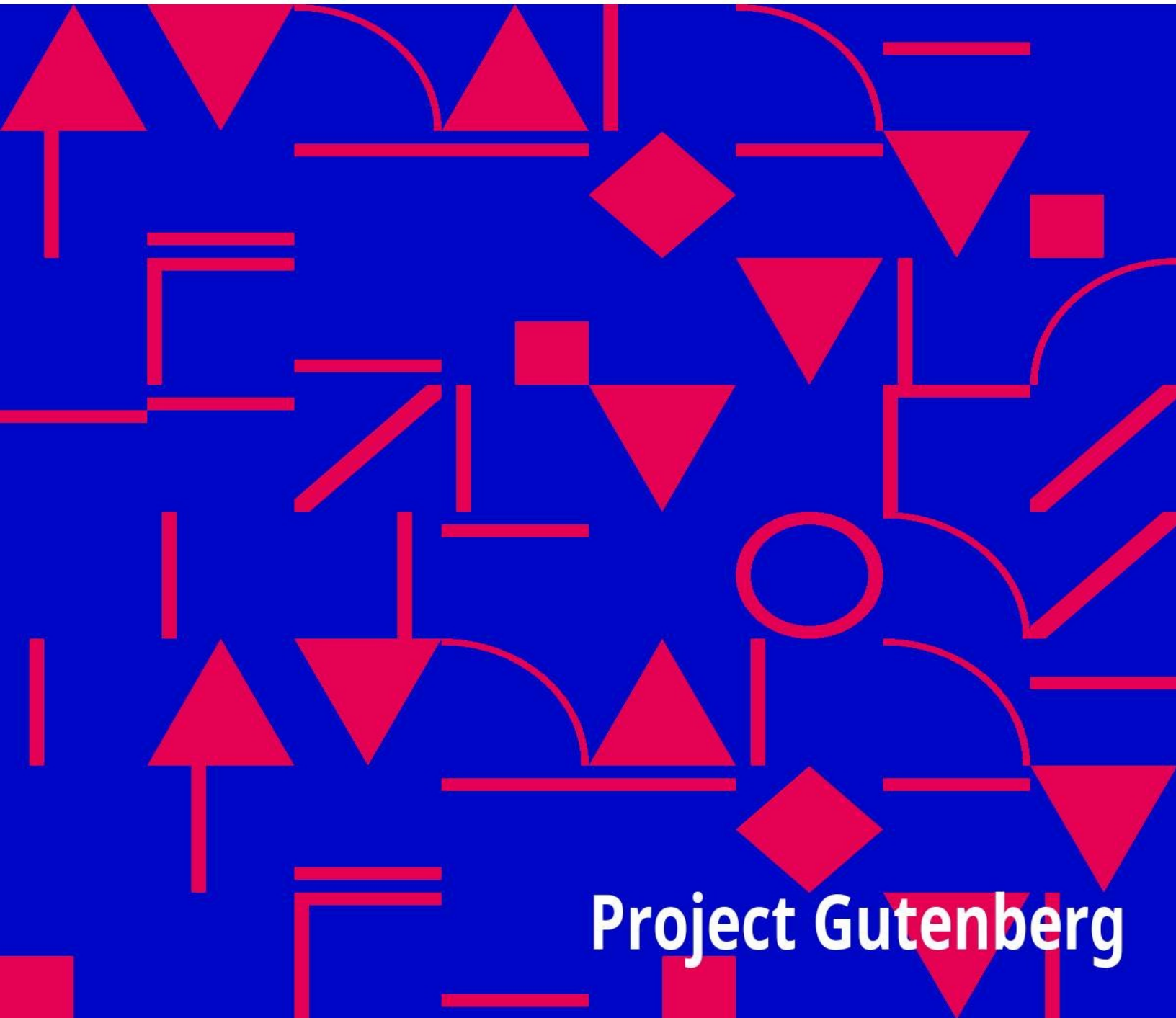
Asiatic Breezes; Or, Students on The Wing

Oliver Optic



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"The stern of the Fatima suddenly went down."
"The stern of the Fatima suddenly went down." Page 127.

All-Over-the-World Library—Second Series

ASIATIC BREEZES

OR

STUDENTS ON THE WING

BY

OLIVER OPTIC

AUTHOR OF "THE ARMY AND NAVY SERIES" "YOUNG AMERICA ABROAD FIRST AND SECOND SERIES" "THE BOAT-CLUB STORIES" "THE GREAT WESTERN SERIES" "THE WOODVILLE STORIES" "THE ONWARD AND UPWARD SERIES" "THE LAKE SHORE SERIES" "THE YACHT-CLUB SERIES" "THE RIVERDALE STORIES" "THE BOAT BUILDER SERIES" "THE BLUE AND THE GRAY AFLOAT" "THE BLUE AND THE GRAY ON LAND" "STARRY FLAG SERIES" "ALL-OVER-THE-WORLD LIBRARY FIRST AND SECOND SERIES" "A MISSING MILLION" "A MILLIONAIRE AT SIXTEEN" "A YOUNG KNIGHT-ERRANT" "STRANGE SIGHTS ABROAD" "AMERICAN BOYS AFLOAT" "THE YOUNG NAVIGATORS" "UP AND DOWN THE NILE" ETC.

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ASIATIC BREEZES

ELECTROTYPING BY C. J. PETERS & SON, BOSTON U.S.A.

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To

MY APPRECIATIVE FRIEND AND BROTHER

FOSTER A. WHITNEY Esq.

OF SOUTHINGTON CONN.

This Volume

IS FRATERNALLY AND RESPECTFULLY

DEDICATED

PREFACE

"ASIATIC BREEZES" is the fourth volume of the second series of the "All-Over-the-World Library." Starting out from Alexandria, Egypt, after the adventures and explorations of the Guardian-Mother party in that interesting country, which included an excursion up the Nile to the First Cataract, the steamer sails out upon the Mediterranean, closely followed by her little consort. The enemy who had made a portion of the voyage exceedingly disagreeable to the watchful commander has been thwarted in all his schemes, and the threatened danger kept at a distance, even while those who are most deeply interested are unconscious of its existence.

But the old enemy immediately appears on the coast, as was expected, and an attempt is made to carry out a plan to escape from further annoyance. The little steamer sails for the island of Cyprus, as arranged beforehand, and reaches her destination, though she encounters a smart gale on the voyage, through which the young navigators carry their lively little craft. Plans do not always work as they have been arranged; and by an accident the young people are left to fight their own battle, as has happened several times before in the history of the cruise.

A considerable portion of the volume is taken up with the record of some very stirring events in a certain bay of the island of Cyprus, where the little steamer had made a harbor after the gale, and where the Guardian-Mother had failed to join her, as agreed upon. The story relates the manner in which the young captain, actively seconded by his shipmates, extricates his little craft from a very perilous situation, though it involves a disaster to the piratical enemy and his steamer. The conduct of the boy-commander brings up several questions of interest, upon which everybody has a right to his own opinion.

The steamer and her consort pass through the Suez Canal, which is minutely described, both in its construction and operation. Some of those on board of the steamer are interested in Scripture history, including the commander; and the residence of the Israelites in the "Land of Goshen," as well as their pilgrimage into Asia, pursued by "Pharaoh and his host," are considered at some length. Some of the different views in regard to the passage of the Red Sea are given, though he who presents them clings to the narrative as he read it from the Bible

in his childhood.

Though the party for reasons given do not go to Mount Sinai, the peninsula to which it now gives its name is not neglected. Mount Serbal, and what is generally regarded as the Holy Mountain, are seen from the deck of the steamer, though some claim that the former is the scene of the delivery of the tablets of the Law to Moses. The captain of the steamer does not regard himself as a mere shipmaster; for in recommending the voyage for the young millionaire, he makes a great deal of its educational features, not alone for its opportunities for sight-seeing, but for study and receiving instruction. As earnest in carrying out his idea in the latter as well as the former, he has made a lecture-room of the deck of the vessel.

The physical geography of the regions passed through is considered, as well as the history; and as the ship is in the vicinity of the kingdoms of the ancient world, the professor has something to say to his audience about Assyria, Babylonia, Arabia, the Caliphate, and gives an epitome of the life of Mohammed, and the rise and progress of Islamism.

In the last chapters the story, which has been extended through several volumes, appears to be brought to a conclusion in a manner that may astonish the reader. However that may be, the termination points to an enlarged field of operations in the future for the party as they visit the vast empires where blow the Asiatic breezes.

WILLIAM T. ADAMS.

DORCHESTER, MASS., September 30, 1894.

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ASIATIC BREEZES

CHAPTER I

PREPARING TO OUTWIT THE ENEMY

"Only one great mistake has been made, Louis Belgrave," said Captain George Scott Fencelowe.

He was a young man of eighteen; but the title by which he was addressed was genuine so far as his position was actually concerned, though it would hardly have passed muster before a court of admiralty of the United States, whose flag was displayed on the ensign-staff at the stern. The vessel was a small steam-yacht, only forty feet in length, but furnished in a miniature way with most of the appliances of a regular steamer.

She had a cabin twelve feet long, whose broad divans could be changed into berths for the four principal personages on board of her. Abaft this apartment was a standing-room with seating accommodations for eight persons, or twelve with a little crowding, with luxurious cushions and an awning overhead when needed.

Her pilot-house, engine-room, galley, and forecastle were as regular as though she had been an ocean steamer of a thousand tons. Her ordinary speed was ten knots an hour; but she could be driven up to twelve on an emergency, and had even made a trifle more than this when an extraordinary effort was required of the craft.

She had been built for a Moorish Pacha of the highest rank and of unbounded wealth, who had ordered that no expense should be spared in her construction and outfit. She was built of steel as strong as it was possible to build a vessel of any kind; and in more than one heavy gale on the Mediterranean she had proved herself to be an unusually able and weatherly craft.

Though she had formerly been called the Salihé, her name had been changed by her later American owners to the Maud. Everything about her was as luxurious as it was substantial. She had a ship's company of seven persons, only two of whom had reached and passed their majority, the other five varying in age from fifteen to eighteen.

The principal personages were boys, three of them having attained the mature age of eighteen, while the fourth was only fifteen. This quartet sometimes called themselves the "Big Four," though it was a borrowed designation, meaning something entirely different from its present signification. Captain Scott had been the first to apply the term; and he had done so simply because it tickled the tympanum of his ear, and it really meant nothing at all.

The Maud was the consort, or more properly the tender, of the Guardian-Mother, a steam-yacht of over six hundred tons' burden, now engaged in making a voyage around the world. In a preceding volume it was related in what manner Louis Belgrave became a millionaire, with fifty per cent more than money enough to entitle him to this rather indefinite appellation. How he happened to be the proprietor of one of the finest steam-yachts that ever floated on the ocean was also explained, through a somewhat complicated narrative, and the details of a cruise to Bermuda, the Bahama Islands, and Cuba, followed by a voyage across the Atlantic and up the Mediterranean, the steamer and her tender having just sailed from Alexandria after the tour of Egypt.

The ship, as the larger steamer was generally called to distinguish her from the smaller one, was the Guardian-Mother. This may be regarded as rather an odd name for a steamship, but it had been selected by the young millionaire himself as a tribute of love, affection, and honor to his mother; for they were devotedly attached to each other, and their relations were almost sentimental. Mrs. Belgrave was one of the most important passengers in the cabin of the steamer.

Felix McGavonty was born in the United States, though his parents came from Ireland. He had been the companion of Louis Belgrave from their earliest childhood; and as they grew older they became the most consummate cronies. Felix almost worshipped his friend, and the friendship was mutual. He was a fair scholar, having attended the academy at Von Blonk Park, where they lived. He could speak the English language as well as a college professor; but he was very much given to speaking with the Irish brogue, in honor of his mother he insisted, and dragged into his speech all the dialects known in the Green Isle, and perhaps supplemented them with some inventions of his own. That great American humorist might have said of Felix just what he did of the kangaroo.

Captain Scott had been a wild boy, in fact, a decidedly bad boy. He had been picked up with his foster-father in the Bahamas. His only guardian bound him over to Captain Royal Ringgold, the commander of the Guardian-Mother, who had thoroughly and entirely reformed his life and character. He was a natural-

born sailor, and his abilities were of a high order in that direction. When the ship's company of the Maud was organized, Louis had brought his influence to bear in favor of electing him to the command, for which he was vastly better qualified than any other member of the "Big Four."

Squire Moses Scarburn, another of the all-over-the-world excursionists, was the trustee of Louis's million and a half. He was a jolly fat man, rising fifty years old. He was a lawyer by profession, and had sat upon the bench, and Louis had always been an immense favorite with him. He had taken Felix into his house as an orphan; and his housekeeper, Mrs. Sarah Blossom, had cared for him in his childhood, looked after his morals and the buttons on his shirts and trousers, till she became very fond of him.

Just before the Guardian-Mother sailed on her cruise from New York, a couple of professional gentlemen, thrown overboard by the upsetting of a sailing-yacht, were rescued from a watery grave by the people on board of the steamer, largely by the exertions of Louis. One of them was Dr. Philip Hawkes, one of the most noted medical men of the great city. He was almost the counterpart of the trustee physically, weighing two hundred and twenty-six pounds and three-quarters, while the lawyer fell a quarter of a pound short of these figures. They were continually bantering each other about this difference.

The doctor called Uncle Moses, as the entire party addressed him, "Brother Avoirdupois;" and the lawyer retorted by christening the surgeon "Brother Adipose Tissue." The conductor of the party in Egypt had called them both "cupids;" and this term became very popular for the time. The other gentleman who had been saved from an untimely grave in the bay was a learned Frenchman. Both of them were in feeble health from overwork; and they accepted invitations to join the party, the one as the medical officer of the ship, and the other as the instructor in the languages as well as in the sciences generally, for which he was abundantly competent.

Louis Belgrave, in passing through the incidents of the story, had made the acquaintance of Mr. Lowell Woolridge, a Fifth Avenue millionaire and magnate. He had formerly been a well-known sportsman; but he had abandoned the race-course, though he kept up his interest in yachting. He was the owner of a large sailing schooner; and through this craft Louis and his mother became acquainted with the yachtsman's family, consisting of his wife, a son, and a daughter. The latter was a very beautiful young lady of sixteen, whose face captivated everybody who came into her presence; and Louis's mother had deemed it her

duty to warn her son against the fascination of the maiden before he had found his million.

A slight illness had threatened the young lady with possible consequences, and the physicians had advised her father to take her to Orotava, in the Canary Islands. On the voyage the yacht had been nearly wrecked, and the family had been rescued by the officers and crew of the Guardian-Mother. The yacht sailed in company with the steamer; and they visited Mogadore, in Morocco. Here Ali-Noury Pacha, one of the richest and most influential magnates of the country, paid a visit to the ship. Unfortunately he saw the beautiful Blanche Woolridge, and was more attentive to her than pleased her parents.

They were alarmed, for of course the Pacha was a Mohammedan. Captain Ringgold found a way out of the difficulty by towing the sailing-yacht out of the harbor; and both vessels hastened to Madeira. The Moor followed them in his steam-yacht, the Fatimé; but the commander put to sea as soon as he realized the situation. At Gibraltar the Pacha confronted the party again. The commander had learned at Funchal that His Highness was a villanously bad character, and he positively refused to permit him to visit or to meet the lady passengers on board his ship. He was an honest, upright, and plain-spoken man. He stated that the Pacha was not a suitable person to associate with Christian ladies.

This led to a personal attack upon the stalwart commander, and the Pacha was knocked into the mud in the street. This had fanned his wrath to a roaring name, for he had been fined before an English court for the assault. His passion for revenge was even more determined than his admiration for the "houri," as he called the maiden. He had followed the ship to Constantinople, engaged a felucca and a ruffian, assisted by a French detective, to capture the fair girl, as the story has already informed the reader in other volumes.

The national affairs of His Highness had called him home, but he had apparently placed his steam-yacht in command of a Captain Mazagan; and this ruffian, attended by Ulbach, the detective, had followed the party to Egypt. The capture of Louis Belgrave, or the young lady, or both of them, was the object of the ruffian, who was to receive two hundred thousand francs if he succeeded, or half that sum if he failed. Louis had had a narrow escape from these ruffians in Cairo; but he had worked his way out of the difficulty, assisted by a chance incident.

The Fatimé had been discovered in the harbor of Alexandria before the Guardian-Mother and her tender sailed. The peril which menaced the young lady

had been kept a profound secret from all except three of the "Big Four;" for the commander believed himself abundantly able to protect his passengers, and the knowledge of the danger would have made the ladies so nervous and terrified that Mrs. Belgrave and the Woolridges would have insisted upon returning to New York, and abandoning the voyage from which so much of pleasure and instruction was expected.

Captain Ringgold and Louis had considered the situation, and fully realized the intention of Captain Mazagan to follow the steamer and her little consort. They had agreed upon a plan, after Captain Scott and Felix, who was the detective of the ship, by which they hoped to "fool" the enemy, as the young commander expressed it. The Fatimé had sailed early in the morning, but she was soon discovered off the Bay of Abukir. The reader is now in condition to inquire into what Captain Scott regarded as the one great mistake that had been made in the arrangements for outwitting the Moorish steam-yacht.

The young captain was in the pilot-house of the Maud when the steamer was discovered. He was the commander; but the smallness of the ship's company made it necessary for him to keep his own watch, which is usually done by the second mate for him. Morris Woolridge, who had had considerable experience in his father's yacht, was the first officer, and there was no other. The young millionaire, in spite of his influence as owner, had insisted on serving as a common sailor, or deck-hand, with Felix. There were two engineers and a cook, who will be presented when they are needed.

"What is the one great mistake, Captain Scott?" asked Louis, who stood at the open window in front of the pilot-house.

"The single mistake of any consequence is in the fact that you are on board of the Maud when you ought to be stowed away in the cabin of the Guardian-Mother," replied the captain very decidedly, with something bordering on disgust in his tones and manner. "Instead of keeping you out of danger, you are running just as straight into the lion's den as you can go, Louis."

"Where is the lion's den, please to inform me," replied the young millionaire, scouting, in his tones and manner, any idea of peril to himself which was not shared by his companions.

"On board of that four-hundred-ton steamer which you see off by the coast."

"Do you think I ought to be any more afraid of her than the rest of the fellows?"

demanded Louis. "Do you wish me to stand back and stay behind a fence while you face the enemy?"

"Of course I don't believe you are afraid, Louis, my dear fellow," added Captain Scott, perhaps fearing he had said too much, or had been misunderstood.

But just at that moment Morris Woolridge came forward, and neither of them was willing to continue the conversation in his presence; for he might fall into the possession of the secret which was so carefully guarded.

CHAPTER II

HARMONY DISTURBED, BUT HAPPILY RESTORED

Morris Woolridge was the first officer of the Maud, and as such he had charge of the port watch. The captain had been two hours at the wheel, and it was Morris's turn to take his trick; and the change was made. At the same time Felix McGavonty relieved Louis. Although the helmsman was always in position to see out ahead of the steamer, the other member of the watch was required to serve as lookout on the forecastle.

Except in heavy weather, when all hands were required to be on duty, the watch not employed had nothing to do, and the members of it could use the time as they pleased. Sometimes they had lost sleep to make up; but most of the leisure hours during the day were given to study, for the commander had stimulated the ambition of the boys so that they were anxious to be prepared to speak on all subjects that were considered at the conferences, or lectures, on board the Guardian-Mother.

Regular subjects for special study were given out, always with reference to the topics of the country that was next to be visited, or was to be seen from the deck of the vessels. After the business of outwitting the enemy on board of the Fatimé, which was an episode in the voyage forced upon the commander and his confidants, the steamers would pass through the Suez Canal, and proceed by the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean.

A written list of about a dozen subjects had been given out to the students on the wing, as Dr. Hawkes called the class of five who profited systematically by the instructions of Professor Giroud, though all on both steamers were more or less engaged in study. The first of these were the Land of Goshen and Mount Sinai. As the little squadron was to pass near the territory of the ancient kingdoms of Assyria, Babylon, and Syria, and the more modern realm of Mohammed and the Caliphate of Bagdad, these subjects were to follow later. At any rate, the peripatetic students had enough to prevent their active minds from becoming rusty.

It was not for two hours that Captain Scott and Louis Belgrave found another

opportunity to consider the alleged mistake, as the former regarded it; for the latter belonged to the port watch, and served with Morris. But when the Maud had made twenty miles more, they were together again, with Felix on the lookout; for he was one of the triumvirate on board in charge of the secret.

Louis took a seat in the pilot-house on one side of the wheel, while Scott was on the other. The Guardian-Mother was not a mile ahead of the Maud. The young captain had already studied up the chart, and the details of the manœuvre contemplated had been already arranged, so far as it was possible to do so.

"The ship does not seem to be letting herself out yet according to the programme," said Captain Scott, when Louis took his place near him, and Felix was using his glass, which had become his constant companion in observing the movements of the Moorish steamer.

"Captain Ringgold knows what he is about," suggested the other.

"Of course he does; but I supposed he would give his cue by this time, and begin the business of overhauling the pirate," added Scott. "Felix, is the ship stirring up her screw?"

"I think she is, Captain," replied the lookoutman; "but she does not give the signal yet."

"Keep your ears wide open tight, Flix, for it will come soon. Where is the pirate now?"

"She is directly in range with the Guardian-Mother."

If the Fatimé had not herself been engaged in piratical proceedings, her owner was responsible for the employment of her present commander on board the felucca Samothraki, in the Archipelago, in an attempt to take Louis and Miss Blanche, or both of them, out of the Maud; and he might have succeeded if Captain Ringgold had not decided to make use of the two twelve-pounders on the top-gallant forecastle of the Guardian-Mother at the critical moment.

The commander regarded Captain Mazagan as really a pirate; and he would have proceeded against him as such, if it had not been that doing so would have broken up his own voyage. With this excellent authority Scott never called the Moorish steam-yacht anything but a pirate, unless it was to save too frequent repetition of the ugly word. If Captain Ringgold had been less politic and prudent, his action would have suited his junior commander better.

"You don't think I am afraid, though one great mistake has been made in permitting me to be on board of the Maud at the present time?" said Louis, while they were waiting for the signal from the ship.

"With no reflection or disparagement upon you of any kind, Louis, I said just what I thought, and spoke just what I felt," replied the captain.

"But I don't understand your position at all, Captain Scott. I do not see that I am in any greater peril than the rest of the ship's company," added Louis with a very cheerful smile upon his good-looking face.

"I don't forget that you are the sole owner of the Guardian-Mother, and half-owner of the Maud, with a million and a half of dollars in your trousers pocket. Though we are all earning our living in your service, as well as improving our education, I for one do not lose sight of the fact that we are all dependent upon your bounty for the means of carrying on this voyage."

"What has all this to do with what we were talking about, Captain Scott?" asked Louis, very much inclined to laugh out loud at the rehearsal of the situation.

"It has this to do with it: I am very much afraid of saying something, or doing something, that will offend you," answered the captain, with more than usual deference in his tone and manner. "We came very near getting into a quarrel in Pournea Bay; and if I had forgotten for a moment what you are and what I am, we might have fallen into a jolly row."

"I acted then as mildly as I could, however, in a matter which you did not understand then, but do now; and I apologized for my interference as soon as I had the opportunity," replied Louis quite seriously. "I cannot understand why you have found it necessary to remind me that I am a millionaire on a small scale, as fortunes are measured in our country, and that I am the owner of the Guardian-Mother. You make it appear as though I regarded you as my inferior. Have I ever put on airs in my relations with you, Captain Scott?"

"Never!" replied the captain promptly, and with decided emphasis.

"Have I ever interfered with you in your command, except in the instance referred to?"

"Never!"

"Have I ever done anything to stultify, degrade you, or impair your self-respect?"

"Never!"

"Could I have done any different, or been any different, if the bill-of-sale of the Guardian-Mother had been among your effects, and the million had been in your trousers pocket instead of mine?" demanded Louis with some earnestness; for the words of his friend—and they had been very strong friends—had produced an unpleasant impression upon his mind.

"You could not, Louis! I have made a donkey of myself; you are the best friend I ever had in this world," returned the captain with emphasis. "But let me say that you have taken me on the wrong tack. I had not the remotest intention of casting the shadow of a reflection upon your demeanor towards me. You have entirely mistaken my meaning."

"Then I think you had better explain yourself."

"Since that little affair in Pournea Bay, I have been mortally afraid I should say or do something to offend you, or hurt your feelings," continued Scott. "We are going on what may prove to be a delicate business."

"I don't see how there can be anything delicate about it," added Louis.

"Perhaps that was not the right word for it. But I want to have it understood, first and foremost, that I did not remind you of the difference in our situations because I felt that I had any cause of complaint," said the captain, so earnestly that he was almost eloquent. "Without reminding you again that you are a millionaire while I am a beggar, you are the most modest fellow on board, and have always been without any let-up. By your action I am in command of the Maud. On your petition I was admitted to the cabin of the Guardian-Mother, where I have a stateroom at this moment, and a place at the table when on board of her, on an entire equality with everybody there."

"Why do you mention these matters, Captain Scott?"

