpse, floating a little distance from a low shore, was almost certain, sooner or later, to be thrown upon the strand, and he was desirous to look upon his master one last time.

“I followed the shore two miles further, looking at it at low and high water, hardly hoping to find anything, when yesterday evening, about 5 o’clock, I discovered footprints upon the sand.”

“Footprints,” cried Pencroff.

“Yes, sir,” replied Neb.

“And did they begin at the water?” demanded the reporter.

“No,” answered the negro, “above high-water mark; below that the tide had washed out the others.”

“Go on, Neb,” said Spilett.

“The sight of these footprints made me wild with joy. They wore very plain, and went towards the

downs. I followed them for a quarter of an hour, running so as not to tread on them. Five minutes later, as it was growing dark, I heard a dog bark. It was Top. And he brought me here, to my master.”

Neb finished his recital by telling of his grief at the discovery of the inanimate body. He had tried to discover some signs of life still remaining in it. But all his efforts were in vain. There was nothing, therefore, to do but to perform the last offices to him whom he had loved so well. Then he thought of his companions. They, too, would wish to look once more upon their comrade. Top was there. Could he not rely upon the sagacity of that faithful animal? So having pronounced several times the name of the reporter, who, of all the engineer's companions, was best known by Top, and having at the same time motioned towards the south, the dog bounded off in the direction indicated.

We have seen how, guided by an almost supernatural instinct, the dog had arrived at the Chimneys.

Neb's companions listened to his story with the greatest attention. How the engineer had been able to reach this cave in the midst of the downs, more than a mile from the beach, was as inexplicable as was his escape from the waves and rocks without a scratch.

“So you, Neb,” said the reporter, “did not bring your master to this place?”

“No, it was not I,” answered Neb.