"Only to show that I am not ungrateful for the many favors extended to me," answered the young man heartily. "More than all this, I was a bad egg when I came on board of the steamer. It was your influence and your example, Louis Belgrave, more than even the treatment of Captain Ringgold, which caused me to turn over a new leaf, and try to make a man of myself."

Scott turned away his head, and looked out at the starboard window, and Louis saw a gush of tears fall on the rim of the wheel as he did so. He had been about

all that is bad which a young man could be when he was committed to the care of the commander by his foster-father; but since he had been "born again," as he expressed it, he had been thoroughly faithful and exemplary, and morally he stood as high as the other members of the "Big Four." His reformation had made a new being of him, and when he reverted to it, his feelings overcame him.

"I have said too much, my dear fellow, and I am very sorry that I have hurt your feelings," interposed Louis, after he waited a few minutes for his emotion to subside. "Only don't remind me that I am a bigger fellow than the rest of you, and we shall never quarrel."

"You have never spoken an unkind word to me since I was born over again, and it was mean in me to say anything which would cut you to the quick. I did not know what I was saying, and I hope you will forgive me."

"With all my heart; for I realize now that you did not mean what I supposed you did, and you must forgive me for picking you up so suddenly," added Louis. "Now we will not say another word about the matter. We can't get up a quarrel if we try, and you cannot do or say anything now that will make me think less of you. There is my hand, my dear fellow."

Louis extended his hand across the wheel, and it was warmly pressed by the captain. It is possible that Scott had some ideas in his mind in connection with the present mission of the Maud that would more clearly have explained why he had uttered words which seemed to be a reproach on him whom he regarded as his best friend. He was a young man of eighteen, and had some of the weaknesses that belong to immaturity of age. Though he did not say so, he thought Captain Ringgold was what he considered as "rather slow" in his treatment of the pirate. It would not have been unlike many very good boys if he had believed he could manage the matter better.

"Now, Captain, let us come back to the question that was before us, the mistake that was made when I was permitted to remain on board the Maud as she came out on her present mission," said Louis, after harmony had been entirely restored.

"In order to understand why I entertain this opinion, let us overhaul my instructions from the commander," replied the captain.

"That will be the best way to get at the subject."

"In the first place, we are to engage in an attempt to shake off the pirate; for she is not only a nuisance, but a constant menace to certain members of the party," added Scott.

"All that has been admitted by the commander; though, as I happen to be one of the individuals, I may say I have not the slightest fear of anything the pirate can do."

"You have been through quite a number of perilous adventures, Louis, and you have got used to such."

"I don't throw myself into such adventures, but I can't deny that they have afforded me not a little of exhilarating excitement," replied the young millionaire. "It was you who proposed the plan to the commander which was adopted, and we are now to carry out."

"And I hope no weakness in either the ship or the Maud will cause it to be a failure. At the signal from the Guardian-Mother the Maud is to run for the island of Cyprus, distance a trifle less than two hundred knots, while the ship is to continue on her course. Then it will remain to be proved what the pirate will do. I think she will follow the Maud, though Captain Ringgold is in doubt about it; and of course I don't feel sure."

"Our machinery was overhauled by the chief engineer of the ship while we were in Egypt, and it is yet to be shown what speed she can make."

"But the pirate is not good for more than thirteen knots at the most, for we have tried it on with her. In my judgment Captain Mazagan will board us if he can, and take one of our number out of the Maud; and that is the reason why I think it was a mistake that you remained with us."

Louis could not yet see the mistake, and did not believe it was necessary that the Maud should be boarded; for that would be an act of downright piracy.

CHAPTER III

A MOMENTOUS SECRET REVEALED

"Three whistles from the Guardian-Mother," said Felix, the lookoutman, walking up to the forward windows of the pilot-house, and speaking with a low voice.

"Three whistles, and I heard them, Flix," returned Captain Scott, as he put the helm to starboard. "Where is Morris?"

"I think he is in the cabin studying Assyria and Babylon," replied Felix with a mild laugh, as he thought this was an odd occupation for the first officer of the Maud; for he was little inclined to be a student himself, though he was an attentive listener at the lectures.

Felix returned to his place in the bow, and directed the spy-glass, which he carried with him most of the time, whether on duty or not, in the direction of the Fatimé. He had a taste for the business of a detective in the higher walks of that profession, and the commander had recognized his ability. He had been employed to ascertain whether the pirate was in the waters of Egypt, having been the first to suspect her presence; and he had proved the fact beyond a doubt.

Accompanied by John Donald, the second engineer of the Maud, who spoke Arabic, he had followed Mazagan to Rosetta, where he found the Fatimé, having evidently made a port there to escape the observation of the commander of the Guardian-Mother and his people. The villain and his assistant had failed to lead Captain Ringgold into the traps set for him.

Having failed in their attempts to accomplish anything at Alexandria, the conspirators had followed the party to Cairo. Louis and Felix were sitting on a bench in the Ezbekiyeh, a park in front of their hotel, when Mazagan and the Frenchman approached them, and wished to make a compromise, which the Moor desired the young millionaire to recommend to the commander. The agent of the Pacha informed the young man that he was to receive a reward of forty thousand dollars for the capture and conveyance to Mogadore of either Louis or Miss Blanche, or both of them, or one-half that sum if he failed; and he proposed to compromise.

The use of the steam-yacht was given to him to accomplish this purpose. Mazagan was, or pretended to be, discouraged by the several failures he had made in effecting his object, and he proposed that the commander should pay him twenty thousand dollars, and then he would collect the other half of the promised stipend of the Pacha, as the promised reward in case of failure.

The pirate proved that he was a very mean and treacherous pirate, as willing to sell out his friend as his foe, and Louis was more disgusted than ever with him. He spoke his mind freely to the villain, and absolutely refused to recommend the treachery to the commander. He would as soon have compromised with the Evil One for the sale of his principles. The approach of Captain Ringgold terminated the interview, and the rascals made haste to retreat. After this they made an attempt to capture Louis, and the detective had been shot in the shoulder.

What the conspirators intended or expected to accomplish since these failures of course none of those interested could know, and it only remained for them to watch the movements of the Fatimé, and to be constantly on their guard against any possible attempt on the part of the reprobates to carry out their purpose. Only the commander of the Guardian-Mother and the three members of the "Big Four" could take these precautions, for no others knew anything at all about the necessity for them.

Felix used his glass very diligently. The Guardian-Mother did not change her course, and the Moorish steamer, which was now hardly a mile from her, was still headed to the eastward. Whether the latter would dodge into the port of Rosetta or Damietta, or give chase to the Maud, was yet to be demonstrated; and the lookoutman was watching for a movement of this kind.

"The ship is stirring up a good deal of salt water under her stern," said Felix, walking over to the pilot-house. "You can see by the power of smoke she is sending out at her funnel that the chief engineer is driving her."

"I can see that she has increased her distance from us; but according to the commander's orders I have directed Felipe to run her not more than eight or nine knots," replied the captain of the Maud. "How far ahead of the Guardian-Mother is the pirate, Felix?"

"Not more than a mile, as nearly as I can make it out," replied Felix. "But she is making the fur fly, and if the pirate don't want her to come alongside of her, or get a position where her people can overlook her deck, she will change her course within the next ten minutes;" and the lookoutman returned to his place in

the bow.

"It is lucky for that pirate that your humble servant is not in command of the Guardian-Mother," said Captain Scott.

"Do you think yourself competent to command a steamer like the Guardian-Mother, my dear fellow?" asked Louis, with a rather quizzical expression on his face.

"I know I am!" exclaimed Captain Scott emphatically; and he did not lack confidence in himself. "Why not? If I can navigate the Maud, I could do the same with the Guardian-Mother; for the size of the vessel don't make any difference in the navigation as long as both of them go out to sea off soundings. I suppose you doubt what I say?"

"I do not; for I am not a qualified judge in the matter," replied Louis, who was considerably surprised at the amount of confidence the captain of eighteen years of age had in himself. "But why is it lucky for the pirate that Captain Ringgold, instead of Captain Scott, happens to be in command of the ship?"

"Because I should serve her as the commander did another steamer of about the size of the pirate, on the run of the ship from Bermuda to Nassau, I believe it was, for I was not on board at the time," replied the captain, with decision enough in his tones and manner to indicate that he would do what he suggested. "I have heard Flix tell all about the affair; and in his estimation Hercules and General Grant were nothing at all compared with Captain Ringgold, when he tells the story. I think he believes the commander is the greatest man that is or ever was in this world, with the possible exception of yourself."

"That steamer was sailing illegally under the name of the Maud, for her proper name was the Viking; but Captain Ringgold ran into her and smashed a big hole in her port bow."

"As I would in one of the bows of the pirate."

"But there was a reason for it; I was a prisoner on board of that Maud, or Viking —captured as this pirate would serve me if he got a chance."

"I would sink him before he got the chance, rather than after he had picked you up," persisted the captain.

"I doubt if that would be a prudent measure," replied Louis, shaking his head.

"The pirate has changed her course to the southward," said Felix, coming to the window of the pilot-house again.

"What does that mean?" demanded the captain.

"It means that she is going to make a port at Rosetta."

"She is about off the Rosetta mouth of the Nile; but she is doing that only to shake off the Guardian-Mother. What is the ship doing, Flix?"

"She continues on her course, and takes no notice of the pirate;" and the lookout returned to his station.

Captain Scott rang the gong in the engine-room, and the screw of the Maud immediately ceased to revolve. The sea was comparatively smooth, and the little steamer rolled on the waves but slightly. As soon as the screw stopped, and the little craft began to roll on the long swell, Morris Woolridge put aside the "Chambers's" in which he had been reading up Assyria and Babylon, and went out of the cabin into the standing-room. He looked about him to ascertain the cause of the stoppage; but he could make nothing of it.

He was a good skipper himself, and he did not like to ask Captain Scott to explain the situation; for since he had gone into the cabin the relative positions of the three steamers had decidedly changed. His idea was that the Maud should follow the ship as usual; but she had dropped at least a couple of miles astern of her, and the Fatimé was headed to the southward. He could not understand the matter at all, and he continued to study upon it.

Louis had come out of the pilot-house, and, looking aft, he discovered Morris, and saw that he was perplexed by the situation, and that Assyria was no longer the subject of his meditations.

"Morris is in the standing-room, and I have no doubt he is wondering why we are wasting our steam just here, when the ship is going ahead at full speed," said he to the captain. "Don't you think the time has come?"

"No doubt of it," answered the captain.

These last remarks may seem a little mysterious; but the present situation had been foreseen by Captain Ringgold. Morris was the first officer, and if the momentous secret was to be kept from him any longer, it would require an amount of lying and deception which was utterly repugnant to the principles of

both the commander and Louis. The representative of the Woolridge family on board of the Maud must be left with his father and mother and sister on the ship, or the whole truth must be told to the son. Thus far no lies had been necessary; and the captain did not believe it would be wrong for him to conceal what would be dangerous to the peace of mind of his passengers.

As long as Captain Ringgold conscientiously believed that neither Miss Blanche nor Louis was in any peril, he considered it his duty to conceal from their parents the plot of the Pacha and his agents. He was sure that neither Mrs. Woolridge nor Mrs. Belgrave would consent to continue the voyage even in the face of a very remote danger to their children. He had abundant resources on board, including his two twelve-pounders, for their protection; and he had used them on one occasion, though his passengers did not understand the reason of the attack made on the Maud.

This subject had been considered before the vessels sailed from Alexandria, and the commander declared that he could not adopt the scheme of Scott, if they were to be required to utter no end of falsehoods to Morris; and Louis absolutely refused to do so. They had finally compromised by making the owner a committee of one to confer with the subject of the difficulty when the time for action came. Like the others, Morris was to be pledged to secrecy for the peace and comfort of the mothers. If he refused to give the pledge, the plan of Captain Scott was to be abandoned, and the Maud was to place herself immediately under the wing of the Guardian-Mother again. The time for action on this subject had come.

"I will go aft and have a talk with Morris; and I am only afraid he will fly off at the want of confidence in him we have shown," said Louis.

"But his case is not a whit different from your own; for you have a mother in the cabin as well as he," added the captain.

"But we have concealed everything from him for months; but Morris is as good a fellow as ever sailed the seas, and he will be reasonable."

"I pledged myself to secrecy, and I think we had better make the 'Big Four' a society for the protection of this secret till the end of the voyage."

"We will consider that at another time," replied Louis as he moved aft.

He found Morris still looking about in order to solve what was a mystery to him,

as it must have been to the engineers and the cook; but they were paid employes, and it was not proper for them to ask any questions.

"Anything broken down, Louis?" asked Morris, as his watch-mate took a seat at his side.

"Nothing at all," replied the owner. "Do you believe, Morris, that you could keep a very important secret if the peace and happiness of your best friends on earth depended upon it?"

"I know I could, even from my mother, from whom I never kept a secret except once, when I heard the doctor say something about the health of Blanche last winter, not long before we sailed in the yacht. I knew that it would worry the life out of her," replied Morris very seriously.

"This is a case just like that; and if the secret came out it would worry the life out of your mother and mine, and perhaps seriously affect the health of Miss Blanche."

"There is my hand, and I will pledge myself to any honest secret you may impart to me; for I know you would not lead me to do anything wrong."

"I would jump overboard before I would lead you astray, Morris," protested Louis as he took the offered hand, and the pledge was exchanged.

It required two hours to tell the whole story of the operations of Captain Mazagan, begun at Constantinople four months before, including the discovery of the plot of the conspirators in the café at Gallipoli.

Morris was astonished at the explanation given him of several incidents with which he was familiar. He quite agreed with Louis as to the necessity of keeping the secret; for his mother would worry herself into a fit of sickness if she learned the truth. He agreed that there was no alternative between abandoning the excursion, which would be a great grief to him, and confining the secret to those who now knew it; and he repeated his pledge with more earnestness than before.

CHAPTER IV

THE POSITION OF THE THREE STEAMERS

The conference in the standing-room of the Maud ended, and all the "Big Four" were in possession of the secret upon the keeping of which the continuation of the delightful excursion voyage depended. They stood on a perfect equality now, and each was as wise as the others. When Louis went forward, Morris went with him; and after the result of the interview had been announced, Scott grasped the hand of the newly initiated, and Felix followed his example.

"I can see that you are all glad to keep me no longer in the dark," said Morris. "You must have been walking on glass all the time for fear that I should break through, and upset your plan to keep me behind the curtain."

"That is so," replied the captain. "We had to shut up tight while you were in the pilot-house; and as Louis is in your watch, I stopped the Maud partly to give him a chance to talk with you, and partly to carry out the manœuvre agreed upon."

"But I can't see why it was considered necessary to keep me in the dark," added Morris. "Am I supposed to be any more leaky than the rest of you?"

"I don't believe any one thought so," replied Louis. "You remember that at Gallipoli, Flix and I went ashore in one of the two harbors, taking Don with us to talk Turkish, though His Highness and Captain Mazagan did their business in French, which they supposed no one near them could speak or understand; and I happened to be the only one of our party who took in all that was said. When we returned to the Guardian-Mother I told Captain Ringgold all about it, in the presence of Flix. The commander immediately directed us to say not a word about it to any person. Even Captain Scott was kept in the dark till he and I were on the verge of a quarrel in Pournea Bay."

"That is putting it a little too strong, Louis," interposed the captain. "I should not have quarrelled with you under any circumstances; I could not have done so."

"But I interfered with you in your command because I understood the situation, and you did not; and Captain Ringgold told me to tell you all there was to be told," Louis explained. "But he was not willing you should be posted, Morris; for

he feared that you might unintentionally betray the secret to your mother. We have got along so far without lying, and I believe the commander would throw up the voyage rather than have any of us go beyond simple concealment without falsehood. As he says, we are acting a lie, though we are doing it for the health, comfort, and happiness of those we love the best on earth. The biggest lies are sometimes told without the utterance of a vocal word."

"I am satisfied, fellows, and I am sure Captain Ringgold has acted from the highest of motives. Now I should like to know something about the manœuvre in which you are engaged."

Captain Scott explained it in full. Felix had gone to his station in the bow, to observe the movements of the Guardian-Mother and the Fatimé. From there he had gone to the hurricane deck, in order to obtain a better view. After an absence of half an hour he came into the pilot-house again, with his glass under his arm; for it had now become the emblem of his occupation.

"The ship is so far off that I can't tell whether or not she is still rushing things; but I judge by her distance that the engine is making things lively in the fire-room," said he.

"How about the Fatimé?" asked the captain. "I can still see her."

"The Fatty is sodjering."

"What do you mean by that, Flix?"

"She is wasting her time, and appears to be making not more than four knots," replied Felix. "I judge that Captain Mazagan does not feel quite at home."

"You think our movements bother him?" suggested Louis.

"Not the least doubt of that! The ship is going off at sixteen knots an hour, and will soon be hull down, and we are lying here 'like a painted ship upon a painted ocean.'"

"Coleridge!" exclaimed Morris, amused to hear Felix quote from a poem.

"In other words, he can't make out what we are driving at; for the Maud has always kept under the wing of the Guardian-Mother," added the captain. "But it is about time to give him something to think of."

As he spoke, Captain Scott rang the gong in the engine-room to go ahead, and

the screw began to turn again.

"Now keep your weather eye open tight, Flix!" and he threw the wheel over, and fixed his gaze upon the compass in front of him. "You needn't watch the G.-M. very closely, but give me the earliest notice of any change in the course of the pirate; for I can hardly make her out now."

"How far is it from here to Port Said?" asked the lookoutman.

"To where? I don't know where Port Sed is," replied the captain, pronouncing the word as Felix did.

"You don't know where the entrance to the Suez Canal is!" exclaimed the lookout.

"That is what you mean, is it?"

"Of course it is; and that is what I said," protested Felix.

"You said Port Sed."

"I know it; if S-a-i-d don't spell Sed, what does it spell?" demanded Felix.

"It spells S-a-h-i-d out here when you mean the port at the entrance of the Suez Canal," replied the captain quietly and with a smile.

"Oh, you have become an Arabian scholar!" exclaimed Felix with a hearty laugh.

"Honestly, Flix, I did not understand what you meant. I have studied up the navigation in this region," continued Captain Scott, as he took from a drawer in the case on which the binnacle stood a small plan of the port in question. "Look at that, Flix, and tell me what the diæresis over the i in Saïd is for."

"It means that the two vowels in the word are to be pronounced separately, and I stand corrected," answered Felix promptly.

"I did not mean to correct you; for I make too many blunders myself to pick up another fellow for doing so. I only wanted to explain why I did not understand you. I had got used to pronouncing it Sah-eed, and Sed does not sound much like it, and I did not take in what you meant, and thought you were talking about some port in the island of Cyprus, where we are bound."

"I accept your apology, Captain, and shift all the guilt to my own shoulders. Now

may I ask how far it is from here to Port Sah-eed?" replied Felix very good-naturedly.

"It is 101.76 miles, by which, of course, I mean knots. I figured it up from a point north of Rosetta," added the navigator.

"Won't you throw off the fraction?"

"No; if you run one hundred and one miles only, you will fetch up three-quarters of a knot to the westward of the red light at the end of the breakwater."

"That is putting a fine point on it; but I will go on the hurricane deck and see what the Fatty is about," replied Felix.

"You have not rung the speed bell, Captain Scott, since you started the screw," suggested Louis.

"I did not intend to do so yet a while," replied the captain. "I want to know what the Fatty is about, as Felix calls her; and I think we had better translate her heathen name into plain English."

"Flix's name would apply better to Uncle Moses and Dr. Hawkes than to the Moorish steamer."

"We had a girl in our high school who bore that name, though she was a full-blooded New Yorker; but the master always insisted upon putting the accent on the first syllable, declaring that was the right way to pronounce it. I know we have always pronounced the word Fat´-ee-may, and that is where Flix got the foundation for his abbreviation."

"Fatty it is, Captain, if you say so. I wonder what the Fatty is about just now?" added Louis.

"Flix will soon enlighten us on that subject, for he has a wonderfully sharp pair of eyes."

"Do you really believe we shall get over to Cyprus, Captain Scott?" asked Louis, looking sharply into the eyes of the navigator.

"Why should we not?"

"Because I don't believe Captain Ringgold intends to turn us loose on the Mediterranean, and let us go it on our own hook, or rather on your own hook; for

you are the commander, and all the rest of us have to do is to obey your orders," said Louis; and the little tiff between them had gently and remotely suggested to him that Captain Scott had some purpose in his mind which he would not explain to anybody.

His hint that if he were in command of the Guardian-Mother he would make a hole in the side of the Fatimé, pointed to something of this kind, though probably it was nothing more than a vague idea. He had suggested the plan upon which the ship and her consort were then acting, and perhaps it had some possibility of which the commander had not yet dreamed.

"Can you tell me why that steam-yacht of over six hundred tons is crowding on steam, and running away towards Port Said, while we are, by Captain Ringgold's order, headed for Cyprus?" asked the captain.

"Of course I can. He expects by this means to draw off the Fatty, and set her to chasing the Maud, so that the party will not be bothered with any conspiracies while we are going through the canal," replied Louis.

"What then?"

"If the Fatty chases us, the Guardian-Mother will put in an appearance before any harm comes to the Maud, or to any one on board of her."

"Precisely so; that is the way the business is laid out," replied Captain Scott; but he looked just as though something more might be said which he did not care to say.

"But it remains to be shown whether the Fatty will follow the Maud or the ship," added Louis.

"She will not follow the Guardian-Mother," said the navigator very decidedly.

"How do you know, Captain? You speak as positively as though Captain Mazagan had told you precisely what he intended to do."

"Of course he has told me nothing, for I have not seen him. Common-sense is all I have to guide me."

They were about to go into a further discussion of the question when Felix came tumbling down the ladder from the upper deck as though he was in a hurry.

"What has broken now, Flix?" demanded the captain.

"Nothing; but the question is settled," replied the lookoutman, stopping at the front window of the pilot-house, as though he had something important to say. "The ship looks like a punctuation mark on the sea, and"—

"Is it a full stop?" asked Captain Scott.

"I don't know; but I think not. She is so far off that I can't make out whether she is moving or not; but she is not sending as much smoke out of her funnel as she was."

"Then your news is a little indefinite."

"As indefinite as a broken barometer. But I did not come down to report upon the ship alone," added the lookoutman.

"Give out the text, and go on with the sermon."

"The text is in the back part of Jonah, where Job swallowed the whale. The Fatty has come about and is now under a full head of steam, as nearly as I can judge," said Felix, who thought he was treated with too much levity over a serious subject. "I couldn't see her compass, but the arrow-head is directly under the mark, according to my figuring of it."

"Don't be too nautical, Flix; but I suppose you mean that she is headed directly for the Maud," replied the captain. "That is precisely what I have been satisfied from the beginning she would do."

"Then Morris may enter on his log-slate that the chase began at 11.15 A.M.," said Louis as he glanced at the clock over the binnacle.

"Not just yet, Morris," replied Captain Scott, who seemed to have no apprehension that the Moor would overhaul the Maud. "Let me have your glass, Flix; and it is your trick at the wheel, Louis."

He took the spy-glass and left the pilot-house. They saw him climb the ladder to the hurricane deck, and it was evident that he intended to take a look for himself.

"He does not accept my report," said Felix with a laugh.

"But he said just now that you had wonderfully sharp eyes, Flix," added Louis.

"Yet he will not trust them."

But the captain returned in a few minutes, and reported what steamers were in sight, with the added information that none of them were headed to the north-east; his shipmates could not see the significance of his information. He rang the speed bell, and Morris noted the time on the slate.

CHAPTER V

LOUIS BELGRAVE HAS SOME MISGIVINGS

Captain Scott had evidently visited the hurricane deck with the spy-glass for the purpose of scanning the sea within eight or ten miles of the Maud, as his report was that no steamers going in a northeasterly direction were in sight. He did not say that he feared any interference on the part of such vessels if any were near. At eleven o'clock it was time for Felix to take his trick at the wheel; Morris's watch, consisting of himself and Louis, were off duty.

It was a very democratic routine that prevailed on board of the little steamer; for the captain was no bigger man than the two seamen before the mast, and was obliged to take his turn on the lookout; but the arrangement had been made by the boys, all had agreed to it, and no one could complain. Scott went to his place in the bow, taking the glass with him. He had given out the course to his successor at the wheel, and the Maud was now going at full speed.

The dignity of the quarter-deck does not permit an officer, much less a seaman, to ask questions of his superior. This sacred limit on board of a ship was entirely constructive so far as the Maud was concerned; for she was provided with no such planking, and the dignity was applicable only to the persons to whom the quarter-deck is appropriated. But Captain Ringgold was a strict disciplinarian, having served in the navy during the War of the Rebellion.

The young navigators had imbibed this deference from the officers on board of the Guardian-Mother, and it had become, as it were, a part of their nautical being. It had never been incorporated in any regulation, but it was just as potent as though it had been set forth in an order from the commander. Captain Scott did not explain what other steamers headed in the same direction as the Maud had to do with the present voyage, and it was not in order to make any inquiries; but Louis Belgrave would have been very glad to know what was passing through the mind of his superior officer at this time.

The young commander "made no sign," and all that could be done was to wait until events developed themselves. Morris and Louis were at liberty to go where they pleased, and do what they liked, provided they did not interfere with the

routine of the steamer. Both of them were desirous of understanding the situation, and they went upon the upper deck in order to obtain a better view of the other vessels.

Morris had a field-glass which he carried with him. Like everything else the magnate of the Fifth Avenue provided for the members of his family, it was of the best quality, and had proved to be a powerful instrument. He first looked for the Guardian-Mother; but he could not make her out. The trend of the coast was to the southward, beyond Damietta, and she had either gone out of the reach of the glass, or she was concealed by the intervening land. The Fatimé was very distinctly to be seen, headed for the Maud, and there could be no doubt at all in regard to her intentions. She was in pursuit of the Maud, and her movements very plainly indicated that she was engaged in a mischievous mission.

"It begins to look serious, don't it, Louis?" asked Morris, after both of them had used the field-glass.

"It would look so if the Guardian-Mother were not somewhere in the vicinity," replied Louis. "Captain Mazagan has waited till she is well out of sight; and I have no doubt he is wondering why our two vessels have separated. At any rate, he has bitten at the bait prepared for him without seeing the hook it conceals."

"I don't see why the plan is not succeeding as well as could be desired," suggested the first officer. "Of course Captain Ringgold does not mean to leave us to fall into the hands of this pirate, as you all call her."

"It was distinctly the understanding that she was to come between us and any possible harm."

"Something may happen to prevent her from doing so."

"Of course there is no knowing what may happen," Louis admitted. "I do not see what can possibly occur to prevent her from following us to Cyprus, if we go there."

"Isn't it settled that we are to go there?" asked Morris, who had not heard the manœuvre discussed before the commander of the ship.

"It is not absolutely settled; for the Fatty might take to her heels, and no doubt would do so if she discovered the Guardian-Mother in her wake. Mazagan knows very well that she can make four knots to the Moorish craft's three; for that is just the ratio we figured out between them. With three or four knots the

lead she could overhaul her in an hour."

"But the pirate could make her out in clear weather ten or a dozen miles off. But what was Captain Scott's idea in running for the island of Cyprus?"

"In order to have room enough for his manœuvre."

"Have you kept the run of the Maud's course, Louis?"

"I have not; I am not so much of a sailor as you are, my boy, and I don't figure on sailing the craft unless required to do so," replied Louis. "But why do you ask that question?"

"Because I think the captain has changed the course of the Maud, and is headed more to the northward," answered Morris.

"What makes you think so? He gave out a north-east course to Flix. You have seen no compass since that time, and the sun is clouded in. I see that Captain Scott is no longer at the bow; he must have gone into the pilot-house," added Louis, his thought in regard to the indefinite idea in the mind of the navigator coming to him again.

"There is a compass in the standing-room, Louis; suppose we go below and look up this matter," Morris proposed, though he could have had no suspicion that the captain had any concealed intentions.

They went down the forward ladder to the forecastle, though there was one aft leading into the standing-room. Louis found that Scott was seated on the divan abaft the wheel, studying a chart, which he could see included the island of Cyprus. He took no notice of them as they descended the ladder, and they went to the standing-room without stopping on the forecastle. Morris led the way; for he seemed to be impatient to ascertain whether or not he was right in relation to the course of the steamer.

"There you are!" he exclaimed as he looked at the face of the compass. "The Maud is headed to the north north-east half east; and that is not the course Captain Scott gave out when Flix took the helm."

"But it is not a great change," added Louis.

"Just now it is not; but in making two hundred miles to the northward it would take the Maud to a point about forty miles to the westward of where she would

have brought up on her former course," Morris explained.

"I understand your point; but what does it mean?"

"It means that we are going to a place forty miles west of the one we started for."

"I don't understand it; and Captain Scott is just as tenacious in keeping his own counsels as the commander of the Guardian-Mother himself," replied Louis.

"But you have as much influence with him as the commander."

"And for that reason I will not ask him any questions in regard to the sailing of the Maud."

Morris was not ready to ask him to call the captain to an account; and, leaving him in the standing-room, he went into the cabin. Louis was not willing to believe, or even to accept a suggestion that Scott had any ulterior purpose in his mind; for it seemed very much like treason to harbor such a thought of his friend. The only thing that gave him a hint in that direction was the fact he had expressed that Louis ought not to be on board of the Maud during her present mission.

If the little steamer was not to engage in some perilous adventure, why should Scott wish he were somewhere else? But the captain was certainly solicitous for one of those whose safety was threatened; and he tried to believe that this was a sufficient explanation. While he was thinking of the matter, Morris rushed out of the cabin, and looked and acted as though he were laboring under some excitement.

"What is the matter now, Morris?" he asked.

"Matter enough!" replied the first officer. "The barometer has made a considerable slump since I looked at it the last time."

"And that means bad weather, I suppose," added Louis, who very rarely became excited when a young fellow would be expected to be in such a condition.

"No doubt of it," answered the mate, wondering that he had made so slight an impression on his companion.

"We have weathered two pretty severe gales in the Maud, and I dare say we can do it again. I suppose the barometer will tell the same story on board of the ship that it has on the consort."

"No doubt of that."

"Then we shall soon see the Guardian-Mother bowling this way at her best speed," answered Louis.

The officer levelled his field-glass in the direction the ship had gone; but there was not the least sign of her or any other steamer in that quarter of the horizon.

"She isn't there; but she may have run in under a lee somewhere near Damietta, in order to watch the movements of the Fatty."

"That may be; and if she has done so it was not a bad idea. But I think we had better go forward and ascertain if there is any news there," added Louis, as he led the way.

If he was not alarmed at the situation in view of the weather indications, he was certainly somewhat anxious. When he reached the forecastle he found the captain there, using his glass very diligently, pointing it in the direction in which the ship was supposed to be. Louis and Morris did not interrupt his occupation. He discovered nothing, and he was apparently going aft to get a view of the Fatimé when he noticed the members of the port watch.

"I suppose you noticed that the course of the Maud has been changed, Louis?" said he.

This remark afforded the perplexed millionaire a decided relief; for it proved that the captain had not intended to conceal the change from him.

"I did not observe it, but Morris did; for he is boiling over with nautical knowledge and skill," replied Louis, and without asking any question.

"I was going aft to take a look at the Fatty; but I suppose you can report what she is doing," added Captain Scott.

"Morris can, but I cannot."

"Do you think she is gaining on us?" asked the captain, turning from Louis to the mate.

"Of course I can't tell while she is coming head on; but I cannot make out that she has gained a cable's length upon us."

"Mr. Sentrick and Felipe put our engine in first-rate condition while we were

going up and down the Nile; and both of them say the Maud ought to make half a knot better time than before," continued the captain. "I am confident we are fully the equal of the Fatty in speed; and perhaps we could keep out of her way on an emergency. You know we had a little spurt with her in the Strait of Gibraltar. But come into the pilot-house, Louis, for I want to show you something there;" and he led the way.

When both of them were fairly in the little apartment, he pointed to the barometer. If Louis was not much of a sailor, he had learned to read the instrument, and he saw that the mercury had made a decided fall from the last reading.

"I see; and it means bad weather," he replied.

"Flix called my attention to the fall some time ago; and after a look at the chart I decided to alter the course," said the captain, as he pointed out the island of Cyprus on the chart spread out on the falling table over the divan.

"I have no doubt you have done the right thing at the right time, as you always do in the matter of navigation."

"But look at this chart, Louis;" and it almost seemed to him that the captain had fathomed his unuttered thoughts, because he was taking so much pains to explain what he had done, and why he had done it. "The course I gave out at first would have carried the Maud to Cape Gata, on the southern coast of the island."

"I understand it so far."

"The tumble of the barometer opened the matter under a new phase. We should have made Cape Gata about three to-morrow morning, and in my judgment in a smart southerly or south-westerly gale. The cape would afford us little or no shelter, as you can see for yourself; and it would be a very bad place in a heavy blow. Our course is now north north-east half-east for Cape Arnauti, on the north side of the island, where we shall be under the lee of the island, though we have to get forty miles more of westing to make it."

Louis thanked the captain for his lucid explanation. The next morning, in a fresh gale, the Maud was off the cape mentioned.

"It had been a stormy night."
"It had been a stormy night." Page 51.

CHAPTER VI

A STORMY NIGHT RUN TO CAPE ARNAUTI

It had been a stormy night, though the gale had not been so severe as either of the two the Maud had before encountered on the Mediterranean. It did not come on to blow hard till about eight bells in the afternoon; and at five o'clock in the morning Captain Scott estimated that the little steamer ought to be off Cape Arnauti; but all the lights of the island were on the south side. He kept her well off shore, where there were neither rocks nor shoals. There was nothing less than twenty fathoms of water a couple of miles from the shore.

The gale had come from the south; and the course of the Maud was only a couple of points from taking it directly aft, so that she was running too nearly before it for the comfort of those on board of her. But she had a little slant, and a close-reefed foresail had been set in the first dog-watch, and she had carried it all night.

The only difficulty about the Maud was her size when it blew hard and there was a heavy sea. She was too small to be at all steady on great waves, though the larger they were the better weather she made of it. Her worst behavior was in a smart, choppy sea, when the waves were not long, but short and violent. But this was not the kind of a sea she had through the night.

In a heavy sea of any kind she made a good deal of fuss; and being only forty feet long it could not be otherwise. She pitched tremendously, and mixed in a considerable roll every time she rose and fell; and it was not an easy thing for even a sailor to get about on her deck. Life-lines had been extended wherever they were needed, and all the ship's company were used to the erratic ways of the diminutive craft. After all, she was larger than some of the vessels used by the early voyagers to America, some of whose craft were not even provided with decks.

When the Maud was prepared for heavy weather she was as tight as a drum; and while the heavy seas rolled the whole length of her, not a bucketful of them found its way below her deck. The only danger of taking in a dangerous sea was at the scuttle on the forecastle, which was the usual door of admission to the

forecastle below, where the two engineers and the cook had their quarters.

The steamer when she made a dive into a sea scooped up a quantity of water, which she spilled out over the rails, or over the taffrail in the standing-room. The captain had therefore ordered this scuttle to be secured below, so that it could not be removed. Those who had occasion to go below in that part of the vessel were compelled to do so through the fire-room. Though Scott was a bold and brave fellow, and even daring when the occasion required, he was a prudent commander, and never took any unnecessary chances.

But not a person on board had been permitted to "turn in" as the thing was done in moderate weather. The sail on the upper deck required one hand to stand by it all the time, though he was relieved every two hours. The engineers and the cook had broad divans upon which they could take a nap, and the sailing-force had taken turns on the broad sofa in the pilot-house. But Captain Scott had hardly closed his eyes during the night.

From the time the Fatimé was found to be headed to the northward, the officers of the Maud had lost sight of her for only a couple of hours, when a bank of fog swept over the sea, just before sundown. But at eight bells her lights had been discovered. At midnight they could still be seen; but the captain and Morris were confident that she had been losing ground, judging by the diminished clearness of the triangle of lanterns as they appeared over the stern of the Maud.

The lights of a vessel following another appear to the latter in this form, with the white, or plain one, at the upper apex of the triangle, the red and the green making the two abreast of each other. They were observed at seven bells in the first watch; but another fog-bank had passed over the sea, and at eight bells, or midnight, they could not be seen. Morris and Louis had the first watch. Felix had gone to take his nap in the galley; for Pitts, the cook, had been called into service, and was attending to the reefed sail on the upper deck. Captain Scott had joined him here.

With a rope made fast around his waist, he had been to the standing-room to look out for the triangle of lights on the Fatimé. He could not find them; but the fog explained why they were not in sight. It was not a very comfortable position on the hurricane deck, for the spray stirred up at the stern was swept over it. All hands had donned their waterproof caps, with capes to protect the neck, and the oilskin suits they had found on board when the steamer was purchased.

"We have been gaining upon her, Pitts," said the captain, after he had looked

attentively into the fog astern for some time. "We may not see her again."

"Perhaps not, sir; but she's a bad penny, and she is likely to turn up again," replied the cook. "But I suppose you will not weep, sir, if you don't see her again."

"I should like to know what had become of her if we don't see her again," added Scott carelessly.

"I suppose that Mustapha Pacha is still on board of her; and I should rather like to see Captain Ringgold pitch him into another muddy gutter, as he did in Gibraltar. But the Guardian-Mother is not with us just now, and that is not likely to happen on this little cruise."

Pitts hinted in this manner that he should like to know something more about the present situation; but the captain was willing to let him form his own conclusions, and he gave him no assistance in doing so. Eight bells struck on the forecastle; and this was the signal for the mid watch, which consisted of the captain and Felix; and Scott left the upper deck.

Pitts was relieved by Felix; for he could serve as lookout and take charge of the sail at the same time. Morris was the youngest person on board, and he was tired enough to camp down at once on the divan in the pilot-house. The cabin door could not be safely opened, or at least not without peril to the contents of the cabin; for an occasional wave combed over the taffrail, and poured itself upon it.

Louis was not inclined to sleep, and he went on the upper deck to pass the time with Felix; and the captain asked him to keep a lookout for the pirate. The fog still prevailed, and he could see nothing. He talked with the Milesian for quite two hours, when the time for the relief of the helm came. Just before the four bells struck, the fog disappeared as suddenly as it had dropped down on the sea.

Louis went aft and gazed into the distance; but he could see no triangle of lights, or even a single light in any direction. He made a thorough search, with no other result, and then stood by the sail till the captain came up to take the place of Felix.

"The fog has blown in ahead of us, Louis; but Flix reports that you have not been able to find the lights of the pirate," said Scott.

"Not a sign of them can be made out," replied Louis. "I have looked the sea over in every direction. What does that mean, Captain Scott?"

"It may mean any one of three things, and you have to take your choice among them. The pirate may have foundered in the gale, she may have put about to return to the coast of Egypt, or we may have beaten her so badly in the race of fifteen hours, that she has dropped out of sight astern of us. I don't know much about the Pacha's steamer, though our second engineer told me she was not built to order, as the Maud was, but purchased outright."

"But which of the three results you indicate do you consider the most probable, Captain?"

"The last one I named. This gale has not been heavy enough to wreck any vessel of ordinary strength, so that I cannot believe she has foundered. Captain Mazagan is working for his little twenty thousand dollars' reward; and if he has followed us up here with the intention of picking you up on the cruise, I don't believe he would retire from the field without making a bigger effort than he has put forth so far."

"Then, you think he is after me?"

"Don't we know that he is? Not one of the 'Big Four' is so indifferent and careless about the matter as you are yourself, Louis," replied the captain with a good deal of energy. "I still think you ought not to have come with us on this perilous cruise; and I wonder with all my might that Captain Ringgold did not keep you on board of the Guardian-Mother."

"He desired to do so; but I would not stand it. I have not the slightest fear of the Pacha and all his blackguards and pirates," protested Louis.

"Not since Mazagan got his paw upon you, and you slipped out of it only by a lucky chance?" demanded the captain, more as an argument than as a question to be answered. "You got off by the skin of your teeth; and you may thank your stars that you are not shut up at this moment in some dungeon in Mogadore, where they don't ask hard questions as to what has become of troublesome Christians. If the shop had not been invaded by creditors, you would have been conveyed to Rosetta, and taken away on board the pirate. The rest of the party would not have known what had become of you; for we could not find you when we searched for you in Cairo."

"That is all very nice, Captain Scott," replied Louis, laughing out loud. "I would not have given two cents to have the guard of sailors who made things so sad for the Arabs at Gizeh in the cellar with me. Make as much fuss as you may over my

danger at this time, I was master of the situation all the while," answered Louis very decidedly.

"Master of the situation!" exclaimed the captain. "You might as well call the trout the master of the situation after he has the hook in his gills. I don't see it in that light."

"I had fired one shot from my revolver, and wounded Mazagan's assistant in the outrage; and I had five balls more in the weapon. I think the pirate counted upon the custom-house officers to deprive me of the pistol, or he would not have gone to work just as he did. My shot demoralized the wounded man, and scared his brother the shopkeeper out of his wits. My next shot was for Mazagan; and if he had taken another step in his programme he would not have been in command of that steamer just now."

"Perhaps there were some chances for your aim or your calculations to fail," suggested Scott; "though Flix says you never miss your mark when you shoot."

"Captain Ringgold said so much to me to induce me to remain on board of the Guardian-Mother, that I was tempted to yield the point; but it seemed to me to be cowardly to leave my friends in the face of a possible danger. I told him finally that I considered myself under his command, and if he ordered me to remain on board of the ship, I should obey. He would not do that, and I am here. If there is to be any row on my account I must be in it."

"You have a mind of your own, and you are in condition to have your own way. If your mother had been posted you would not have been here."

"We don't know; but I think I have as much influence with my mother as she has with me. I hardly believe she could or would make me act the part of a coward."

The subject was dropped there, for it seemed to be exhausted. The night wore away very slowly, and nothing more was seen of the Fatimé's lights. The morning watch came on duty at four o'clock; but the captain did not leave the deck. It was evident to him that the sail had increased the speed of the Maud, and perhaps that was the reason she had run away from the chaser. An hour later, with the dawn of the day, the gale broke.

"Land, ho!" shouted Louis over the forward part of the upper deck, so that Morris could hear him at the wheel; and the captain rushed out of the pilot-house where he had lain down on the divan.

"Where away?" called the first officer.

"Broad on the starboard bow," replied Louis.

"That must be the country south-west of Cape Arnauti," said Scott, after he had examined the shore with the glass. "Make the course north north-east, Morris," he shouted to the wheelman.

"North north-east!" returned the helmsman.

"There are mountains on this island, some of them nearly seven thousand feet high; and there is a cluster of them close to the shore here," added the captain.

It was another hour before they could distinctly make out these mountains; and by that time the end of the cape could be seen on the beam. The speed of the Maud had been reduced one-half, and the course due east was given out. She followed the land around the cape, and was soon in smooth water. With the chart before him at the helm, and with Morris heaving the lead, Captain Scott piloted the Maud to the head of a considerable bay, where he ordered the anchor to be cast loose, and then stopped the screw.

CHAPTER VII

THE BELLIGERENT COMMANDER OF THE MAUD

"Here we are!" shouted Captain Scott, as the cable slid out through the hawse-hole.

"That's so; but where are we?" asked Louis, who had been watching the bottom for the last hour. "There is a big ledge of rocks not twenty feet from the cutwater. Here we are; but where are we?"

"We are on the south-west shore of Khrysoko Bay," replied the captain. "That ledge of rocks is just what I have been looking for the last half-hour."

"Then, I am glad we have found it," added Louis.

"What's the name of the bay, Captain?" inquired Felix, scratching his head.

"Khrysoko," repeated Scott. "It pronounces well enough; but when you come to the spelling, that's another affair."

"I could spell that with my eyes shut; for I used to cry so myself when I was a baby. Cry so, with a co on the end of it for a snapper. But I thought that bay was on the coast of Ireland, sou' sou'-west by nor' nor'-east from the Cove of Cork," added Felix.

"That's the precise bearing of the one you mean, Flix; but this isn't that one at all, at all," said the captain with a long gape.

"Then it must be this one."

"The word is spelled with two k's."

"That's a hard k'se; but where do you get them in?"

The captain spelled the word with another gape, for he had not slept a wink during the night; and Louis advised him to turn in at once.

"Breakfast is all ready in the cabin, sir," said Pitts.

"That will do me more good than a nap," added Scott. "Don, keep a lively lookout on that high cape we came round, and see that it don't walk off while I'm eating my breakfast. Remember, all you fellows, that is Cape Arnauti; and if any of you are naughty, you will get fastened to that rock, as doubtless the chap it was named after was."

"Oh-h-h!" groaned Morris. "You are not sleepy, Captain; a fellow that can make a pun can keep awake."

"I should not need a brass band to put me to sleep just now; but I shall not take my nap till we have overhauled the situation, and figured up where the pirate may be about this time in the forenoon," replied Scott, as he led the way to the cabin.

As Pitts was waiting on the table, nothing particular was said. Don had his morning meal carried to him on the forecastle, where Felipe joined him. He kept his eye fixed on the cape all the time, as though he expected to see the Fatimé double it. He knew nothing at all about the real situation, though he could not help seeing that the Maud was trying to keep clear of the Moorish steamer; and he was in full sympathy with this idea.

The larder of the little steamer had been filled up at Alexandria, and Pitts had prepared one of his best breakfasts. The party were in high spirits; for the little Maud had run away from the pirate, though of course there were other chapters to the narrative.

"As soon as we get the situation a little more settled, and you fellows get your eyes braced wide open, one of you must tackle the island of Cyprus, and get up a lecture on it; for the commander desired that we should learn something about the place," said the captain.

"I move you, Mr. Commander, that Mr. Louis Belgrave be invited to prepare and deliver the lecture," interposed Morris; and the motion was put and carried.

"I have no objection; and my own curiosity would have prompted me to do so without any invitation; but I thank you for the honor you confer on me in the selection," replied Louis; and the company adjourned to the forecastle.

"Well, Don, have you seen anything of the Moorish craft?" asked the captain.

"Not a sign, sir," replied the engineer. "If she is looking for the Maud, I don't believe she will find her in here very soon."

"I don't believe this is just the place to hold a consultation on a delicate subject," said Louis, as he pointed to the scuttle which had been removed from its place by Felipe. "I think we shall do better on the hurricane deck."

As this afforded a better place to observe the surroundings, and especially the approaches from the sea, the captain assented to it, and the "Big Four" repaired to the upper deck. They seated themselves in the little tender of the Maud, and all of them looked out in the direction of the cape, from beyond which the pirate was expected to put in an appearance.

"Our present situation is the subject before the house," the captain began. "We have made the bay for which I shaped the course of the Maud as soon as the gale began to make things sloppy. This is a mountainous island, with nothing like a harbor on the west coast between Cape Gata and Cape Arnauti. There are from twelve to twenty fathoms of water in this bay, within a mile of the shore; and the rocks close aboard of us reach out a mile and a half, with from ten to twelve feet of water on them. There is no town within ten miles of the shore, and we are not likely to see any natives, unless some of them come to this bay to fish. That's where we are."

"We should like to have you tell us now where the Fatty is," added Morris.

"Or the Guardian-Mother," said Louis.

"I am sorry to say that I can't tell you where either of these vessels is; and I am as anxious to know as any of you can be," replied Scott, as he took a paper from his pocket. "I have followed the orders of Captain Ringgold, just as he wrote them down: 'Proceed to Cape Gata; but if it should blow heavily from the southward, go to the north side of the island, and get in behind Cape Arnauti.' And here we are."

Felix was seated where he could see that much more was written on the paper which the captain did not choose to read. But he had the right to keep his own council, and the Milesian asked no questions.

"Here we are—what next?" added Louis.

"That depends," replied Scott. "The commander of the Guardian-Mother knows where we are, though he may have to look in at the harbor of Limasol to see if the Maud is there. When he comes I shall have nothing further to say."

"Don't you expect to see the Fatty before the ship comes?"

"It is quite impossible to form any idea what has become of the pirate. Perhaps she is looking for the Maud; and if she is she will probably find her. I think this is about as far as we can go now; and, if you will excuse me, I will turn in and get my nap," said the captain as he rose from his seat.

"That is the right thing to do," added Louis.

"You will all keep a sharp lookout to seaward, and call me as soon as either vessel heaves in sight."

The captain went to the cabin, and in two minutes he was sound asleep. The rest of the ship's company had obtained about one-half of their usual slumber, and they were not inclined to follow the example of the captain. Louis went to the cabin and proceeded to study up the island. He made notes in a little blank-book he kept for the purpose in his pocket, and he had already filled a dozen such books; for they contained a full diary of all the events of the voyage for over a year.

Felix kept his spy-glass in his hand all the time, and every few minutes he swept the horizon to the northward with it. Morris had gone to sleep in the pilot-house, for his watch was not on duty. At about six bells in the forenoon watch the Milesian began to show more sign of animation than before. He held his glass in range with the cape, and directed his attention steadily in that direction.

If he had been fishing, he would have said that he "had a bite." It was clear that he saw something in the distance, which was hardly more than a speck on the ocean; but there was also a thread of black smoke on the sky above it, for it had cleared off since sunrise. Of course it was a steamer; but whether it was the Fatimé or the Guardian-Mother, or neither of them, he could not determine, and he did not wish to disturb the captain for nothing.

He continued to watch the appearance for half an hour longer, and then he struck seven bells. In that time the steamer could be seen more distinctly, though she was still five or six miles distant. He was satisfied from his reasoning that the vessel was approaching the cape. The craft looked smaller than the ship, and in another quarter of an hour he was convinced that she was the pirate. Then he hastened to the cabin, and announced the news to the captain, and Louis heard him.

"Are you sure it is the pirate, Flix?" demanded Captain Scott, as he sprang from his bed and looked eagerly into the face of the messenger.

"Not absolutely sure; only reasonably confident," replied Felix, as he followed the captain to the forecastle.

Scott examined the distant sail with the glass for a little time, and Louis did the same with another. Morris was aroused by the voices, and rushed out with his field-glass.

"That's the pirate!" exclaimed the captain; and the others had waited for him to express his opinion.

"If my mother should step on deck and tell me so, I shouldn't know it any better," added Felix; and Louis and Morris were equally sure of the fact.

"Go to the engine-room, Morris, and tell Felipe to stir up his fires," said the captain, who had suddenly become a mass of vim and activity. "Then call all hands."

Scott observed the approaching steamer with his glass till she was within three miles of the Maud. Morris had been ordered to set the American flag, and it was now floating in the light breeze at the ensign staff.

"Now all hands will come with me," continued the captain; and all but Felipe followed him to the cabin.

His first movement was to throw off the cushions from the divan on the port side, and raise the lid of the transom. From this place he took out a breech-loading rifle, one of half a dozen deposited there three months or more before. They had been in service in the famous attack of the Samothraki on the Maud in Pournea Bay, and had never been removed. No one asked any questions; and the captain ordered them to be conveyed to the pilot-house and engine-room, where they would be available for immediate use. A supply of cartridges was also sent forward, and those who had revolvers were instructed to put them in their pockets.

All these orders were promptly obeyed, and the situation began to look decidedly warlike. Louis could not help asking himself whether or not Captain Scott was not proceeding too rapidly. But the belligerent chief had Captain Ringgold's written orders in his pocket, and there was no room for a protest. Everything appeared to be ready to give the pirate a warm reception, and nothing more could be done.

The Moorish steamer was feeling her way into the bay very slowly, sounding all

the time. The Maud was anchored in fourteen feet of water, which placed her keel very near the rocky bottom, and with no greater depth for a cable's length outside of her. Scott had chosen the position of the little steamer so that the Fatimé could not come alongside of her, or within a cable's length of her, which is one-fifth of a nautical mile.

"I think we are all right now, Louis," said Captain Scott when he had completed his preparations.

"It looks as though you meant to fight the pirate," added Louis.

"Not if it can be avoided; but I do not intend to let Mazagan take any one of my people out of the Maud; and all hands will shoot before anything of that kind can happen," replied Scott very mildly, and with no excitement in his manner; for he had studied the bearing of his model, and tried to imitate him.

"Do you expect Mazagan will resort to violence, Captain Scott?"

"That is an odd question, Louis," answered Scott, laughing heartily, perhaps as much to manifest his coolness as to treat the question lightly. "Excuse me, Louis, but you make me smile. Do I expect Mazagan to resort to violence? For what did he visit Pournea Bay? Did he resort to violence when he caught you in that shop in the Muski? Did he resort to violence when his assistants attempted to capture you and Miss Blanche in Zante? What do you suppose he followed the Maud up here for, Louis?"

"Perhaps to induce me to pay him twenty thousand dollars to let up on Miss Blanche and myself," replied Louis, overwhelmed by the argument.

"Are you ready to pay him?"

"Never!"

"Then he will resort to some other means to accomplish his purpose in coming to Cyprus. Do you wish me to surrender the Maud to him?" asked the captain.

"Certainly not."

The Fatimé let go her anchor as near the Maud as the depth of water would permit her to come.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LECTURE ON THE ISLAND OF CYPRUS

Captain Scott was ready to do anything the occasion might require. Possibly he would not have been sorry to come into collision with Captain Mazagan and his piratical craft, judging from what he had said to Louis Belgrave, and he had pluck enough to precipitate a conflict with the enemy; but sometimes it requires more courage to keep out of a fight than to plunge into one.

As he had admitted himself, Louis was his model; and he felt that no rashness, no braggadocio, no challenging, no casting down the gage of battle to the pirate who had already outlawed himself, no holding out of a temptation to cross swords with him, would be justified or palliated when he came to render an account of his conduct in what was yet to occur to the commander of the Guardian-Mother.

Whatever he did he was to do strictly in self-defence. The character of Captain Ringgold and of Louis would permit nothing more than this. The "Big Four" fully understood why the Fatimé was there. It was true that the Maud had held out the temptation for her to follow her; but it was as a man with a gold watch and plenty of money in his purse holds out a temptation to the robber; but it does not follow that he should throw away his valuables.

But the plan suggested by Scott and adopted by the commander had not worked as had been expected. The Guardian-Mother ought to be there in the bay, or somewhere in the vicinity; but nothing had been seen of her, and no one knew what had become of her. According to the plan, the two steamers were to find a way to escape from the pirate, and Scott had marked out the manner in which it was to be done. The gale and the non-appearance of the ship had upset the plan, though the Maud had carried out her portion of the programme.

"What next, Captain Scott?" asked Louis.

"Wait," replied the captain.

"Wait for what?"

"I don't know," replied Scott, shaking his head. "Wait for whatever is to come."

"But what is to come?" asked Louis, who still had a fear that the captain would resort to some fool-hardy expedient.

"You know just as much about this affair as I do, Louis, and you may be a better prophet than I am. It is not a question of navigation just now, or I should be willing to take the entire responsibility. Of course the handling of the Maud is an important element in getting out of the scrape, whatever it may prove to be. I have somewhere seen a picture of a good-looking gentleman playing chess with an individual provided with horns, hoofs, and a caudal appendage. But in this game the mortal appeared to have the best of it, and he says to the infernal power, 'Your next move.'"

"And that is what you say to the representative of the same infernal majesty in Khrysoko Bay," interposed Louis, rather pleased with the illustration, especially in its application to Captain Mazagan.

"Precisely so; it is the pirate's move, and I shall not do a thing till he makes it," added Captain Scott. "What Mazagan will do, or how he will do it, I have no more idea than you have, Louis. That is where we stand. I am willing to listen to any advice that you wish to give me."

"I have no wish to give any advice," replied Louis; and by this time he was entirely satisfied with the position Scott had taken, and he approved everything he had done.

At this point Pitts announced that dinner was ready, and Scott led the way to the cabin. The ledge of rocks appeared to cover at least half an acre of the bottom of the bay. The Maud had anchored abreast of the rock, in two fathoms of water. It was just about high tide when she came in, as the captain had learned from his nautical almanac, and the ebb placed the craft broadside to the Moorish steamer, so that the "Big Four" could see her out the cabin windows.

The pirate made no demonstration of any kind, and the dinner was disposed of in good order, and with hardly an allusion to the exciting events that were expected. Pitts was instructed to give the engineers their dinner as soon as possible; for all hands might be needed at any moment.

"Heave the lead, Flix; it begins to look like shoal water around us," said the captain when they returned to the forecastle.

The great rock was of a light color, and could be distinctly seen from the deck. A portion of it rose about six feet above the surface of the water when the Maud anchored, and the receding tide now permitted two feet more of the projecting cone to be seen.

"By the mark two," reported Felix, as he drew up the line.

"Twelve feet; we have not much to spare under the keel," added the captain. "We had fourteen feet when we anchored, and the tide has been ebbing five hours."

"Hold on, Captain Scott!" shouted Felix, as he carried the lead-line to the other side of the vessel. "I have been measuring on the top of a bulging rock. And a half two!"

"Fifteen feet; that looks more like it. There ought to be about three feet ebb and flow here, and your sounding gave about double that, Flix."

"It was the fault of the rock on the bottom, Captain;" but the leadsman heaved the line all around the steamer with the same result.

There was nothing to do except to observe the Fatimé; but she did nothing, and there was no appearance of any movement on her deck.

"I think we had better attend to that lesson now, as we have nothing else to do," said the captain after they had looked about them for a time. "I don't care to have the pirate suppose we are on the anxious seat."

"All right," replied Louis, as he seated himself on the rail by the bow flag-pole. "I have studied my lesson, and I am all ready."

"Blaze away, then," replied the captain.

"If any of you have not yet found it out, I will begin by informing you that the land on three sides of us belongs to the island of Cyprus, and you are again on Turkish territory. The owners of the island call it Kebris, written by them G'br's, if you can make anything of that combination of consonants," Louis began, spelling out the strange names he introduced. "The Greeks call it Kupros, and the French, Chypre. Venus was the original goddess of spring among the Romans, but became the goddess of love, the Aphrodite of the Greeks, and was worshipped as such in this island by the Phœnicians and other ancients.

"One of this lady's names was Cypris, or Cypria; and that is why the island

happens to be called Cyprus. It is in about the same latitude as South Carolina. It is about 35 to 50 miles from Asia Minor on the south and Syria on the east. It is 140 miles long by 60 in breadth, containing 3,707 square miles, or larger than both Rhode Island and Delaware united.

"It has two ranges of mountains extending east and west, the highest peak being 6,352 feet. It has plenty of rivers, with no water in them except after heavy rains, or when the snow melts on the mountains. There is no room for lakes of any size, though there is a small one on the east coast, which dries up completely in summer, like the rivers, but has an abundance of fish in winter. This is rather remarkable, and the fact is not doubted, though the phenomenon has not been explained."

"The fish must go down where the water goes," laughed Felix. "If there are any volcanoes here, I suppose they come up in the winter all boiled or broiled ready for the table."

"I don't know how that is, Flix, and we haven't time to investigate the matter. The interior of the island is mostly composed of a great plain, which was once famous for its crops of grain; but the system of irrigation which prevailed has been discontinued, and its fertility no longer exists. In a scarcity of rain five years ago there was almost a famine in the island.

"As you have seen for yourselves, there is a deficiency of harbors, and this bay is a fair specimen of them. It has two places they call seaports, but they are not worthy of the name. They are on the south side, and in such a blow as we had last night, they afford no shelter to shipping from southerly storms; and Captain Scott was wise in coming here instead of going to Limasol, which is just inside of Cape Gata. The ports on this side of the island would be similarly exposed in a northerly storm. Safe ports are necessary for the commerce of a country or an island, and therefore to its prosperity.

"In ancient times there were ports at Salamis, Paphos, and Famagusta, in the eastern part of the island, which was the portion celebrated in the past. The capital is Leucosia, as I find it on my chart, though I find it elsewhere put down as Nicosia; and even the cape we have in sight is Pifanio in a standard atlas. The population is 186,000, of whom not quite 50,000 are Mohammedans, and the rest are orthodox Greeks. The great majority of the people speak the Greek language, but it is so much corrupted that Flix would not understand it."

"You are right, my darling; I want the pure Greek of Kilkenny, or I don't take it

in," replied the Milesian.

"The island was colonized by the Phœnicians, who have a history too long to be related now; but they occupied the northern part of Syria and the country to the north of us. They were the New Yorkers of their day and generation, and were largely engaged in commerce. They brought the worship of Venus over here, and called the island Kupros after her. It had at first nine independent kingdoms, and I should suppose that almost anybody could afford to be a king in this locality. It was conquered by the Egyptians about five hundred years before the time of Christ; then by the Persians; and finally came into the possession of the Romans.

"It went with the Eastern Empire when Rome was divided. The people embraced Christianity at an early date. It was said that a shepherd discovered the body of St. Matthew and a part of his Gospel in the island, which called many early saints to visit it. In 646 A.D., Cyprus was taken by the Saracens, but was not long held by them. Richard Cœur-de-Lion captured it on his way to Syria for the Third Crusade. In 1570 the Turks obtained possession of it, and have practically held it ever since.

"The ruins of Salamis may be seen at the other end of the island. In the Book of Acts we read that Paul came over here. 'And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews.' Then the account informs us that they went 'through the isle' to Paphos; and doubtless the place was near Point Papho, which I find on my chart. Don't forget to tell Mrs. Blossom, Flix, that you have been to an island visited by Paul and Barnabas in their missionary travels.

"The island has about the same productions as Egypt. Carobs, or locust beans, figure up to about $300,000. But I fear you will not remember any more figures if I should give them; and I see there is something like a movement on board of the pirate."

"You must repeat that lecture on board of the ship when we get back to her," added the captain. "It was telling us just what I wanted to know."

"I could have done better if I had had the library of the Guardian-Mother for reference," replied Louis, as all hands fixed their attention on the Fatimé.

"They are getting out a boat, sir," said Don, who had gone to the hurricane deck to obtain a better view.

"That means that they intend to pay us a visit; and as I intend to retain the command of the Maud until I am relieved by Captain Ringgold, I shall allow no one from the pirate to come on board," said Captain Scott in his most decided tones. "All hands except Felipe will arm with breech-loaders and revolvers, with a supply of ammunition, and form in the port gangway."

This order was promptly executed, and the force collected at the place designated. This gangway was concealed from the enemy by the house on deck. Louis had two revolvers, and he loaned one to Don. Scott had carried out a handsaw which was kept in the pilot-house in readiness for any emergency, as well as an axe and a hatchet. The captain had used this same saw with decided effect upon some smugglers who attempted to obtain possession of the little steamer in the Bay of Gibraltar, and he placed it where it was ready for use at any moment.

In addition to this novel weapon, he had sent for a small heave-line with which he had done some lassoing on the same occasion, and also on Captain Mazagan at a later period. The five hands in the port gangway had loaded their weapons, and were ready to be called into the field. The captain took a look at them, and all was satisfactory. He hastened back to the forecastle, where he saw that the boat was already pulling for the Maud.

CHAPTER IX

A MOST IMPUDENT PROPOSITION

Certainly it looked decidedly warlike on board of the little steamer Maud; and Felix, who was never inclined to be very serious over anything, declared that she was like a bantam rooster ready for a pitched battle in a farmyard. Captain Scott called Louis out, and proposed to him that he should take the command of the riflemen, who were required to keep out of sight of the Moors in the boat.

"Of course I will obey orders wherever I am placed; but, if you will excuse me, I must protest against the appointment," replied Louis, as they watched the approaching enemy. "Morris is one of our number in the gangway, and it would not be fair or right to put another fellow over the first officer."

"That is all right in theory; but Morris is the youngest fellow on board," reasoned the captain.

"But he is just as resolute, plucky, and prompt as any one on board. He thinks quick, and has good judgment," persisted Louis. "I should be very sorry to be placed over his head."

"Say no more! I only thought it would be unfortunate to lose you in the place where you could do the most good," added Scott. "I will give my orders to Morris, and let him carry them out. I don't know any better than the rest of the fellows what is coming out of this affair; but it is plain enough now that Mazagan intends to do something."

"No doubt of that; but it does not follow that he intends to attack us. He knows very well that such would be piracy," suggested Louis.

"Piracy! He makes no bones of anything that will put forty thousand dollars into his pocket; and that is what he expects to make out of us. Piracy is nothing but a pastime to him; and he relies upon His Highness to save his neck from any undue stretching," replied Captain Scott, as he walked to the port gangway. "Is everything ready here, Morris?"

"Everything, Captain," answered the first officer. "The rifles are all loaded, and

every man has a supply of cartridges in his pocket. Every one has a revolver except Pitts."

"I have two, and he shall have one of them," interposed Felix, handing his extra weapon to the cook, with a package of ammunition for it.

"I think we shall be able to render a good account of ourselves, whatever may turn up in the course of the afternoon," added the captain. "I want you with me on the forecastle for the present, Louis; for, after all, there may be more talk than bullets in this affair."

"I hope so," added Louis sincerely; though it was evident that some of the boys looked upon the adventure as decidedly exciting, and therefore agreeable.

Louis walked to the forecastle with the captain, and both of them gave their entire attention to the boat that was approaching, having now accomplished more than half the distance between the two vessels.

"I can't imagine what has become of the Guardian-Mother," said Louis, as he directed a spy-glass to seaward. "She cannot have intended to desert us in this manner. What do you suppose has become of her, Captain Scott?"

"I shall have to give it up at once, for I cannot form any idea," replied Scott. "She was to follow us, and in some such place as this bay we were to bring things to a head, and give the pirate the slip."

"I hope nothing serious has happened to her. The last we saw of her she was rounding a point near Damietta."

"She intended to get out of sight of the pirate as soon as possible, so that the Fatty could follow the Maud; and she did all that in good order. But I have no doubt that she is safe enough; and, if we don't get chewed up in this scrape, I have no doubt she will soon put in an appearance in these waters."

"Steamer, ahoy!" shouted a rather tall man in the stern-sheets of the boat.

"In the boat!" replied Scott, after he had waited a moment, and then in a very careless and indifferent tone.

"That's Mazagan," said Louis.

"Of course it is; I knew he was there before he opened his mouth, the pirate!" added the captain.

"Is Mr. Belgrave on board?" demanded the captain of the Fatimé.

"What if he is? What if he is not?" answered the captain.

"I wish to see him."

"He is not to be seen at the present moment. What is your business with him?" Scott inquired, as indifferently as though the affair did not even remotely concern him.

Of course his manner was assumed, and Louis listened to him with the most intense interest; for he was anxious to ascertain in what manner the captain intended to conduct the negotiation, if there was to be anything of that kind. In spite of his affectation of indifference, he knew that Scott was quite as anxious in regard to the result of the parley as he was himself, though he was the intended victim of the pirate.

"My business is quite as important to Mr. Belgrave as it is to me," replied Mazagan.

"Very likely; but what is your business with him?"

"It is with him, and not with you," returned the pirate, apparently vexed at the reply. "Who are you? I don't mean to talk my affairs with one I don't know."

"I am Captain Scott, commander of the steamer Maud, tender of the steamship Guardian-Mother, owned and in the service of Mr. Louis Belgrave," replied the captain as impressively as he could make the statement. "That ought to knock a hole through the tympanum of his starboard ear," he added with a smile, in a lower tone.

"Of course he knew who you were before," added Louis.

"He ought to know me, for I fished him out of the water in the harbor of Hermopolis."

"If Mr. Belgrave is on board, I wish to see him," continued Mazagan.

"I may as well face the music first as last," said Louis, as he stepped out from the shelter of the pilot-house which had concealed him from those in the boat.

"Of course it is no use to try to hide you. Do you wish to talk with the pirate, Louis?" asked the captain.

"I don't object to hearing what he has to say, though certainly nothing will come of it," replied the intended victim.

"It will use up some of the time, and the longer we wait before the curtain rises, the better the chance that the Guardian-Mother will come in to take a hand in the game," suggested the captain; and Louis took another look through the glass to seaward.

"You needn't look so far out to sea for the ship, my dear fellow; for when she appears she will come around Cape Arnauti, and not more than a mile outside of it, where she will get eight fathoms of water. She is coming up from the south; and if our business was not such here that none of us can leave, I would send Morris and Flix to the top of that hill on the point, where they could see the ship twenty miles off in this clear air."

While the captain was saying all this, the four Moorish rowers in the boat dropped their oars into the water, and began to pull again; for the patience of their commander seemed to be oozing out.

"That won't do!" exclaimed Scott. "Boat ahoy! Keep off!" he shouted.

"I told you I wished to see Mr. Belgrave, Captain Scott; and you do not answer me. You are using up my patience, and I tell you that I will not be trifled with!" said Captain Mazagan in a loud tone, with a spice of anger and impatience mixed in with it.

"That's just my case! I won't be trifled with! Stop where you are! If you pull another stroke, I shall proceed to business!" called the captain, with vim enough to satisfy the most strenuous admirer of pluck in a moment of difficulty.

The oarsmen ceased rowing; and when the boat lost its headway it was not more than forty feet from the side of the Maud. Scott did not object to this distance, as there was to be a talk with the pirate.

"Mr. Belgrave will speak with you since you desire it," said Captain Scott, as soon as he realized that the boat's crew did not intend to board the steamer.

He walked over to the port side of the deck, where he could still command a clear view of the boat all the time; and he did not take his eyes from it long enough to wink. He was ready to order the riflemen to the forecastle; and he intended to do so if the boat advanced another foot.

"What is going on, Captain Scott?" asked Morris, who stood at the head of the column.

"Mazagan wants to talk with Louis, and we are willing he should do so; for we desire to gain all the time we can, in order to enable the Guardian-Mother to arrive here before anybody gets hurt."

"We have heard all that has passed so far, and we expected to be called out by this time," added Morris.

"I don't care to have you show those rifles just yet, and I hope you will not have to exhibit them at all. You can sit down on the deck and hear all that is going on," added the captain, as he moved away. If he took his eyes off the boat at all, it was only to glance at the lofty cape where the ship would first be seen.

Louis had placed himself at the rail, ready for the conference that the pirate desired. Mazagan had met him face to face, and he could not help knowing him.

"Are you Mr. Louis Belgrave?" demanded the Moorish captain, more gently than he had spoken to Scott at the close of the interview with him.

"That is my name," replied the young millionaire with all his native dignity.

"We have had some business relations together, and at the present moment they are not in a satisfactory condition," the captain proceeded.

"Go on," replied Louis when he paused; for he had decided to say nothing that would unnecessarily irritate the villain.

"I wish you to join in the conversation, and express your mind freely."

"I shall do so as occasion may require. I am ready to hear any statement you wish to make; but I have nothing to say at present."

"Between the noble and exalted gentleman in whose services I sail his steam-yacht, and the commander of your larger steam-yacht, Captain Ringgold, there is a difficulty of very great magnitude;" and Captain Mazagan paused as if to note the effect of this announcement upon his auditor.

"Proceed, sir," added Louis.

"Do you deny the truth of what I have stated?"

"By no means," said Louis with a polite bow and a wave of his right hand.

"His Highness, the Pacha, was grossly and disgracefully insulted and assaulted by Captain Ringgold, who has so far declined to make any apology or reparation such as one gentleman has the right to require of another. Can you deny this statement?"

"Proceed, Captain Mazagan; I have nothing to say," repeated Louis.

"You will not speak?"

"If you desire it, I will; but simply to suggest that you wait on Captain Ringgold with your grievance."

"That he has tried to do, and called upon him in Constantinople for that purpose; but Captain Ringgold is a coward, a poltroon! He keeps himself shut up in his cabin, and refuses to give my noble master any satisfaction."

It was with a struggle that Louis maintained his dignity and preserved his silence.

"Finding all the avenues to any satisfaction closed against him, my noble master, one of the most exalted dignitaries of the Empire to which he is an honor, employed me to obtain the redress to which he is honorably entitled. So far I have not been successful. My noble master has been graciously pleased to modify the terms and conditions upon which he will consent to discontinue his efforts to obtain adequate satisfaction for the insults heaped upon him. He will accept the atonement of two hundred thousand francs for the injury done him, assured that this penalty would be the severest punishment that could be inflicted upon a cowardly and penurious American like Captain Ringgold."

"Why don't you send in your bill to him for the boodle?" asked Louis, who thought somebody must have written out the speech of Mazagan for him.

"He would not notice the claim," replied the pirate.

"I don't think he would," said Louis, inclined to laugh.

"I intend to make the matter sure this time. If you will do me the favor to come on board of the Fatimé, and remain with me in the cabin, which is quite as luxurious as your own on board of your large steam-yacht, until the money is paid, it will save all trouble and settle the matter at once," continued the Pacha's representative with a suavity creditable to his French education.

"If you please, Captain Mazagan, we will not settle it in just that way; and without any disrespect to you personally, I object to taking up my quarters in the cabin of the Fatimé," replied Louis blandly.

"Then I must take you by force!" exclaimed the pirate.

He gave the order for his men to pull. Captain Scott called out his force.

CHAPTER X

"JUST BEFORE THE BATTLE, MOTHER"

Morris Woolridge did not make use of any military forms, for he did not claim to understand them; but he simply came on the forecastle himself, followed by the other four of his party; for Louis had joined it when directed to do so by his superior. Captain Scott took the rifle he had reserved for his own use from the pilot-house. Those who had been waiting for the order had only to move a few feet, and not a second of delay had been made.

A boat large enough to contain six men, as did the pirate's, does not overcome its inertia and shoot ahead forty feet without any apparent lapse of time, like a bullet shot from a rifle. Morris and his men were in position before the boat had made ten feet.

Morris gave no orders according to the manual of the soldier, but he ranged his command on the forecastle, close to the starboard rail. The guns were all loaded, and every one of the party had had some experience in the use of the weapon, so that none of them had to be taught how to fire it.

"Aim at the boat," said the first officer in a quiet tone; and all the rifles were directed to the enemy.

It was a fact which came out afterwards, that every one of them aimed at Mazagan, not only because he was the most prominent mark as he stood in the standing-room, but he was regarded as the biggest villain of the assailants, and they could shoot him with less compunction than the Moors in his train. He was the representative of the villain behind the scenes, and all the mischief seemed to come out of him.

"Stop where you are, or I shall order my men to fire!" shouted Captain Scott, as soon as the rifles were all aimed at the boat. "Say that in Arabic to them, Don!"

The engineer translated the warning for the benefit of those who were back to the Maud, and perhaps did not see the weapons that were pointed at the boat. But Mazagan could see the six rifles, including the one in the hands of the captain; and before Don could finish his Arabic sentence, he had given the order to cease

rowing. At least it was supposed he had done so, for the Moors dropped their oars, some of them into the water.

The boat's crew were in a panic without any doubt, and Captain Scott was inclined to feel that "the coon had come down." Mazagan spoke to them in a savage tone, as though he was reproving them for their cowardice; but they plainly did not relish the idea of being shot down without being able to make any resistance, for there was nothing that looked like a musket to be seen in the boat.

"Stop where you are or I shall order my men to fire!"
"Stop where you are or I shall order my men to fire!" Page 92.

After his recent experience in Cairo, probably Captain Mazagan was provided with a revolver; but he did not exhibit it, and in the face of half a dozen breech-loaders, capable of sending three dozen bullets into the boat, it would be a piece of useless bravado. It could be seen on the forecastle of the Maud that the pirate's crew were demoralized. The Mohammedans are said to be fatalists; and in what they regard as a holy cause they have no fear of death, for they believe it bears them directly to paradise. But some of them must have had sense enough to understand that they were engaged in piracy, and that their heaven did not open wide its gates to those who fell in the commission of crime.

The boat lost its headway, and became motionless at a distance of twenty feet from the Maud, with the rifles still pointed at its crew. If the pirate chief had a revolver in his pocket, this was the time to use it; but he did not even produce it. He could not help seeing that if he fired a shot, it would immediately cause half a dozen bullets to be sent into the boat; and he had good reason to believe that he would himself be the first victim.

"What are you about?" he demanded in angry tones.

"About to fire if you come any nearer," replied Captain Scott.

"Can't you see that we are unarmed? Do you mean to shoot us down like dogs?"

"That depends upon you, Captain Mazagan. But you are so very polite while you act as a pirate, that I think it is proper for me to say, with your permission, that my crew can fire thirty-six balls without stopping to load again. If you persist in this business, not one of your number will ever get on board of the Fatimé again," added the captain of the Maud, as decided as before; but the politeness of the pirate and Louis had amused him at such a time, and he was disposed to

imitate them.

"If you mean to murder us all, I cannot help myself just now," howled Mazagan, furiously mad at the disappointment which had suddenly overtaken him; and he seemed like an angry child who had been denied a piece of candy, and resented it with tears and yells.

"All you have to do is to pull back to your ship, and we shall not take the trouble to follow you," answered Scott. "This difficulty is not of our seeking."

"I came to you peaceably, unarmed, with a fair proposition"—

"A most impudent and presumptuous proposition!" shouted Captain Scott.

"I have been respectful and polite to you, and you threaten to shoot me and my men."

"You have plainly announced your intention to take Mr. Belgrave on board of your steamer by force. Do you call that respectful and polite?"

"But I gave him a polite invitation to take possession of my cabin without the use of force, and he declined to accept it," argued Captain Mazagan, somewhat mollified in his tone and manner.

"Which he had a perfect right to do. You proposed to rob him of the sum of two hundred thousand francs; and you invite him to become a prisoner on board of your ship in the capacity of a hostage for the payment of the money of which you propose to rob him."

"What is the use of arguing the question with him, Captain Scott?" interposed Louis, who retained his place in the ranks. "His position is absurd, and the fellow is a fool as well as a knave."

"I have distinctly stated that my claim is to be indemnification for the injury done to my noble master," replied the pirate, in reply to Scott's last remark. "I do not propose to rob you."

"Call it blackmail then, if you please."

"I do not know what that means."

"Mr. Belgrave has nothing to do with your claim. He has not insulted or assaulted your ignoble master; and, in United States dialect, you 'have taken the

wrong pig by the ear.' To come back to first principles, I have nothing more to say," added Captain Scott, as he turned his back to the claimant.

"I have something more to say," returned Mazagan, bristling up with anger again. "My boat is unarmed; but I have not come up here without being prepared to meet you. I wish to be fair and just, and I will state the truth to you."

"I don't believe you know how to do it!" exclaimed Scott.

"I would not irritate him any more than is necessary," said Louis in a whisper.

"I have lost all patience with him," replied the captain; and his manner indicated that he spoke the truth.

"You will find before you have done with me that I can and do speak the truth, Captain Scott. When I made my first attempt to obtain satisfaction for my noble master in the Archipelago, I failed because your large ship was armed with cannon, and she disabled my felucca. When my noble master offered me the command of the Fatimé, to be used in carrying out his wishes, I stipulated that she should be armed with two twelve-pounders, with a supply of ammunition. I may add that I have served as an officer in the Turkish navy. Now, Captain Scott, I have nothing more to say from this boat, and the next time I speak it will be with twelve-pounders; and my last word is that the Fatimé will not go out of this bay till she leaves with Mr. Belgrave on board of her."

"Adieu!" shouted Scott in mocking tones.

"Do you suppose the villain spoke the truth, Captain?" asked Louis.

"Very likely he did, though he is not in the habit of doing so," replied Scott, laughing; but he was accustomed to put the best face upon an awkward situation.

The boat was pulling away from the Maud, and the danger of an attack was removed for the present. Mazagan appeared to be urging his men to pull with all their might, and they were doing so. He evidently had a purpose before him, born of his failure to accomplish anything by his visit to the Maud.

It seemed to be incredible that this man could be sane and sensible to make such a proposition as he had put forward; and doubtless it was done to clothe piracy in a more seemly garb than it usually wears. It was simply ridiculous on the face of it, with no imaginable foundation for the preposterous claim advanced.

Mazagan went on board of his steamer, and a few minutes later a cloud of black smoke began to pour out of her smokestack. Captain Scott had already ordered Felipe to put his furnaces in order for quick time. At the indication given of the firing up of the enemy, he went to the engine-room himself. Don was at work on the fires; and he gave Felipe directions to get up all the steam possible, and to prepare to run the Maud at the greatest speed she had ever attained.

Then he went to the pilot-house, and did not appear to be inclined to talk even with Louis. He went to work upon the chart which included Khrysoko Bay, called Pifanio on some maps, and studied intently for a considerable time. It was clear to all on deck that he had something in his head, and it was believed that he was preparing to meet the boastful threats of Captain Mazagan.

"Well, my darling, what is to be the next scene in the comedy?" asked Felix, as he seated himself by Louis in the bow.

"I don't know, Felix; but whatever it may be, Captain Scott is evidently getting ready to play his part in it," replied Louis, still watching the captain through the open front windows of the pilot-house.

"They are making the steam sizzle below, and I suppose the captain has ordered this to be done. By the powers of mud! Do you mind that?" exclaimed the Milesian, pointing to the Fatimé.

"What of her?"

"Don't you see that she has a gun run out on her port side? She had just thrown open the port when I spoke," replied Felix.

"Then the pirate spoke the truth for once," added Louis.

"He said the vessel had been armed with two twelve-pounders, and we have not even one. I suppose she has the other on the starboard side. If she had half a dozen of those playthings she might do something."

"She may do a deal of mischief with two of them if they are well handled," suggested Louis.

"She can't use but one of them at once, and she will have to come entirely about before she can do anything with the other. Her top-gallant forecastle isn't big enough for them, as the Guardian-Mother's is for hers. I am not much scared yet, my darling."

"Neither am I, Flix; but I think this is about the tightest place we have been in since we came across the Atlantic."

"Captain Scott will arrange the affair all right. If I were a sporting-man, I would bet on him yet," protested Felix.

"But while we are not scared, you know that it is possible for one of those guns to put a shot through our boiler, rip out the engine, or tear a big hole in the plates of the Maud," added Louis.

"We can plug the shot-holes—I believe that is what they call it."

"We have not a single one of the old man-of-war's-men of the Guardian-Mother on board who can tell us what to do in case of accident."

"But we won't croak, whatever else we do. If we are to be sent to the bottom of this bay, we will go down with the best grace possible," added Felix, who was certainly in as good humor as ever he was, in spite of the brass gun that protruded at the side of the Fatimé. "Do you suppose Captain Scott knows about that twelve-pounder?"

"He appears to be very busy; and I doubt if he has looked at the enemy since he went into the pilot-house," replied Louis. "I think I had better tell him that Mazagan spoke the truth about his guns."

The young men might well have been excused if they had been intimidated at the situation as it was now presented to them. That the Maud was to be the mark for the cannon of the enemy looked like a settled fact; but no one seemed to be at all excited or nervous. It is true that all of them had been in several fights. They had fought the fishermen in the Canaries, the smugglers at Gibraltar, the Greek pirates in the Archipelago, and the brigands at Zante. They had had some experience of danger, but they had never come into the presence of great guns before. They were to face these on the present occasion; at least, they were prepared to do so.

Before Louis could reach the pilot-house, he saw the captain standing at the wheel, and heard one bell in the engine-room on the gong. It was evident that he was ready to carry out his plan, whatever it was; for he was not expected to announce it. Felix observed the Fatimé and her twelve-pounder, whistling, "Just before the Battle, Mother."

CHAPTER XI

AN EXPEDIENT TO ESCAPE THE ENEMY

Captain Scott had directed Morris to heave up the anchor before he buried himself in his study of the chart in the pilot-house, and to do it in such a manner as not to attract the attention of the Fatimé's people. It was not a very heavy anchor that was required for a craft of the size of the Maud, and it had been done very easily and quietly.

Louis went into the pilot-house, where the captain was behind the wheel by this time. He was gazing intently at the conic rock which rose from the water a cable's length ahead of him, off a point on the main shore. When he brought the little steamer in to her anchorage in the morning, the lead had been kept going all the time, and he had noted the soundings on the log-slate at his side. It was now dead low tide, and the last sounding had given fifteen feet.

"I suppose you have noticed a change in the appearance of the Fatimé, Captain Scott," said Louis, as he took his place opposite him.

"What change? I haven't glanced at her. I don't like the looks of her, for she stirs up bad blood in me. I have been trying to be a saint like you, Louis, and it is the most difficult enterprise in which I ever engaged," replied Scott, as he directed his attention to her. "I don't see any change in her."

"Don't you see that gun sticking out through her bulwark?" asked Louis.

"I see it now, but I had not noticed it before," answered the captain. "Then Mazagan was not lying when he said that his vessel had been armed since he took command of her. I suppose I ought to be frightened at the appearance of that twelve-pounder, poking its muzzle out the side of the vessel; but somehow I am not a bit scared," said the captain, with a broader smile on his face than usual.

"But twelve-pound shot are not agreeable missiles to have plumped through the side of the Maud."

"Perhaps not; but the lively little craft is built of extra strength, and she can stand

a few of them. I am more concerned about the speed of the Fatimé than I am about her guns. Of course she has another gun on her starboard side."

"Of course."

"If Mazagan had consulted me in regard to the placing of them, he could not have arranged them to suit me any better. But her speed is of more consequence than her guns."

"I judge from that, that you intend to run away from her," suggested Louis.

"Louis," said Captain Scott, looking at his companion with a very serious expression for him, "there is a recording angel hovering over and around me all the time."

"I suppose every fellow has one near him, to make a note of all his thoughts and actions, though we don't often take notice of his presence."

"I believe all that, and that we shall be held responsible for all we do and say, and even for what we think," replied Scott.

"A fellow has to keep a guard over his thoughts, for they are the foundation of his actions."

"But you are taking a higher flight than I am, Louis, and we will overhaul your idea some other time, when there are no twelve-pounders near," interposed the captain, as he glanced at the enemy. "My recording angel is not one of the sort you are thinking about; though, metaphorically speaking, I believe in those to whom you allude. If my winged spirit, so constantly near me at times like the present especially, were to materialize, he would present the photograph of Captain Royal Ringgold."

Louis could not help smiling as he imagined the angel described; and he thought the dignified commander made a rather odd-looking ethereal being.

"I am not making fun of the idea, Louis; the commander seems to be close aboard of me when there is any doubtful question to be decided by me as captain of this craft," continued Scott. "He is looking at me, and writing down all I do and say, ready to hold me responsible for everything when I meet him again. He is bigger and more present, so to speak, just now than ever before. If he knew the situation here at the present moment, it would half worry the life out of him, though he would be as dignified as ever."

"You have made a picture of your sense of responsibility; and I am glad you feel it so keenly," added Louis.

"This is a tight place for a young fellow like me, and I want to do my duty faithfully. If I should follow out my natural, inborn inclination, I should pitch into the Fatimé, and open fire upon her officers and crew with all the rifles and revolvers we could muster. But I don't do that sort of thing now. I am not the same fellow I was when I came on board of the Guardian-Mother. Now I shall run away if I get a chance to do so."

"I think you are wise, Captain Scott," added Louis.

"Whatever my recording angel sets down for or against me, he shall not write that I tried to get into a fight with that pirate," said the captain with a great deal of emphasis.

"You know something about her speed, for we had a little trial of it in the Strait of Gibraltar."

"We did not beat her in a straight run, and we escaped from her by manœuvring and the aid of shoal water," the captain explained. "I depend upon the same kind of assistance to get out of the present scrape."

"Then you have a plan in your mind, Captain Scott?" asked Louis.

"I have. I shall do the best I can to get away from the pirate; but we may not succeed. I have no plan of this bay, only the general chart, on which but a few soundings are given. We may be driven into a corner where we shall have to see what virtue there is in our firearms, though I hope not."

"If we are compelled to fight, I am confident that every fellow on board will stand by you. I shall for one; for I heartily approve the platform on which you stand, Captain Scott," said Louis, giving him his hand.

"I thank you, Louis, with all my heart. You make me stronger than I was before," replied Scott, as he took the offered hand, and warmly pressed it.

The Maud was going ahead at only half speed, blowing off her extra steam; for she was in condition to make the best effort of her existence. Morris and Felix were at the bow, wondering what those in the pilot-house found to talk about so long. The water was extremely clear, as they had seen it in the Bahamas, and they were watching the bottom, composed entirely of rocks. Morris occasionally

thrust down a long-handled boathook whose length he had measured, and it gave him thirteen feet about every time.

With her bunkers full of coal as they had been when she left Alexandria, the Maud drew twelve feet of water, and by this time she had reduced it six inches. She was approaching the shore, and she could not continue much farther. Scott did not explain his plan in detail, and only said that he intended to escape if he could. He had a theory in regard to the formation of the bottom of the bay, which had twenty fathoms of water at a distance of a mile from the shore.

He had a theory in regard to the subject which was by no means a novel one, that the bottom of the sea was similar in its features to the surface of the land. If the face of the country was rugged and uneven, so was the bottom of the sea near it. On Cape Arnauti the hills rose to the dignity of mountains, and some of the soundings at the entrance of the inlet were over a hundred fathoms, which confirmed his theory in its application to this particular locality.

Otherwise stated, Captain Scott believed that if all the water in the bay could be suddenly dried up, the bottom of it would present the same irregularities as the shore. Doubtless his theory was correct in regard to the great oceans. Islands are only the tops of submarine hills and mountains rising above the surface of the water.

The captain steered the Maud directly towards the shore, while the steamer was making not over five knots an hour. He kept one eye on the rocky cone on the starboard hand, which was an elevation on the enormous ledge of half an acre.

"Where's the bottom, Morris?" he called to the first officer when the steamer was abreast of the cone.

"Thirteen feet down," returned Morris.

"Heave the lead on the port hand, Flix," added the captain very quietly; and he seemed to be still in a brown study.

"Mark under water two," reported the Milesian.

"Give the depth in feet now."

"Thirteen feet, short."

"Keep the lead going."

For about a quarter of a mile farther Scott kept the Maud moving in the same direction, with no change in the reports of the soundings. The great ledge could still be seen from the windows of the pilot-house; but suddenly the color changed to a darker hue. At this point the captain threw the helm over to port, and changed the course from south-west to north-west, a full quarter of a circle. The soundings were continued, and for some time the reports were of deeper water.

Louis had nothing to do on the forecastle, and he returned to the pilot-house, where he stationed himself at the door on the starboard side, where he could look down into the clear water as the others were doing. The ledge still presented the same appearance; that of a smooth surface, though with many seams and protuberances upon it.

"You seem to have found a channel inside of the ledge, Captain Scott," said Louis, after he had watched the indications for some time.

"I thought there must be some kind of an opening on this side of the ledge; for on the shore there is a strip of land half a mile wide covered with trees. The channel is all right here; but I would give up all my chances of being appointed to the command of the Guardian-Mother within the next ten years, to be assured that it extends out to the deep water outside the bay," replied Scott, turning around to look at his companion, and thus showing that there was a cloud on his face.

"Don't you believe that it extends the whole length of the ledge?" asked Louis, who could not fail to see the shadow of anxiety that hung over the expression of the young commander.

"It is no use to believe or disbelieve in a thing you know nothing at all about," replied Scott, as Louis placed himself at the side of the wheel opposite to him, so that he could see his face. "Do I believe it rains in New York City at this moment? What is the use of expressing an opinion about a matter upon which you have no material to base an opinion?"

"Correct, Captain!" exclaimed Louis, laughing. "Many people make fools of themselves by doing just that thing; but your recording angel never does it. I did not know but you had the means of knowing something about it."

"None whatever; there is no law of nature I know of that requires the channel to reach through to deep water. But there is one circumstance which leads me to

fear it is 'no thoroughfare' to the deep water."

"What is that, Captain?"

"The present attitude of the Fatimé."

"She does not appear to have changed her position or her looks since she ran out that twelve-pounder."

"That is just it!" replied Scott. "If he really intends to bag Mr. Louis Belgrave as his game in this hunt, as I have no doubt he does, he is not going to allow me to carry him off in the Maud through this channel without doing some kicking and some barking with his twelve-pounders. He remains there as quietly as though he had you in his cabin already. Mazagan is a sea-captain, and probably has spent most of his life sailing in these waters. I am afraid he knows more about this channel than I do, or has a more detailed chart of this bay than mine."

The Maud passed the cone, and continued on her course for a short time longer. Half a mile more would take her into twenty fathoms of water.

"It would look very hopeful, Louis, if the Fatimé were only doing her best to overhaul us in a chase; but she is like an alligator sunning himself on the water, she don't move a muscle," said the captain.

"Well, if we have to go back, we shall still have the chance of a race before us," suggested Louis.

"I hope so," added Scott.

"Only hope so?" queried Louis.

"That's all," answered the captain, with something like despondency in his tones and expression.

"Twelve feet and a half!" shouted Morris with emphasis.

"By the mark two! Twelve feet!" shouted Felix.

"Eleven and a half feet!" said Morris.

"Eleven feet!" yelled the Milesian.

Captain Scott rang one bell on the gong to stop her, and then three more to back her. The boat was lowered into the water, and only seven feet of water could be

found half a cable's length ahead of the Maud. She could go no farther in this direction.

CHAPTER XII

THE BATTLE FOUGHT, THE VICTORY WON

Whatever doubts Louis had in the first instance about Captain Scott's management of the defence of the Maud, he now believed that he honestly and sincerely desired to escape from the difficult and trying situation without an encounter with the pirate. He had feared the temptation to make a hero of himself would lead him into a conflict with the enemy when it might be avoided.

Without "showing the white feather," he had conducted himself with quite as much prudence as resolution. He had done his best to escape from the bay without any fighting. Before his reformation he was generally "spoiling for a fight" when there was any dispute or difficulty; but on the present occasion he had done his best to avoid one.

He had tried to do just as he believed Louis, his model in morals and conduct, would have done if he had been in command of the Maud. The hearty approval which his mentor had expressed of all he had done so far afforded him intense satisfaction, and he was sure that Captain Ringgold could find no fault with his management up to this moment.

"Here we are, Louis; and, so far as my plan is concerned, we are euchred. It is a failure," said Captain Scott, as he took a survey of the surroundings, which remained precisely the same as they had been from the beginning.

"Through no fault of the plan or yourself, Captain. If there was no channel here to deep water, of course you could not pass through it," replied Louis. "You have done everything you could."

"I have been asking myself if I was to blame for getting into the trap; for we certainly are in a trap," continued Scott. "I followed the instructions of Captain Ringgold to the letter; and when I brought the Maud to her anchorage by the ledge, the pirate was not in sight, and I knew no more of what had become of him than I did in regard to the Guardian-Mother."

"You have no occasion to censure yourself for anything," replied Louis. "You have obeyed your orders, and our present difficult situation is the result of the

non-appearance of the ship. Don't blame yourself, Captain Scott, for not a shadow of an imputation can rest upon your conduct."

"Thank you, my dear fellow. I hope I shall get out of this bay without forfeiting your generous approval," added Scott.

"Here we are, Captain, as you say, and it looks as though we were in a bad scrape. All we have to do is to turn our attention to the manner of getting out of it. If there were any reason to reproach yourself or anybody else, we have no time to attend to that matter. What can be done next?" demanded Louis, rousing his energies to face the difficulty.

"What we do next depends mainly upon what the Fatimé does; and she isn't doing anything," replied Captain Scott, apparently roused to new exertion by the burst of energy on the part of his companion in the pilot-house. "I have no doubt Mazagan intends to make an effort to get possession of our millionaire as soon as he has the opportunity; but he will never succeed unless he knocks the Maud all to pieces with his twelve-pounders, which I don't believe he can do, Louis. You have comforted me so effectually, my dear fellow, that I begin to think it is time for me to do something of the same sort for you."

"I don't feel the need of comfort and consolation yet," said Louis quite merrily. "I am not at all alarmed; and what I say is not braggadocio."

"If the Maud is wrecked by the guns and sent to the bottom, we still have the whole island of Cyprus open to us," added the captain.

"To come down to the hard pan of business, allow me to ask a foolish question or two, and you may laugh at them if you please. What is the Fatimé waiting for? Why doesn't Mazagan proceed to carry out his threat to capture me?" asked Louis.

"For the simple reason that he cannot; and the question calls for a review of the situation," replied the captain, as he took from his pocket a paper on which he had drawn a diagram of the position of both vessels, with the shape of the bay, the ledge, and the soundings so far as they were known. "Here is the Maud," he continued, making a small cross on the paper at the point in the inside channel where she had come to the shoal water. "There is no way to get out of this place except that by which we came in."

"I understand all that; for we have the shore on one side of us and the ledge on

the other, and the channel is not deep enough to permit us to go ahead," added Louis.

"That is our position. The Fatimé lies in deep water at least a mile from us. She is a steamer of four hundred tons, and she must draw at least fifteen feet of water; for both of these steamers were built where they put them down deeper in the water than they do in our country. The pirate would take the ground anywhere near the ledge, and she could not come into the channel by which we reached this point. Therefore, she can do nothing; and her guns would not hit us a mile distant, if they would carry a ball as far as that. You can see why she can do nothing yet a while."

"But the tide is rising, and we now have an hour of the flood," suggested Louis.

"But the tide is rising for the Fatimé as well as for the Maud."

"There was nine feet of water on the ledge at low tide, and there will be twelve feet at high tide."

"That will not be till nine o'clock this evening. But even if it were now I should not dare to undertake the task of piloting the Maud over the ledge; for I know nothing about the soundings on it except on the south edge. That would not do. We must get to deep water by the way we came in here," said the captain very decidedly.

"A shot from the pirate!" shouted Felix at this moment, as he noted the flash.

A moment later the report came to the ears of all on board, and the gun-made noise enough to startle a timid person. All watched for the ball, and saw it strike the water about half way between the two vessels.

"Bully for you, Mazagan!" exclaimed Felix. "You fired at the water, and you hit it."

"He is only trying his gun, and he will do better than that after he gets his hand in," said the captain. "The piece was depressed too much to prove what it would do if properly aimed."

"They are getting up the anchor!" shouted Felix a couple of minutes later, after he had brought his spy-glass to bear upon the pirate.

"She is evidently going to do something," said the captain, who had taken his

usual place at the wheel, while Louis was on the other side of it, where both had remained after the steamer stopped.

"What do you suppose Mazagan intends to do now?" asked Louis.

"I have not the remotest idea, except that, in a general way, he will try to keep us shut up in this channel. For that reason I do not propose to remain here any longer;" and he rang the gong to go ahead.

The tide must have risen six or eight inches by this time, increasing the depth in the channel to that extent. Scott had taken the bearings very carefully when he came in, and he soon rang the speed bell. The Maud proceeded at full speed till she came to the turn in the passage, where the captain rang to stop her, in order to take an observation.

The Fatimé had not yet got under way, and she appeared to be having some difficulty with her cable or anchor. As soon as the Maud had lost her headway the port gun belched out another flash and cloud of smoke. The Maud was at about the same distance from the pirate as when the latter fired before, and Scott watched with interest for the result of the discharge. The solid shot plumped into the water half a mile from the mark, just as though it had been dropped from some point overhead.

"I don't know much of anything about gunnery, except with four-pounders on a yacht; but that last gun was elevated so that we know about the range of her pieces," said the captain. "It is less than half a mile, and her shots would not do much damage at more than half that distance."

"She has weighed her anchor, and started her screw," reported Felix, who was still watching the enemy with the glass.

Scott rang the gong, and the Maud went ahead again. At the same time he directed Felipe to be ready to give the steamer her best speed.

"Another shot!" shouted Felix.

This one was discharged from her starboard gun, as she came about; but its range fell considerably short of that of the other piece. The Maud was still in the channel, and the ledge could be seen through the clear water on the port hand; what the soundings were on the starboard hand had not yet been demonstrated. The steamer was moving at her ordinary speed. The Fatimé had turned her head to the south; and, though she was still nearly a mile distant, her engine gong

could be heard when it rang for the vessel to go ahead.

The pirate soon changed her course, with the apparent intention of "cutting across lots," in order to reach the Maud. A hand was heaving the lead, indicating that Mazagan was not sure of his soundings. She went ahead on the new course not more than the eighth of a mile before she came about, showing that the depth of water was not satisfactory to her commander.

"If the tide were not rising, I should know better what to do; for we might go back to the angle in the channel, out of the reach of the guns, and remain there till the morning tide, and then work out into deep water," said Captain Scott, after he had observed the movements of the enemy for a couple of minutes. "But with two feet more water, the Fatimé can go at least up to the verge of the ledge, and that plan would not work anyhow."

"Another gun!" cried Felix, as he caught the flash.

The enemy was a little nearer than before, but the shot fell hardly less than half a mile from the Maud. Mazagan had "swung to" in order to fire this shot, but resumed his course at once. Scott desired to gain some time by leaving the channel, and heading to the south-east. Morris was sounding with his boathook, and reported only thirteen feet when the Maud began to move in that direction.

"Twelve feet and a half!" shouted the first officer a little later.

"This won't do," said Scott, shaking his head. "The water shoals to the southward, and all we can do is to face the music."

"What do you mean by that, Captain?" asked Louis.

Scott made a couple of crosses on his diagram, and passed it to his companion.

"The cross on your left is our present position near the outlet of the channel," the captain explained. "On the port we have the ledge, and we can't run over that. On the starboard the water is too shoal for us. We can go neither to the right nor the left."

"Therefore you must run dead ahead."

"Precisely so, or right into the guns of the enemy."

"Couldn't you retreat up the channel again?" asked Louis; and it began to look to him as though "the end of all things had come;" and it even appeared possible

that he might be captured, after all.

"Heave the lead, Flix!" called the captain, without answering the question.

"And a half two!" reported the Milesian.

"That means fifteen feet," said the captain. "The Fatimé could come into this position now, or at least within an hour. After we had run as far as we could go up the channel, we should hardly be more than four hundred and fifty feet from her, and she could batter the Maud to pieces at her leisure. We must face the music. That is our only safety, if there is any safety anywhere."

"I am with you, Captain Scott. But we are taking all the shot, and giving none. I am not a nonresistant in such a situation as this," said Louis. "We can't run away, and we must fight!"

"I am glad the suggestion comes from you, Louis," replied Scott. "Morris, bring out your company of riflemen! You will act as sharpshooters, and pay particular attention to the bridge and pilot-house of the enemy."

"Ay, ay, Captain!" returned Woolridge.

Louis left the pilot-house to join the ranks. Don came up from the fire-room, and Morris led his force to the hurricane deck, which commanded the best view of the enemy. By this time the Fatimé was within the eighth of a mile of the Maud. Her engineer was forcing her to her best speed; but she was coming head on, and could not use her broadside guns without swinging to, which Mazagan seemed to be unwilling to do, as it caused considerable delay every time it was done.

She was coming in ahead of the Maud, and her starboard gun would soon be available at a distance of not more than twenty yards. The work of the riflemen on the upper deck was evidently having its effect, and one man had been seen to fall on the bridge of the pirate.

Suddenly the helm of the Fatimé was put to starboard, and the steamer presented her broadside to the Maud. The gun was discharged then, and the shot struck the house on deck of the little steamer, tearing its way through the galley. Scott, perhaps maddened by the crashing boards behind him, put the helm to port. Felipe was driving the engine to its full power, and the bow of the Maud struck the broadside of the Fatimé, crushing in about six feet of her plates. Then he rang to back her, and the little steamer went clear of the disabled pirate.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CATASTROPHE TO THE FATIMÉ

If the strength of the little Maud was never fully tested before, it was done on the present occasion; and the construction and material of the Fatimé at the same time. The story of the manner in which the Guardian-Mother had run into and made a hole in the side of the Viking had been many times repeated on board of the ship while the "Big Four" were on board of her; for this affair had interested Scott more than any other item of her voyage.

The young captain had done at this time precisely the same thing that Captain Ringgold had at another; and the blow had not been given by accident on either occasion. When at the distance of sixty feet from the Maud, the pirate had swung to and discharged her starboard gun, the shot from which had passed through the galley. She was under full steam; her port gun was no doubt all ready, and another turn of the wheel would have enabled her to send another shot through the Maud.

To Captain Scott it was the critical moment of the conflict. Another ball from the enemy might go through the boiler or the engine, or disable his beloved little craft in some other manner; and he did what seemed to be the only thing he could do for the salvation of the Maud and his ship's company. He had disabled his vindictive enemy.

Up to the moment when the Maud struck the decisive blow, the five "sharpshooters," as Scott had called them, had used their rifles; but the people of the Fatimé had taken refuge under her top-gallant forecastle, or behind whatever would afford them shelter from the bullets, and not many of them appeared to have been hit. Besides, the situation was altogether too novel and exciting for the party to act with anything like coolness, and the smoke from the twelve-pounder concealed the enemy at the most critical moment. They had discharged the rifles at random, rather than with careful aim at each shot.

The moment the collision came, the voice of the captain called the party to the main deck; for the battle appeared to him to be ended. The enemy could not board the Maud, for she had backed at least fifty feet from the disabled steamer;

but all hands were needed there in case they attempted to do so with their boats, of which she had one on each quarter.

"Don!" shouted Scott, as soon as the rifle-party appeared on the forecastle, and while the little steamer was still backing.

"On deck, sir," promptly responded the second engineer.

"Go below forward, and see what damage has been done to us," added the captain. "Flix, heave the lead!"

However it may have been with the others on board of the Maud, the young commander was in full possession of all his faculties, in spite of the tremendous excitement which must have pervaded the minds of all on board of the little craft. His first care was for the Maud, and he looked all about him to ascertain what mischief had been done. He sent Pitts to the galley to report on the effect of the shot there.

"And a quarter seven!" reported Felix.

This was the first mark on the chart outside of the shoal line from one to two miles from the shore. The captain now turned his attention to the condition of the Fatimé. Louis had gone into the pilot-house to receive any orders the commander had to give him. The collision had been a surprise to him. It had not occurred to him that Captain Scott would resort to such an extreme measure, though he had hinted at something of the kind early in the morning.

"I suppose we may consider the battle as ended, Louis," said Scott, as the other took his place on the opposite side of the wheel, where he could see out of the front window on the port.

"I should say that it was decidedly ended, and in the most decisive manner," replied Louis, though his thoughts were not a little scattered and confused by the exciting events of the last few moments. "What next?"

"If the pirates undertake to board us with their boats, we must be ready to repel them," replied Scott.

"Board us! Why, the water is pouring into that hole in her side as through a mill-sluice!" exclaimed Louis.

"But they are lowering their boats; and it remains to be seen what they intend to

do with them."

All the hands on board of the Fatimé appeared to be Moors, for they were all dressed in Oriental costume. By this time she was letting off steam with a tremendous racket. The crew were casting loose the boats at the quarter davits. If there was an English engineer on board of her, he had clothed himself in Moorish costume, for no one in a European dress could be seen.

"She is settling in the water," said Louis, as he observed the condition of the disabled vessel.

"In a word, Louis, she is going to the bottom!" exclaimed Captain Scott. "Do you see anything of Mazagan?"

"I have been looking for him, but I can't make him out," replied Louis.

By this time one of the boats was in the water, and the men were crowding into her without any order or method in their movements. No one appeared to be in command, and every one was acting for himself. There must have been a couple of officers besides the captain; but no one exerted his authority. The other boat was soon in the water, and all who had not found a place in the first one crowded into her, some of them jumping overboard in their haste to save themselves.

The first boat shoved off from the side of the Fatimé, and all the people of the Maud watched it, some of the firing party seizing their rifles, and preparing to use them, to ascertain what the pirates intended to do. It contained ten men, as Morris counted them. The four men at the oars gave way as soon as it was clear of the vessel, but the head of the boat was directed to the shore.

"Those villains have had fighting enough, and I don't believe they will give us any more trouble," said Captain Scott, when the boat was fairly in motion for the shore. It was evident enough that they could do nothing to save the steamer, and they had abandoned her. The other boat presently came out from the farther side of the vessel, and it contained only seven persons, from which it appeared that the Fatimé's ship's company consisted of only seventeen men, unless some of them had been killed or wounded, and left on board.

"This looks like the end of the Fatimé, and I don't believe she will give us any further trouble in our voyage, wherever we may go," said Captain Scott, while all hands were watching the passage of the two boats to the shore.

"But why don't she sink?" asked Louis.

"Though that is a big hole in her side, the most of it was above water in the first of it, and the brine did not flow in very rapidly; but she is settling very fast now, and it is a question of only a few minutes with her now," replied the captain, as he rang three bells upon the gong in the engine-room to back her. "We are rather too near her if she makes much of a stir-about when she goes down."

"Help! Help! Save me! Save me!" came in rather feeble tones from the wreck of the Fatimé.

At the same time the form of a man was seen staggering to the end of the bridge.

"That's Captain Mazagan!" shouted Felix from the forecastle.

"Mazagan!" exclaimed Louis.

"Shall we do anything for that man, Captain Scott?" asked Don, coming to the front windows of the pilot-house. "If we do, it must be done in a hurry, for that craft is going to the bottom in less than two minutes."

"Of course we shall save him," replied the captain, looking at Louis.

"Certainly, we must save him!" added Louis with an earnestness that impressed his companion. "Don't let us forget that we are Christians at such a moment as this! How shall it be done, Captain? Give your orders, and count me in as the first volunteer."

"Get the boat into the water, Morris! Be lively about it. Louis and Felix will go in it to save this man if they can," replied the captain.

The boat on the hurricane deck was a small and light one, and the first officer had it in the water almost in the twinkling of an eye. Louis and Felix leaped into it, and in another instant they were pulling for the wreck. It was a smooth sea, and the distance was not more than fifty feet; for the captain had rung to stop the backward motion as soon as the cry from the survivor reached his ears.

"Mind your eye, Louis!" shouted Scott, as soon as they were in motion. "She may go down at any moment! When I shout to you, back out as fast as you can! I will watch her, and let you know when she is likely to make her last dive!"

"Ay, ay!" returned Louis.

"I beg you, Captain Scott, not to let them go any farther," said Don very earnestly. "She is settling fast by the stern, and she will go down by the time they

get alongside of her. She has settled so that the hole is more than half under water."

"That is so!" exclaimed Scott, as he glanced at the stern of the wreck. "Hold on! Hold on!" he shouted with all the force of his lungs. "Back out!"

The two rowers obeyed the order promptly, and backed water with all their might; and it was fortunate that they did so, or they would have been caught in the swirl of the sinking vessel. Before they had retreated twenty feet, the stern of the Fatimé suddenly went down, with a mighty rush of the water around her to fill up the vacant space inside of her, and then she shot to the bottom, disappearing entirely from the gaze of the beholders, as well in the two boats of the ship's company that had abandoned her, as of those on board of the Maud.

"That is the end of the pirate!" exclaimed Captain Scott, with a sort of solemnity in his tones and manner, as though he regarded the fate of the steamer as a retribution upon her for the use to which she had been applied.

"Amen!" responded Don at the window of the pilot-house.

The burden of his responsibility began to weigh upon his mind as Captain Scott witnessed the last scene of the drama. But his thoughts were recalled to the present moment when he saw Louis and Felix, the commotion of the water having subsided, pulling with all their might back to the scene of the catastrophe.

The little boat had not been far enough away from the turmoil of the water to be unaffected by it; and for a moment the puny craft had rolled and pitched as though it would toss its passengers into the bay. A skilful use of the oars had saved the boat from being upset, and Louis and Felix began to survey the scene of the uproar as soon as the waves ceased the violence of their motion.

"Mazagan has gone to the bottom with her!" exclaimed Felix, as he looked about the various objects that had floated away from the wreck as it sank to the bottom.

"Perhaps not," replied Louis. "He was on the end of the bridge, and he may have floated off and come to the surface. Give way again, Flix!"

"There he is!" shouted the Milesian, as he bent to his oar with his boatmate. "His head just up out of the water, as though he had just come up from the bottom."

A few more strokes brought the boat to the point where Felix had seen the head just as it rose again. He rushed to the bow, and seized the drowning man by the

collar of his vest, for he wore no coat, and dragged him to the middle of the boat. He seemed to be exhausted or insensible, for he did not speak. With a great deal of difficulty they labored to get him in; but the boat was so small that they did not succeed at once.

"All right, Flix; hold him where he is, if you can. The captain has started the Maud, and she will be here in a moment," said Louis. "Pass the painter of the boat under his arms, and make it fast if he is too much for you, though it will be but for a moment."

"I can hold him in the water easily enough, my darling. I wonder what made him come up," replied Felix.

"I suppose he was lighter than the water. But here is the Maud."

The little steamer ran alongside the tender, and Don and Pitts leaped into it. By the order of the captain they drew the insensible form into the boat, which was then taken on board with the victim in it. It was shoved aft to the cabin door, in which Morris had made up a bed for the sufferer.

The engineer and the cook proceeded to examine him. In his right shoulder they found a bullet-wound, which he must have received while on the bridge, doing his best for the destruction of the Maud. The cook declared that it was not a very bad wound, and not at all likely to be fatal. Pitts brought some brandy from the medicine-chest, and gave him a small quantity of it.

This stimulant revived him, and then he wanted to talk; but Pitts would not permit him to do so. He remained with him, while Louis and Felix went forward to report to the captain, and Don went to the engine-room to tell Felipe the news.

CHAPTER XIV

THE CONSULTATION IN THE PILOT-HOUSE

Felipe Garcias, the first engineer of the Maud, had filled the same position on board of her when she was owned and used by Ali-Noury Pacha. He was a young man of eighteen now, a native of the Canary Islands, and a very religious Catholic. The orgies conducted by His Highness on board of the little steamer, not to say the crimes, had disgusted and revolted the pious soul of the youth, and he had rebelled against his master.

For this he had been abused; and he had run away from his employer, departing alone in the Salihé, as she was then called. After an adventure with the unreformed Scott, the "Big Four" had been picked up at sea in an open boat, and conveyed to Gibraltar, where the Fatimé had followed the Guardian-Mother from Funchal.

Felipe quieted his conscience for taking the steam-yacht by causing her to be made fast to the Pacha's steamer, and leaving her there. At that distance from his home the little craft was an elephant on the hands of the owner, and he had sold her for a nominal price to one who had disposed of her to the present owners. Don had been himself an engineer on board of the Fatimé; but he had been threatened when he criticised affairs which occurred on board of her, and he was ill-treated. He escaped from her at Gibraltar, and had been employed by Captain Ringgold in his present capacity.

"The Fatimé has gone to the bottom, Felipe," said Don as he entered the engine-room. "There will be no more defiance of the laws of God and man on board of her, for the present at least."

"God is good, and God is just," replied the chief engineer; but he did not understand English quite well enough to comprehend the remark of Don, who proceeded to repeat and explain it.

Captain Scott still remained at the wheel, and had not left it for a moment. He was thinking all the time of what he had done, and wondering what his recording angel had written down in regard to his action in the greatest emergency of his lifetime.

"Mazagan is wounded in the shoulder; but Pitts thinks it will not prove to be a fatal wound," said Felix as he went into the pilot-house.

"Has he come to his senses?" asked the captain.

"He has; and he wants to talk."

"I should like to hear him talk; for there are some things about this affair which I do not yet understand."

"The cook says he must not talk yet, and he is taking charge of the case."

"Where is Louis?"

"He was looking on, and doing what he could for the wounded man. Do you know, Captain Scott, I believe it was the ball from his rifle that struck Mazagan!" said Felix, with an impressive expression on his face.

"Nonsense, Flix!" exclaimed Scott. "How under the canopy can you tell who fired the shot, when five of you were firing at the same time?"

"Within my knowledge Louis has defended himself with a revolver in his hand three times, and in every one of them he hit his man in the right shoulder," replied Felix. "He never fires to kill; he is a dead shot, and he can put the ball just where he pleases every time. If Mazagan had been shot dead, I should know that Louis did not do it."

"I remember that the fellow in the Muski was hit in the right shoulder," added the captain.

"That disables a man without making a very dangerous wound. But, Captain, darling, don't whisper a word to Louis that he did it, for it might make him feel bad."

"I won't say a word; but ask him to come to the pilot-house, for I want to see him, Flix," said Scott, as he had had no opportunity since the catastrophe to speak to the one he regarded as the most important personage on board of the Maud.

In fact, but a very few minutes had elapsed since the event occurred. Those on the wreck had made haste to escape before they should be carried down with it, and they were still pulling at no great distance from the Maud for the shore. Louis appeared at the door of the pilot-house very promptly; for he imagined

that his presence before the wounded man was not agreeable to him, and that it emphasized in his mind the disastrous failure of his expedition to this island.

"What next, Louis?" asked the captain with a smile on his face; for he believed he had stolen his friend's first question "after the battle."

"That is for you to decide, Captain Scott, and I intend to avoid any interference with the duties of the commander," replied Louis.

"But when the commander asks for advice it may be given without offence," suggested Scott. "We have just got out of the tightest place in which we have ever been placed, and our experience hitherto has been boy's play compared with this day's work."

"That is very true; this is by all odds the most serious affair in which we have ever been engaged," answered Louis, as he seated himself on the divan.

"I am not going to beat about the bush for a moment, my dear fellow; and before we talk about anything else, even of what we will do next in this trying situation, I want to say that I am very much troubled in my mind in regard to the consequences of what *I* have done," continued Scott, as he seated himself by the side of his friend and model on the divan.

"I don't wonder that you are troubled; so am I, for I think we may well regard what has happened as an extraordinary event," added Louis.

"I say what *I* have done; for I purposely abstained from asking advice of you or any other fellow, after I had decided what to do, even if there had been time for me to consult you. In other words, I took the entire responsibility upon myself; and there I purpose to have it rest."

"Of course you had no time to ask the opinion of any fellow, even if it could have been of any use to you."

"I believe I did the best I could. The shallow water at the south of us prevented me from running away in that direction, as I tried to do, and the only avenue out of the difficulty was directly ahead of the Maud."

"I understand it all perfectly, for I could measure the situation from the upper deck," said Louis.

"I headed the steamer to the east. Then came that shot through the galley. The

Fatimé was coming about in order to bring her port gun to bear upon us. She could not well avoid hitting us if she had tried to do so, we were so near. If the ball went through the engine or the boiler, both of which were exposed to the fire, that would have been the last of us. Half of us might have been scalded to death; or, at the best, Mazagan might have knocked the Maud all to pieces at his leisure after he had disabled the vessel."

"Precisely so."

"I might have hoisted a white rag, and surrendered, permitting the pirate to take you on board his steamer; but if I had done that, I could never have held up my head again, and I could never have looked my recording angel in the face to tell him I had let the pirate take Louis Belgrave out of the Maud."

"It would not have ended in just the way you have pictured it, Captain Scott," added Louis with a smile. "I think enough of the ship's company would have stood by me to enable me to make an effectual resistance, and Mazagan might have got a bullet through his left breast instead of through his right shoulder."

"Every fellow would have stood by you, my dear fellow, as long as you stood yourself," replied the captain. "If Mazagan had disabled the Maud, he could have retired out of reach of our rifle balls, and knocked a hole through the vessel with his guns, and sunk her. Then he would have had nothing to do but to pick up his millionaire, and ransom him with double the sum he demanded in Cairo."

"Perhaps you are right, Captain Scott; but I think we need not discuss what might have been. We know what is; and this is the problem with which we have to deal."

"Bluntly, Louis, I desire to ask you whether you approve or disapprove what I have done as the captain of the Maud?" continued Scott rather nervously for him.

"I wholly and heartily approve of what you have done!" protested Louis with emphatic earnestness, and without an instant's hesitation.

"My dear Louis, give me your hand!" exclaimed Scott, springing to his feet; they clasped hands in front of the wheel, and the captain seemed disposed to extend it to an embrace. "You have removed all my doubts and anxiety by what you said and the manner in which you said it. If you approve my action, I believe the commander will do the same."

"While I do not accept your view of what might have followed if you had done

otherwise, I believe you did the best thing that could be done. If the end had not come just as you say, it would have amounted to the same thing. Let us leave the subject now, and come back to the question you asked me when I came in. What shall be done next?" said Louis.

"I don't think we can do anything but wait here till the Guardian-Mother comes. If we go to sea, she will not know where to find us," replied Captain Scott. "What do you think of it, Louis?"

"I am decidedly opposed to remaining where we are. Though you and I may agree that what has been done is all right, the officers of the Turkish government in authority on this island may not be of that opinion. There is no town, or anything like one, in sight, and I have not been able to make out even a single house or habitation of any kind."

"It is an exceedingly rough-looking country on shore. There are nothing but mountains and forests to be seen. The nearest town put down on the chart is more than ten miles distant, though there may be a village or houses behind those hills on the shore to the south of us. If any of the inhabitants had heard the three shots fired by the pirate, they would have shown themselves before this time."

"But I think we had better be farther from the island. When the Guardian-Mother comes, she must take the same course which we followed yesterday," persisted Louis. "I quite agree with you that we must remain in this vicinity. It is almost as calm outside the bay as it is inside. How is the water off the cape?"

"There are eight fathoms half a mile from the point. I think you are right, on the whole, Louis; for we don't care to meet any Turkish officers of any kind," replied the captain, as he rang the gong to go ahead.

The sound of the bell brought all hands except Morris, who had volunteered to stay with the patient in the cabin, to the forecastle. Pitts had gone to the galley to ascertain the condition of his wares after the passage of a twelve-pound shot through his quarters. The stove had not been struck, but it had knocked about everything else into the utmost confusion. He was arranging things as well as he could; for it was now five o'clock in the afternoon, and time to think of getting supper.

"How is your patient, Pitts?" asked Louis, coming to the door.

"He is doing well enough, though he has a good deal of pain. I suppose the ball is still in his shoulder, and he will not be much better till that is removed, Mr. Belgrave," replied the cook. "We are under way again, sir."

"We are running out to the cape to wait for the Guardian-Mother," returned Louis, as he joined the others on the forecastle.

The two boats from the wreck had made a landing on a point near the conic rock on the ledge. The course of the Maud took her within half a mile of them; for she passed over the outer extremity of the ledge.

"They are making signals to us," said Felix to the captain. "There goes a white cloth on a pole."

A little later a boat put off pulled by four men, with another in the stern sheets. The captain rang to stop the screw; for he was curious to know what the men wanted.

"Let the boat come alongside," said he.

There was not force enough to do any mischief if the Moors had been so disposed. Don was sent for to do the talking; but the first person Louis saw was Jules Ulbach, who had been Mazagan's assistant in his operations. Louis talked with him in French. His first statement was that his employer had been shot in the shoulder, and had gone down with the wreck. The spokesman for the steamer did not deem it advisable to contradict this statement.

Then Ulbach begged for a passage to some port from which he could return to Paris. A few words passed between the captain and Louis, and the request was peremptorily refused. The Frenchman begged hard, declaring that the island was a desolate place, and he should starve there. The men had come to beg some provisions, as they had not a morsel to eat.

"Give them all they want to eat," replied the captain when the request was translated to him.

"The Guardian-Mother!" suddenly shouted Felix at the top of his lungs.

All hands gave three rousing cheers, to the astonishment of the Frenchman and those in the boat. Pitts came out of the galley to ascertain the cause of the demonstration, and he made out for himself the bow of the ship passing the point of the cape. A plentiful supply of food was put into the boat, and the Maud

continued on her course.

CHAPTER XV

THE ARRIVAL OF THE GUARDIAN-MOTHER

The appearance of the Guardian-Mother in the offing was hailed with rejoicing by every person belonging to the Maud. Off on an independent cruise as the boys were, and "when the cat's away the mice will play," it would not have been strange if they had enjoyed their freedom from the restraining presence and influence of the commander; but no such feeling pervaded the minds of the ship's company.

Not even the captain of the little steamer had felt that he was in possession of any unusual liberty. It might have been otherwise with him and his companions if the threatening presence of the Fatimé had not been a serious damper upon them. As it was, the voyage to Cyprus had resulted in a tremendous event.

Whatever Scott had said to Louis Belgrave about knocking a hole in the side of the pirate, as Captain Ringgold had done with the Viking, had no bearing whatever upon what he had actually done when the critical moment had come in the encounter. He declared rather lightly that he would proceed to this extremity if he were the captain of the larger steamer; but it had not occurred to him to do such a reckless deed with the little Maud, when his opponent was a steamer of four hundred tons.

Captain Scott and his companions had expected to see the Guardian-Mother long before she appeared. The commander might naturally have felt some anxiety in regard to the safety of the Maud in the gale of the night before, though it had not been a very severe storm; and Scott and Louis supposed he would make all possible haste to be near her. Instead of that, she was fully ten hours behind her, even with her superior speed and more weatherly ability. They could not explain her delay, and it was useless to attempt to do so.

"What do you suppose will become of those fellows from the pirate, Captain Scott?" asked Louis, looking at the people from the Fatimé on the shore.

"I haven't the least idea, and I don't think I shall trouble my head with the question," replied the captain. "We have given them provisions enough to keep them alive for several days, and they can make their way to some town. I don't

consider their condition as at all desperate. If Captain Ringgold thinks it necessary, he will do whatever he deems advisable."

"I don't consider those men as pirates, or hold them responsible for the acts of Captain Mazagan," added Louis. "They had to obey his orders, and I doubt if they had any knowledge of his intentions."

"I did not see a single person, as well as I could make them out in the boats, who looked like an Englishman. Probably the foreign engineers retired from the Pacha's service when Mazagan took command of her. They knew the meaning of piracy. At any rate, the steamer was not officered nor manned as she was when we saw her at Gibraltar. Don says her cabin was magnificently furnished, as he had seen through the open door, for he had never been into it. But he is certain that she is an old steamer, built for a steam-yacht, but sold by her owner at a big price when she became altogether behind the times."

"She could not have been very strongly built, or the Maud would not have knocked a hole in her so easily," said Louis.

"It has been repeated over and over again that the Maud was constructed of extra strength when she was built. Who was that man of whom she was purchased?"

"Giles Chickworth, a Scotchman," replied Louis, as he recalled the character.

"He declared that she was the strongest little vessel of her size that ever was built. Don examined the inside of her bow immediately after the blow was struck, and I have done so since. She has not started a plate or a bolt. But then we had all the advantage. We struck the pirate fairly on the broadside with the part of our craft where she is the strongest, and where there could be no give or spring. It does not seem so strange to me as I think it over."

"Pitts," called the captain a little later, while they were still watching the approach of the ship, "how is your patient?"

"About the same, sir; I don't see any change in him," replied the cook. "But he will have the doctor to-night, and that will put him in the way of getting well."

"Does he talk any?"

"He would talk all the time if I would let him; but I don't answer him when he asks questions, and I leave him alone most of the time."

"What is the condition of the galley?" asked the captain.

"It is in very bad condition, sir; the cannon-ball tore away all the shelves on the starboard side, and knocked the tins and dishes all to pieces. But I can get supper after a fashion," replied the cook.

"You may let the supper go to-night, and we will get it on board of the ship. We shall be alongside of her in less than fifteen minutes," said the captain. "Set the colors astern, Flix."

The Maud was going at full speed, and, as the two steamers were approaching each other, they came within hail off Cape Arnauti. At this time the captain ordered three cheers to be given; for he wished to make a demonstration of some kind, and this was the only way within his means. They were given with hearty good-will, and the seamen responded from the Guardian-Mother, and both vessels whistled as snappers. Then the ship stopped her screw, and the sound of escaping steam came from her.

"Maud, ahoy!" shouted Captain Ringgold from her top-gallant forecastle.

"On board the Guardian-Mother!" responded Captain Scott.

"Come alongside!" added the commander.

"Alongside, sir!" replied the captain.

The Maud made a sweep around, and when she had come about, she came alongside on the port side of the ship. The gangway was already lowered. All the cabin party had been watching the approach to the island from the promenade; but as soon as the Maud came alongside, they all hastened to the main deck to greet the young cruisers, who had been absent from the ship about thirty hours.

"Come on board, all of you!" called the commander from the head of the gangway.

"I think we had better not say anything about what has happened in the presence of the party," said Scott, as he started to mount the steps.

"Not a word," added Louis; and Morris and Felix repeated the words.

The "Big Four" ascended the gangway stairs to the main deck. The captain was permitted to pass without any assaulting embraces, but Louis dropped lovingly and submissively into the arms of his mother, as did Morris when Mrs.

Woolridge presented herself. Felix hung back, for he knew what awaited him. The commander stepped aside to make room for these demonstrations.

"Come to my room, all of you, as soon as the others are at liberty," said the commander in a low tone to Captain Scott.

"I will, sir," replied he, fully understanding what was meant.

"I am so glad to see you again, Louis!" exclaimed Mrs. Belgrave, as she continued to hug her boy. "You have had a terrible time, haven't you, my dear?"

"What makes you think so, mother?" asked Louis, wondering what she meant; for it seemed impossible that she could know anything about the "Battle of Khrysoko," as it afterwards came to be called.

"Why, you were out in a terrible storm last night," replied Mrs. Belgrave. "I was afraid you would be cast away, my son, and I prayed for you half the night."

"Then your prayers were effectual, for I am safe," answered Louis with a smile.

"But wasn't it an awful tempest, my boy?" she asked, hugging the young man with a new impulse.

"Not at all, my dear mother. We had a gale of wind, and it made a rough night of it; but we got into this bay about eight o'clock this morning all right," returned Louis, reciprocating her caresses. "But you must not worry so about me, mother. We were in no danger at any time from the gale or the heavy sea."

"Here is the commander, and he wants to see you, I know," she said, stepping aside for him.

Captain Ringgold took the hand of the owner of the ship, and pressed it warmly.

"She spread out her arms and rushed upon him."
"She spread out her arms and rushed upon him." Page 147.

"He says he has been in no danger from the storm, Captain," added the lady.

"He knows best about that; but I told you the Maud would go through it all right," added the commander as he turned to greet Morris.

"Where in the world is Felix?" cried Mrs. Blossom; for the Milesian, actually dreading the onslaught of the excellent woman who was not his mother, had dodged in at the door of the boudoir.

"I'm looking for you, grandma," said he, stepping out on the deck.

As soon as she saw him, she spread out her arms and rushed upon him; but Felix put up his left arm and warded off the burden of the attack, taking her by the hand with the right.

"How glad I am to see you, grandma!" he exclaimed, still holding her by the right hand, with his left on guard. "I am delighted to be with you again. The Guardian-Mother did not come into the bay, and I was afraid you had all gone to the bottom in the gale."

"Don't you call me 'grandma' again, Felix," protested the worthy woman quite warmly; for the Milesian had twice applied the opprobrious appellation to her. "If you ever do it again, I will never hug you another time!"

"Then I will call you so till my dying day!" Felix declared, to the great amusement of all those within hearing.

"I am not your grandma! I am only thirty-six years old, and I am not far enough into years to be the grandmother of a great strapping boy like you."

"It is only a pet name. But you didn't go to the bottom of the sea after all, grandma."

"There it is again!"

"Of course it is, grandma. But I will make a fair trade with you. If you will promise never to hug me any more, I will agree never to call you grandma again."

"That is fair," said Mrs. Belgrave.

They retired to the boudoir to talk over the matter; but the agreement was ratified between them. The "Big Four" were cordially greeted by all the passengers and by all the officers of the ship; but they were careful not to drop any hint of what had transpired in Khrysoko Bay. Before the exchange of salutations was finished the gong rang for dinner.

"For a reason to be given later on, Captain Ringgold, I must ask you to give the engineers and cook of the Maud their supper to-night," said Captain Scott at a favorable moment.

The commander sent for Baldy Bickling, the second cook, and ordered him to provide for them; and Mr. Boulong to send an engineer and a couple of hands on board of the Maud while the party came on board to supper. The company in the cabin were in a very jovial state of feeling, and it would take a chapter to record all the jokes of Dr. Hawkes and Uncle Moses. It was an excellent dinner even for the Guardian-Mother; for both the chief steward and the chief cook were artists in their line, and it was heartily enjoyed by all at the table.

The commander was impatient to hear the report of Captain Scott on his expedition, and the commander of the Maud was almost as impatient to learn what had delayed the ship; but fully an hour was spent at the table, for no one wished to break in upon the agreeable occasion. How he knew it he could not have told in detail; but the commander was satisfied, that something important had occurred in the experience of the young navigators, though not a word had yet been spoken, and he had failed to notice the ragged hole through the Maud's deck-house at the location of the galley.

He had expected to find the Fatimé near the little steamer; but though he had swept the bay with his spy-glass, he could not find her, for she was no longer visible. Probably she had fallen over on the rocky and irregular bottom, and that had carried even her short masts under water. As soon as the party rose from the table, Louis and Morris detached themselves from their mothers, and hastened to the commander's room, where they found Captain Scott and Felix.

"I don't see anything of the Fatimé in this bay," said Captain Ringgold, when he had closed and locked his doors.

"But she is there, sir," replied Scott mysteriously to the commander.

"Where? I looked the bay over with my glass, and I think if she were here I should have seen her," added Captain Ringgold.

"You could not see her where she is, Captain," replied Scott.

"Where is she, then?" demanded the commander.

"On the bottom, Captain Ringgold," said Captain Scott impressively.

CHAPTER XVI

THE REPORT OF THE BATTLE OF KHRYSOKO

Captain Ringgold looked from one to another of the "Big Four," and a smile passed over his dignified face. It was evident to him from the expression of all of them that something of importance had occurred in Khrysoko Bay, and that Captain Scott, who was, by his position, the spokesman of the party, proposed to tell his story in his own way, to which he did not object.

He believed the young men were honest, truthful, and straightforward, and he had no suspicions of any kind. As the bearer of heavy and disagreeable intelligence is inclined to approach his topic by degrees, the young captain did not like to tell the worst of his report in the beginning.

The commander was not disposed to have the news "broken" to him, and considered himself able to bear the whole of it in a mass without being overwhelmed. But he had no idea of the seriousness of the event which had occurred, and he thought it probable that the boys were making a great deal more of it than the occasion required. They had all been to the table at dinner, and were as lively and as full of fun as usual. As none of them had been killed or injured, nothing very terrible could have happened.

"When did you reach this bay, Captain Scott?" he asked, after he had measured the visages of his audience.

"About eight o'clock this morning, sir," replied Scott.

"You had a smart gale about all last night," the commander proceeded.

"Yes, sir; but we made very good weather of it, and it lasted about twelve hours."

"You had no accident?"

"None of any kind, sir; everything went on as usual."

"I suppose you expected the ship sooner than she came?"

"I looked for her this morning."

"In carrying out the plan which you suggested, Captain Scott, I found that the Fatimé was not disposed to follow you as long as the Guardian-Mother was in sight," continued the commander, while the "Big Four" looked at each other, wondering that Captain Ringgold had turned aside from the subject which was a burning one to them. "In order to help Captain Mazagan in his movements, I picked up a pilot off Ras Bourlos, and stood in behind a neck of land. We took the ground there, and stuck hard in the soft mud, though the chart gave water enough to float the ship."

"That was unfortunate," added Scott.

"A government tug hauled us off on the next tide, and I followed you at the best speed of the ship. I went in at Limasol, though I did not believe you would make that port in a southerly gale, and the lookout reported the Maud in this bay. That is the reason of my delay in joining you as arranged," said the commander, finishing his narrative. "But I expected to find the Fatimé here also; for she was pressing on after you the last we saw of her."

"We lost sight of her early last night," added Scott. "Her lights disappeared, and we could form no idea as to what had become of her. I think now that we outsailed her; for we carried a reefed foresail before the gale, and it must have helped a good deal."

"She came into this bay this morning," added Louis, who thought the conference was moving on very slowly.

"I see that you wish me to drag out of you the particulars of your stay here, Captain Scott," said the commander with a smile. "As I have not the least idea what you have been about here, I find some difficulty in framing my questions. You know that a lawyer, when he examines a witness in court, is in possession of all the facts, as I am not on the present occasion. I have learned that the Fatimé came to this bay, and that she is at the bottom now. Perhaps you will be willing to inform me, Captain, by this time, how the Pacha's steamer happens to be at the bottom."

"We had a fight here, and I ran the Maud into her, stove a big hole in her side, and she went to the bottom!" almost shouted Scott, who had been not a little perplexed at the manner of proceeding of the commander. "I believe that is telling the whole story in a heap, sir."

Captain Ringgold sprang out of his chair, evidently startled by the intelligence;

and he had never been known to make so much of a demonstration before since he had been in command of the ship. He stood looking into the face of Captain Scott as though he were incredulous in regard to the announcement just made to him; and that a little steam-yacht only forty feet in length had run into and sunk a vessel of four hundred tons was calculated to stagger a man of his experience in nautical affairs.

"Do you mean literally, Captain Scott, that you ran into and sank the Fatimé?" demanded the commander.

"Literally and exactly, sir, that was what was done," replied the young captain very decidedly.

"It looks incredible," added the commander, as he resumed his seat.

"It is the exact truth, Captain Ringgold," said Louis.

"I vouch for the truth of the statement, Captain, if my word is good for anything," Felix followed.

"I give my testimony in the same direction," Morris put in.

"Of course I do not doubt the truth of your statement," replied the commander. "But it looks like an amazing fact that the little Maud was able to do so much mischief to a steamer of the size of the Fatimé. However, she is about as big as some of the little tug-boats in New York Harbor that drag ships of five hundred tons after them. In spite of all that has been said in the last six months about the extraordinary strength of the Maud, I should have supposed the blow, if you went at the steamer at full speed, would have crushed in her bow."

"It did not start a bolt or bend a plate," replied Scott. "But, according to the evidence of Don, who knew something about the Pacha's yacht, she was old and nearly worn out when His Highness bought her."

"That may explain it."

"Before we proceed any farther, I ought to report that Captain Mazagan is now in the cabin of the Maud, wounded by a rifle ball in the shoulder, and in need of the services of the doctor," said Captain Scott.

"Wounded with a rifle ball," repeated the commander. "Then there is a good deal more of this affair which has not yet come out. But if the villain is suffering, it is

proper that he should be attended to at once."

"Pitts has had charge of him."

Pinch, the mess steward, was sent for, and ordered to make the hospital ready for a patient. Mr. Boulong was called in, and directed to superintend the removal of the wounded Moor to this apartment, under the direction of the surgeon. Dr. Hawkes was called from the boudoir, where the company had assembled by this time, and conducted to the patient.

"With this affair all concealment comes to an end for two reasons," said the commander, as soon as he had given the orders for the disposal of the wounded man. "First, there is no longer any necessity for us to keep our own counsel, for Mazagan is now deprived of the means of following us on our voyage; and second, it would be impossible to cover up our movements under the present circumstances. The nervous mothers have no longer any cause for alarm."

"It did not occur to me that we had made an end of this scare business," said Captain Scott. "I had not thought of the matter in that connection, and all I did was to defend my steamer from the attack of the pirate, who proposed to come on board and take Louis Belgrave out of her."

"Then you did your duty!" exclaimed Captain Ringgold, rising from his arm-chair, and extending his hand to the young man. "I congratulate you on your success, and I am only sorry that the unfortunate grounding of the Guardian-Mother compelled you to fight the battle alone. I had no intention of allowing the Maud to be out of my sight more than a few hours."

Louis, Felix, and Morris clapped their hands with all their might at the indorsement the commander had given Captain Scott.

"I cannot express to you, Louis, how happy I am to have you still with us," continued the captain of the ship, as he took the hand of the young millionaire; "for it appears from the report of Captain Scott that you have been in imminent danger of being captured and carried off by that miscreant, and that you have been saved only by the bravery and determination of the commander of the Maud. He has done no more than I would have done in his place, and if the pirate had taken you I would have sunk his steamer at sight to rescue you."

"I am glad you approve the action of Captain Scott, though I had no doubt you would do so when you learned the facts," replied Louis, as he pressed the hand

of the commander.

"But I have got only a skeleton of the facts yet, and now I should like to hear the whole story in detail," said Captain Ringgold.

Scott took a paper from his pocket, the one he had drawn off of the situation of the two steamers in Khrysoko Bay, with the position of the ledge, the trend of the shore, and some of the soundings as he had taken them from the chart. He had marked the course of the Maud in all the movements she had made, and also of the Fatimé, giving the position of each vessel at the moment of the collision.

He began his recital with the pointing out of the places of each steamer as soon as the pirate came into the bay. The visit of her boat to the little steamer followed, and the marshalling of the five members of the ship's company armed with the repeating-rifles. The interview with Mazagan was as minutely stated as though a skilled reporter of a newspaper had taken it down.

"That was the most amazing, presumptuous, groundless, and insane demand that one person could make upon another," interposed the commander. "It was sheer piracy!"

Scott had so viewed it, and he proceeded with his narrative. Captain Ringgold had vacated his chair at the desk, on which the captain of the Maud had placed his diagram, and pointed out everything as he spoke. The attempted escape by the supposed channel near the shore was dwelt upon at some length, in order to enable the young captain to prove that he had done his best to avoid a collision with the enemy.

The first shots the Fatimé had fired at the Maud, though they had fallen far short of the mark, were mentioned so as to give them their full effect; and Captain Ringgold declared that they were a sufficient declaration of war.

"Only one avenue of escape was open to me," continued Captain Scott, "and that was directly across the bow of the enemy. If I remained where I was the Fatimé could come in with the rising of the tide, and sink the Maud at her leisure. Then the pirate fired the shot from her starboard gun which passed through the galley, and began to swing to, so as to bring her port gun to bear on the Maud.

"I won't deny that the shot which went through our upper works made me mad; but I feared that the next one might go through our boiler or engine, and then it would have been all over with us. I determined to prevent such a disaster if I

could. I had ordered the hands to use the rifles; but most of the crew concealed themselves under the top-gallant forecastle. I shifted the helm, and drove the little steamer's bow square into the broadside of the Fatimé, just abaft her fore chains.

"It seemed to me from the feeling that she was going to bore her way through the pirate craft, and I rang to stop and back her. I gave the speed bell as soon as she began to go astern, and the Maud went clear, as I was afraid she would not."

The picking up of Mazagan after the Fatimé had gone down, and the visit of the boat from the shore, were given in detail, and the narrative was completed.

As soon as the story was finished, the commander took the hand of Captain Scott again, and pressed it in silence for a moment. He had listened attentively to the report, interrupting it but once, and had carefully followed the speaker as he pointed out his movements on the diagram.

"I approved your conduct, Captain Scott, when I had only a partial knowledge of what you had done," said he. "I can now approve it with a full knowledge of the whole affair even more heartily and decidedly than before. You have been resolute and unflinching from the beginning, and you have not only fought your ship as bravely and skilfully as any naval officer could have done it, but you have done your best to avoid a conflict. I commend you with all my heart and mind."

"I thank you, Captain Ringgold, for all the kind words you have spoken, and I am rejoiced to be informed on such authority as you are that I have done my duty faithfully," replied the young commander.

"I suppose the mothers in the boudoir are wondering what has become of their boys," added the commander. "I give you an hour to pass with them, and then we must sail for Port Said."

The conference was ended, and the boys all went to the boudoir.

CHAPTER XVII

THE INSIDE HISTORY OF THE VOYAGE

While the Guardian-Mother lay aground, the mothers in the cabin had become very anxious about their boys, and both of them had spent wakeful nights in thinking of them. In a comparison of notes it was evident that the wind had blown harder on the coast of Egypt than farther to the north. But the ship had escaped from the dilemma in the morning at an early hour, and had made a quick run to Cape Arnauti.

There was therefore great rejoicing in the cabin when it was ascertained that the Maud was safe, with all on board of her. Dr. Hawkes operated upon Mazagan in the hospital, and readily removed the bullet from his shoulder. Ball, one of the old man-of-war's-men of the crew, who had seen some service as a nurse, was appointed to take care of him.

The fact that the surgeon had a patient soon became known in the boudoir, and curiosity ran to the highest pitch to ascertain who and what he was. All that was known was the fact that he had been brought on board from the Maud, which Sparks had learned from the sailors who assisted in removing him. The commander and the "Big Four" were still closeted on the upper deck, and there was no one to answer any questions.

Before Captain Scott had finished his report, Dr. Hawkes rejoined the party; and he was immediately beset by the curious ones for information. The seal of secrecy had been removed by the commander, and he had not been instructed to be silent. He knew the patient as soon as he saw him; for Mazagan had been a prisoner on board of the ship for a considerable time after his capture in Pournea Bay.

"What is your patient, Dr. Hawkes?" asked Mrs. Blossom before he had fairly crossed the threshold of the door.

"A wounded man; bullet in the shoulder," replied the surgeon with professional discretion. "It is not a woman, and Ball has been called in as his nurse."

"A bullet in the shoulder!" exclaimed the excellent woman. "Will he die?"

"Undoubtedly he will, though perhaps not for twenty or thirty years."

"Is the wound dangerous?"

"I don't think so."

"But who is the man?"

"Captain Mazagan."

"Captain Mazagan!" exclaimed the good lady; and the name was repeated by several others, for they had known him as the pirate who had attacked the Maud for the purpose of robbery, as they supposed, and they had seen him occasionally on the upper deck when the conferences were in progress there.

"How happened he to be wounded in the shoulder, doctor?" persisted the worthy lady.

"Because the bullet hit him there," replied the stout surgeon with a chuckle, which was promptly communicated to Uncle Moses.

"But who shot him?"

"The man who fired the gun at him."

"Who fired the gun?"

"I don't know."

"What was Captain Mazagan doing here?"

"I don't know."

"Has there been a fight here?"

"Not that I am aware of."

"Then how did he get wounded?"

"I don't know," replied Dr. Hawkes, who evidently enjoyed the defeat of the inquisitor; and Uncle Moses's huge frame was jarring like a pot of jelly under the influence of his inward chuckles.

"Have you dressed the wound of your patient without finding out anything at all about how the man was wounded?" demanded the good lady, disgusted at her

failure.

"It was my affair to dress his wound, and not to pump him, as I should have done if he had taken a dose of poison," laughed the doctor. "But I think you need have no anxiety about my patient, for I have no doubt he will do very well."

"But there must have been a quarrel or a fight somewhere about here, and I should like to know something about it," continued Mrs. Blossom, as she dropped herself heavily on one of the divans.

"I can give you no information whatever; for I leave all the fights and quarrels to our worthy and discreet commander, and do not meddle with his affairs," added the surgeon.

"Do you really know nothing at all about what has happened here, Dr. Hawkes?" asked Mrs. Belgrave; and it was plain that the curiosity of the rest of the party was strongly excited, though they were more guarded in manifesting it.

"Absolutely nothing, my dear madam, beyond the fact that the man is Captain Mazagan," replied Dr. Hawkes. "I never inquire into the affairs of my patients beyond what it is necessary for me to know in treating the case. I have no doubt Captain Ringgold will give you all the particulars of whatever has happened here; for it looks as though something of importance had occurred."

A little later the commander, followed by the four boys, appeared, and Mrs. Blossom renewed the onslaught. The others were, perhaps, quite as anxious to learn what had taken place; but they were silent, and waited for the captain to answer her questions if he was disposed to do so.

"I am sorry to interrupt this pleasant party, ladies and gentlemen, but I have already given the order to weigh the anchor, and we shall go to sea immediately," said Captain Ringgold. "The young gentlemen of the Maud must take their leave, and return to the tender."

"Has anything happened here, Captain Ringgold?" asked Mrs. Belgrave, taking him by the arm.

"Something has happened here," replied the commander, loud enough to be heard by all in the boudoir. "But here are the four young men in whom you are all more or less interested, and you can see that they are not injured."

"Have you been hurt, Mr. Belgrave?" asked Miss Blanche, by whose side Louis

had taken his place when he entered the apartment, as he was very much in the habit of doing when the party assembled.

"Not a hair of my head has been damaged," he replied.

"As soon as we are under way, and get clear of the shore, I shall tell you the whole story of certain events which have transpired in Khrysoko Bay during our absence," continued the commander. "I am willing to add that it will make quite a thrilling narrative. About two o'clock to-morrow afternoon I expect the Guardian-Mother and the Maud will be at Port Said, at the entrance to the Suez Canal."

The mothers hugged their boys again even for the separation of eighteen hours, and the hands of the others were duly shaken. Mrs. Blossom did not attempt to hug the Milesian this time.

"What has happened here, Felix?" she asked in a low tone; for the good lady would have been glad to get at the solution of the mystery, in order that she might give a hint of it to the others.

"Captain Ringgold will tell you all about it; it would take me six hours to do so, and I have not the time," replied Felix as he bolted through the door.

"Six hours!" exclaimed the amiable lady. "Then we shall have to sit up about all night to hear the story. I wonder what the boys have been doing in this lonely place."

She was no wiser than the rest of the party. The two sons tore themselves away from their mothers, and Louis was permitted to take the hand of Miss Blanche in bidding her adieu. The commander had sent four of the old sailors on board of the little steamer to stand the watches during the trip; for the "Big Four" were believed to be thoroughly exhausted after a night in the gale and the most exciting day of all their lives. This was certainly true of Captain Scott, for he had hardly slept a wink in the last thirty-six hours, and the others were tired enough.

The chief engineer had been notified of the immediate departure of the Maud, and the fasts were cast off as soon as the ship's company went on board. Stevens, the carpenter of the ship, had repaired the damage done in the galley, and a supply of provisions had been put on board.

Captain Scott had submitted the question as to whether anything was to be done in regard to the ship's company of the Fatimé. The matter had been decided at

once. Captain Mazagan had declared war against the Maud, and had proceeded to enforce his preposterous demand. He had made a failure of it, and outside of the call of ordinary humanity, the commander believed that it was not his duty to look out for the comfort of the marauders. A sufficient supply of provisions had been sent to those on shore, and the pirate himself was under treatment on board of the ship. What was to be done with him was a question for the future.

Captain Scott remained in the pilot-house of the Maud till the steamer was well off the cape, and then gave out the course, south and a half west. It was Morris's watch, and he insisted on remaining on the forecastle, as he had obtained a portion of his sleep the night before. The ship soon followed her consort; and as soon as the commander had given out the course he hastened to the boudoir, where the party were awaiting his appearance.

"It is hardly necessary for me to give the nautical points involved in 'The Battle of Khrysoko,'" said Captain Ringgold, as he laid the diagram of the captain of the Maud on the table.

"I beg your pardon, Captain—involved in what?" interrupted Mr. Woolridge, who seemed to be bothered by the proper name.

"'The Battle of Khrysoko,'" repeated the commander with a smile. "That is the name the boys gave to the affair, calling it after the bay in which it occurred, though it is rather a high-sounding designation for it."

"Are we to understand that a battle has been fought here, Captain Ringgold?" inquired the magnate of the Fifth Avenue, as Louis had called him.

"It did not rise to the dignity of a regular naval engagement, though it took place on the waters of the bay," replied the captain. "Perhaps if we call it a contest for superiority, it would cover the idea better. But this party are not prepared to understand what has taken place in Khrysoko Bay; and I must admit that I have concealed from you for the last three months certain features of our voyage, a knowledge of which would have rendered some of you very nervous and unhappy.

"I did not consult Dr. Hawkes in relation to the effect upon one of his patients, but I am confident he would have advised me to do as I have done. I am equally confident that another of your number would very soon have become one of his patients if I had been imprudent enough to put her in possession of all the facts in the situation. If I had done so at Athens, Zante, or Alexandria, I am almost

certain that the Guardian-Mother would have been speeding her way across the Atlantic to New York; for some of the party would have insisted upon abandoning the voyage as projected.

"My only confidants in the inside history of this voyage for the last six months, or since we visited Mogadore, were the four young men who have just left you. Now I will relate this inside history, and give all the facts without any reservation whatever. I must begin back at Mogadore; and as I mention the incidents of our cruise so far, you will remember all of them. 'The Battle of Khrysoko' is the last chapter of the story, and for the present at least, and I hope forever, has removed all danger from our path."

By this time the entire party were all attention. The captain began his review of the incidents of the voyage at Mogadore. He used the time judiciously, but it took him a full hour to bring the history down to the final event. Whatever had been dark and mysterious in the past was made plain. The discovery of the plot made by Louis in the café at Gallipoli made a tremendous impression, and Dr. Hawkes had to attend to Mrs. Belgrave, she became so excited and nervous.

The stirring events in the bay were given very cautiously by the speaker, though he told the whole truth. He stated enough of the nautical situation to enable the party to understand the affair; and he warmly commended Captain Scott for the decisive act by which he had finished the encounter, after he had used every effort to escape a conflict.

"And did that wicked pirate actually fire cannon-balls into the Maud while Louis was on board of her?" asked Mrs. Belgrave, very much excited.

"He put one shot through her, though Louis was on the upper deck, firing his rifle into the enemy, and he was in no danger," replied the commander.

It was midnight when the narrative and the comments upon it were finished. The doctor attended to his patient in the cabin, and then to the other in the hospital. Mazagan felt better, and wanted to talk; but Dr. Hawkes would not permit him to do so. The party retired with enough to think about.

At the time stated by the commander, the Guardian-Mother and the Maud were off the red light on the end of the breakwater at the entrance to the Suez Canal.

CHAPTER XVIII

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SUEZ CANAL

The sea was quite smooth when the Guardian-Mother and her tender arrived off Port Said. There was about thirty feet of water off the breakwater; and though there was an extensive basin at the town, the commander preferred to anchor outside for purposes he had in view. The trip to Cyprus had interrupted the educational work of the tourists, and this was the grand object ever uppermost in his mind.

Though this instructive element of the cruise around the world had been prominent in his thoughts before the steamer sailed from New York, it was rather indefinite in its details, so that he had failed to make some preparations for the work which the experience of a year now suggested to him. In the lectures, conferences, talks, and explanations to individuals, the professor and himself had felt the want of suitable maps on a large scale.

At Alexandria he had obtained a large map of Egypt, though it was not just what was wanted; but it had answered the purpose tolerably well. The subjects which would be next in order were full of interest to him, and were likely to be so to the members of the party; for they included some of the older countries of the world, such as Syria, Babylonia, Assyria, Persia, and Arabia. Geographically they were comparatively unfamiliar to the members of the party, who, unlike the professor, the surgeon, and Uncle Moses, had not been liberally educated.

The instruction given at the various places on the voyage, and the studies of the students on the wing, had demonstrated that such maps were indispensable. But Captain Ringgold was a man of expedients. Every steamer, especially those engaged in making long voyages, has a paint-shop on board, more or less abundantly supplied with all necessary material. All seamen are required to do plain painting; for such a ship as the Guardian-Mother had to be kept in the nicest condition.

At Alexandria and Cairo the commander had procured such additional material as was needed for the production of the maps desired. Some of the sailors were more skilful in the use of the brush than others; and as soon as the captain

mentioned his purpose to the first and second officers, they were able to point out a couple of men who had some artistic ideas in their composition.

All the crew were able seamen, and every one of them was skilled in the use of the sail-needle and palm, though of course in different degrees, as in all other occupations. Some of these had sewed the canvas together on which the maps were to be drawn and painted. It was not expected that anything which would pass the scrutiny of an artist would be produced; only such work as would answer the purpose of illustration.

In Mr. P. Lord Gaskette, the second officer of the ship, Captain Ringgold found his ablest assistant. He was a graduate of one of the most noted colleges of the United States, and had made some progress in the study of the legal profession. Unfortunately his health had failed him, and he had turned his attention to artistic pursuits for the sake of the out-door life to be obtained in sketching. He had taken some lessons in drawing and painting; but his physician had insisted that he should go to sea. He had been seven years a wanderer over the world, having shipped before the mast, and reached his present position.

In the paint-shop he was quite at home. He was assisted by the two seamen the most skilled with the brush, while he did the drawing himself. The large atlas of the world, a very expensive work, belonging to the commander, supplied accurate maps on a small scale, and these were transferred to the canvas, eight feet square. During the voyage to Cyprus three of these maps had been finished. One of them was the Delta of Egypt, including the Suez Canal; and the commander declared that it was handsome enough to adorn any schoolroom.

The Maud had made fast to the ship as usual when she came to anchor, and the "Big Four" were to report on board as soon as they had put their craft to rights. The party had mounted the promenade as soon as the low shore was in sight, and were looking about them at the various objects in view. Several large English steamers were in sight, including one of the P. & O. Line, and the Ophir, the largest and finest of the Orient Line, both bound to India and other countries of the Orient.

"How is your patient this afternoon, Dr. Hawkes?" asked the commander, as he met the physician on his way to the promenade.

"He is doing very well. He has very little pain now; and I think he will be as well as ever in a fortnight or three weeks, if he will only be reasonable," replied the doctor.

"Reasonable? Doesn't he wish to get well?" asked the commander.

"He wants to talk, and evidently has something on his mind. He desires an interview with you, Captain, and has asked me to obtain it for him; but I refused to do anything of the kind, for he has some fever hanging about him, and must be kept as quiet as possible."

"I don't know that I have any business with him, or he with me. I consider him one of the most unmitigated villains that ever walked the earth or sailed the seas," added Captain Ringgold. "The scoundrel does not seem to have common-sense; for he puts forward the most absurd claims that ever were invented, and it would not surprise me at all if he advanced another against me or Louis, in spite of the overwhelming defeat he has just sustained."

"He is the coolest and most impudent rascal I ever heard of. He asks Louis for a vast sum of money, and then politely requests him to become a prisoner in the cabin of the Fatimé as security for the payment of the sum by his trustee;" and the doctor shook his fat sides with laughter at the absurdity.

"Very likely he has some such proposition to make to me. He really believes, I think, that he has a fair claim for what he has lost, or failed to obtain, by the miscarriage of all his plots to make a prisoner of Louis and Miss Blanche. All I desire is to get rid of the villain; and as soon as you inform me that he is off your hands I shall put him on shore."

The captain and the doctor joined the party on the promenade. Mr. Gaskette and his assistant were hanging one of the maps completed on the upper deck, where the conferences were usually held. He had assigned subjects to several members of the party, and he seemed to be anxious to have them disposed of; for he declared that this locality was one of the most interesting corners of the world to him.

On the promenade the mothers had their sons by their side, and Mrs. Blossom had secured possession of Felix in some manner that did not appear; but the good woman seemed to be superlatively happy. The commander did not take a seat, but took a stand in front of the company. He described the two big steamers that were approaching, in answer to a question put by Mrs. Belgrave.

"Of course you all recognize the shore before you," he continued.

"There isn't much shore there, only a strip of sand, with water beyond it," added

Mrs. Woolridge.

"What country is it?" asked Miss Blanche in a whisper to Louis, who had his mother on one side of him and the fair maiden on the other.

"Egypt," replied Louis, wondering that she did not know.

"The water you see is Lake Menzaleh," answered the captain. "It is not much of a lake, as Americans would look at it. It is a sort of lagoon, covering from five hundred to a thousand square miles, according to different authorities; but the inundation of the Nile makes varying areas of water. The Damietta branch of the great river empties into the sea about thirty miles to the west of us, and this lagoon covers the region between it and the Suez Canal.

"The lake is separated from the Mediterranean by a narrow strip of land, which you can see, through which are a number of openings, such as we find in the sand-spits along the shore of our own country. But unlike our inlets, they were formerly mouths of the Nile, or at least of streams connected with it; and all of them have names, as the Mendesian Mouth, the Tanitic, the Pelusian, and others.

"It is full of islands, on some of which are the remains of Roman towns. The average depth of the water is not more than three feet; but it abounds in fish, and it is the abode of vast flocks of aquatic birds, which are hunted by many English sportsmen, who camp out there to enjoy the shooting. The morass has been partially drained, which accounts for the low water in the lake at the present time; and undoubtedly it will all be above the ordinary level of the Nile at no very distant time.

"The Suez Canal extends in a perfectly straight line, north and south, through this lake and the low land around it. But we will not meddle with the canal just yet, for we shall have a great deal of time to talk about it while we are going through it; for it is a hundred miles long, and steamers are required to move very slowly, except in the lakes now forming part of it. As this canal is one of the most important enterprises ever carried through to a completion, I have asked Mr. Woolridge to give us an account of its construction and uses. Then I shall invite you to adjourn to the promenade deck, where I have prepared something more in relation to Egypt, the 'Land of Goshen.'

"This canal takes its name from the isthmus or city of that name, or the Red Sea; more properly from the former, as it makes its passage through it," Mr. Woolridge began. "Our old friend, Ramses II., of whom we have heard so much

in the last four weeks, is said to have been the first to dig out a Suez Canal, though I cannot inform you by what name he called it in the Egyptian language; but that was a small affair compared with the one before us. But our friend's canal got filled up from the amount of mud and sand lying loose around here.

"Darius I. of Persia cleaned it out, though it was suffered to become useless again. Then the Mohammedan conquerors of Egypt opened it once more; but they lacked the modern facilities for handling mud and sand, and it went to ruin again, and was useless till a comparatively modern date.

"When Napoleon I. was in Egypt the subject attracted his attention, and he employed an expert French engineer to examine the matter. This gentleman declared that the level of the Red Sea was thirty feet higher than that of the Mediterranean; and this report knocked the scheme higher than a kite. But in 1841 the English officers employed in this region proved the fallacy of the French engineer's conclusion, and the subject came up again for consideration.

"This time it was the Vicompte de Lesseps, another French engineer, who took up the subject. He was born at Versailles in 1805, had been educated for the diplomatic profession, and had served his country acceptably in this capacity at Lisbon, Cairo, Barcelona, and Madrid. In 1854 he began upon the work, and two years later obtained a concession of certain privileges for his proposed company, which was duly formed, and began the actual work of construction in 1860. Nine years after it was completed, and formally opened with extraordinary ceremonies and festivities, and has now been in successful operation about twenty-two years. Queen Victoria of England made the distinguished Frenchman a K. C. S. I."

"What does that mean, papa?" asked Miss Blanche.

"It is a big distinction, and that is all I know about it," replied the speaker with a laugh; for he was not student enough to look up what he did not comprehend.

"Knight Commander of the Star of India," added Louis, who had looked up the abbreviation.

"Thank you, Mr. Belgrave. From 25,000 to 30,000 men were employed upon the work. It was delayed by the necessity of completing a fresh-water canal to Ismaïlia, about half way through to Suez, and by some trouble with Ismail, who had succeeded as viceroy. The original capital of the company was about forty million dollars of our money; but the total cost, including the auxiliary works

required to put it in running order, was one hundred million dollars. Yet it is good stock to-day; and all the steamers that used to be obliged to go around Cape Good Hope pass through the canal, and did so before some of you were born.

"As the commander observed a little while ago, the canal is 100 miles long. The width of the water surface is from 150 to 300 feet, though it has changed somewhat since the canal was built. At the bottom it was 72 feet wide, and the shoalest place has 26 feet in depth. As you see around you, two breakwaters had to be built, involving an immense amount of labor and expense; for one of them is nearly 7,000, and the other a little more than 6,000, feet in length.

"The highest level on the isthmus is 52 feet, so that they did not have to dig very deep anywhere; and there were several depressions in the level, which made the work still less. The canal passes through three lakes: first, Menzaleh, 28 miles; Timsah, 5 miles; and the Bitter Lakes, 23 miles. Every five or six miles there are side basins where one ship can pass another. That is all I need say at present; but as we are sailing through, there will be much more to say."

The usual applause followed, and then the commander took the rostrum.

CHAPTER XIX

THE JOURNEY OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

Captain Ringgold suggested to the magnate of the Fifth Avenue that he had omitted something, as he pointed to the long piers which extended out into the sea.

"I had it on my tongue's end to mention them; but I am not much accustomed to speaking before an audience, and I forgot to do so," replied Mr. Woolridge. "But then they are engineering work, and I doubt if this company would be interested."

"I was wondering where they obtained all the stone to build them in this place, where there appears to be nothing but sand and mud," interposed Mrs. Belgrave. "They must be nearly a mile long."

"They are quite a mile long," replied Mr. Woolridge.

"Did they bring the stone from the quarries away up the Nile, where they got the material of which the pyramids are built?"

"Not at all; that would have been about as big a job as digging out the canal."

"Hardly; for they could have brought them by water about all the way," said the commander. "But the material did not come from those quarries."

"No; they made the rocks," added the magnate.

"Made them!" exclaimed Mrs. Blossom. "Do you expect us to believe that?"

"There is a great deal of such work done in the United States, and in some of our cities there are streets paved and sidewalks built of manufactured stone," replied Mr. Woolridge. "At the town which you see, the piers start out about two-thirds of a mile apart, and approach each other till they are less than a third of a mile from each other. They were built to protect the port from the north-west winds which sometimes blow very fresh here, and to prevent the harbor of Port Said from being choked up with the Nile mud from the mouths of the great river.

"These piers were constructed by a French firm. The first thing was to manufacture the artificial stone, which was composed of seven parts sand, of which there is a plentiful supply in this vicinity, and one part of hydraulic lime, imported from France. I suppose the latter is something like the cement used in New York in building sewers and drains, or other works in wet places. This concrete was mixed by machinery, then put into immense wooden moulds, just as you make a loaf of sponge cake, Mrs. Blossom, where it was kept for several weeks. These blocks weighed twenty tons each."

"Goodness! They were heavier than Mrs. Grimper's sponge cake!" exclaimed Mrs. Blossom.

"Considerably," laughed the magnate. "The solid contents of each were thirteen and a third cubic yards. How big a cubic block would that make in feet, young gentlemen? I hope you are not neglecting your mathematics for geography and sight-seeing."

"About seven feet," replied Louis, after some mental figuring.

"A little more than that," added the professor.

"Seven feet is about the height of the cabin of this ship, and one of them would just stand up in it," continued Mr. Woolridge. "They made thirty of them every day, and twenty-five thousand were required."

"This is about as wonderful as the immense work of the ancient Egyptians," said Mrs. Belgrave.

"But all this labor was done by machinery. The moulds were removed from the blocks, and they were exposed to the air in order to harden them more effectually. They were then hoisted on peculiar boats, built for the purpose, with an inclined deck, from which they were slid into the sea. They made a tremendous splash when they were dumped overboard; and it was a sight worth seeing if we had happened to be here twenty-four years ago."

"It wasn't convaynient for some of us to be here at that time," said Felix.

"That is so, my broth of a boy; but some things happened before you were born, as well as since."

"Sure, the pyramids were built before your honor was barn."

"True for you; some things happened before I was born, and even before the twin cupids came into the world; for I believe they are the oldest persons on board," replied the magnate. "They kept dropping these tremendous blocks into the sea till they came nearly to the level, and then they built the walls as you see them now. I suppose you have noticed that lighthouse on the little strip of land between the sea and Lake Menzaleh. That is also built of these artificial stones, and it is one hundred and sixty-four feet high. It is provided with electric lights, which are to be seen from a distance of twenty-four miles. It is, therefore, one of the largest in the world. I believe I have covered the ground now, and I won't say anything about Port Said till we are moored in the grand basin."

"You have disposed of the *pierres perdues* very nicely indeed, Mr. Woolridge," said the professor.

"Who are they?" asked the magnate, who had forgotten all the French he ever knew.

"Literally, 'lost stones,' as they were when they went overboard; but that was what the French engineers called them."

"Now, ladies and gentlemen, I desire to invite you to the upper deck, where I wish to say something to you about the Land of Goshen, and thus finish up Egypt, except the portion we shall have in view as we continue on our voyage," said the commander rising from his seat.

The ladies were handed down from the promenade by the gallant gentlemen, though, unfortunately, there were not enough of the former to go round; but no one but the captain and Louis presumed to offer his services to Mrs. Belgrave or Miss Blanche. As the party approached the place where the conferences had usually been held, they saw that a change had been made in the appearance of things.

The first novelty that attracted their attention was the large map which was suspended on a frame rigged against the mainmast. It was brilliant with colors, with all the streams, towns, and lakes, properly labelled, upon it. A small table stood at the left, or port side, of it, covered with a cloth, with a Bible and a vase of flowers upon it. Chloe, the stewardess, had provided the latter from the pots which the ladies had kept in the cabin since their visit to Bermuda.

On the deck a large carpet had been spread out, and the thirteen arm-chairs had been placed in a semicircle, facing the map, with one behind the table for the

speaker for the occasion. As soon as the company had taken in this arrangement for the educational feature of the voyage, they halted, and applauded it with right good-will.

"Please to be seated, ladies and gentlemen," said the commander, as he handed Mrs. Belgrave to the chair on the right of the table; and at the same time he took his place behind the table.

The party took their chairs according to their own fancies, and Mrs. Blossom managed to get at the side of Felix. At one side stood Mr. Gaskette and the two sailors who had assisted him in his work. They had also arranged the meeting-place from the direction of the captain. Some of the tourists wondered what the commander meant to do in the face of all these preparations. It was not Sunday, or they would have come to the conclusion that the usual religious service was to be held here; for the Bible on the table pointed in this direction. As soon as the party were seated the commander opened the Good Book at a marked place.

"I see that some of you are surprised at the altered appearance of our out-door hall," Captain Ringgold began. "I regard the instructive element of our voyage as one of the greatest importance; and if I were to fit out the ship again for this cruise, I should provide an apartment on this deck for our conference meetings. But I have done the best I could under the circumstances, with the assistance of Mr. Gaskette, the second officer of the ship.

"I see also that the map before you has challenged your attention," continued the commander, who proceeded to explain in what manner he had caused the maps to be made. "Mr. Gaskette has been my right-hand man in this work. He is not only a good navigator and a thorough seaman, but he is a highly educated gentleman, a graduate of Harvard College, a person of artistic tastes, as you may have learned from your intercourse with him. The map before you is only one of three already completed, and the work is in progress upon several others."

The company, including the ladies, received this explanation with generous applause, and all the boys called for the subject of the captain's remarks. He was presented to them, and thanked the commander for his kind words, and hoped the maps would prove to be useful in the conferences.

"I will begin what I have to say about the Land of Goshen by reading a few verses from the first chapter of Exodus: 'And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation. And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled

with them. Now there rose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Ramses.'

"Ramses II. is generally regarded as the Pharaoh of the oppression, and doubtless the Israelites suffered a great deal of persecution in his reign," the commander proceeded as he closed the Bible. "But the one who proposed in the verse I have read to 'get them up out of the land, was the successor of Ramses II., 'the new king over Egypt,' Merenptah, the son of Ramses, and now believed to be the Pharaoh of the Exodus. He reigned about 1325 years A.D.

"The Land of Goshen, where the Israelites lived, is the north-eastern part of Egypt, the whole of it lying to the east of the Damietta branch of the Nile," continued the commander, using his pointer upon the map. "Through this region then, as now, there were fresh-water canals, by which the country was made very productive, and the people were very prosperous. The city of Ramses, built by the Israelites, was doubtless the most important in Goshen. It is the ancient Tanis, the ruins of which are still to be seen. Pithom, the other city mentioned in the Scripture, is here," and the speaker pointed it out. "It is quite near the Arabian Desert, and the present fresh-water canal runs within a few miles of it.

"With the birth of Moses, and the finding of the child in the ark or basket by the daughter of Pharaoh, and her adoption of it, you are all familiar; and the story is quite as interesting as any you can find in other books than the Bible. Though of the house of Levi, he became an Egyptian for the time; but he claimed his lineage, and became the leader of the Israelites, and conducted them out of Egypt.

"A great deal of study has been given by learned men to the route by which this was accomplished. Most of them agreed that he started from Tanis, or Ramses. On that narrow strip of land between the lake and the Mediterranean, which you have seen from the promenade, was one of the usual roads from Egypt into Asia, and was the one which led into Palestine, the Holy Land. Where Moses and his followers crossed the Red Sea is still an open question, though hardly such to devout people who accept literally the Bible as their guide in matters of faith and fact both. These accept the belief that the crossing of the Red Sea, with the

miracles attending it, was in the portion near Suez.

"Heinrich Karl Brugsch, a learned German and eminent Egyptologist, born in Berlin in 1827, has constructed a theory in relation to the exodus of the Israelites which is more ingenious than reasonable to the pious reader of the Scripture. It would be hardly profitable for us to go into the details of his reasoning, though he uses the Bible as the foundation of his statements. There were two roads from Egypt to Palestine, the one mentioned, and one farther south, not so well adapted to caravans on account of the marshy country it traverses.

"The German savant believed they departed by the northern road. In the British Museum is a letter written on papyrus over three thousand years ago, in which an Egyptian writer describes his journey from Ramses in pursuit of two runaway servants. The days of the month are given; and his stopping-places were the same as those of the Israelites. (Exodus xii. 37): 'The children of Israel journeyed from Ramses to Succoth;' and this is the region east of Goshen. (Exodus xiii. 20): 'And they journeyed from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness,' or the desert.

"This was also the route of the Egyptian letter writer. Then the pilgrims were commanded to turn, and encamp at a point between Migdol and the sea, (Exodus xiv. 2.) He found the fugitives had gone towards the wall, meaning the forts by which Egypt was defended from Asiatic enemies. Following the same route, the Israelites came to the Sarbonian Lake. This is a long sheet of water on the isthmus," said the commander, as he pointed it out on the map. "It was, for it no longer exists, separated from the Mediterranean by such a strip as that which you see here by Lake Menzaleh.

"Diodorus Siculus informs us that the Sarbonian Lake was filled with a rank growth of reeds and papyrus bushes, which made it very dangerous to travellers. Strong winds blew the sands of the desert over the surface, studded with leaves, so as to hide the water; and the traveller might walk upon it and sink to his death. The same ancient writer says that an army with which Artaxerxes, King of Persia, intended to invade Egypt, being unacquainted with this treacherous lake, got into it, and was lost.

"Brugsch believes this was the lake through which the Israelites passed, and that Pharaoh's army encountered a storm, were lost, and perished as did the Persian forces. But we must drop the subject here, though it may come up again when we arrive at Suez, where others believe the six hundred thousand Israelites went

over dry shod, while Pharaoh and his hosts perished in the closing waters."

The company had certainly been deeply interested in the subject, and the commander retired from the rostrum with a volley of applause.

CHAPTER XX

THE LAST OF CAPTAIN MAZAGAN

Captain Ringgold was very much delighted with the success which had attended his efforts to interest his passengers; for he never lost sight of the instructive feature of the voyage. None of his party were scientists in a technical sense in the studies which occupied them, though Dr. Hawkes and Professor Giroud were such in their occupation at home; but they were all well-educated persons in the ordinary use of the term.

They were not Egyptologists, philosophers, theologians, zoölogists, biblical critics, ethnologists, or devoted to any special studies; they were ordinary seekers after knowledge in all its varieties. The everyday facts, events, and scenes, as presented to them in their present migratory existence, were the staple topics of thought and study. Though none of the party ascended to the higher flights of scientific inquiry, the commander endeavored to make use of the discoveries and conclusions of the learned men of the present and the past.

He was eminently a practical man, and practical knowledge was his aim; and he endeavored to lead the conferences in this direction. The building of the piers at Port Said, and the construction of the canal, as meagrely described by the magnate of the Fifth Avenue, were the kind of subjects he believed in; and he had a sort of mild contempt for one who could discourse learnedly over a polype, and did not know the difference between a sea mile and a statute mile.

"Do you believe in the explanation of that Dutchman you mentioned, Captain Ringgold?" asked Mr. Woolridge, at the close of the conference.

"What Dutchman?" inquired the commander. "I do not remember that I alluded to any Dutchman."

"I mean the man who says that Pharaoh's army perished in the lake where the weeds and papyrus grew," the magnate explained.

"Brugsch? He was not a Dutchman; he was a German."

"It is all the same thing; I have been in the habit of calling a German a

Dutchman."

"If you will excuse me, Mr. Woolridge, I think it is a very bad habit," added the commander with a deprecatory smile. "A German is not a Dutchman, any more than a Dutchman is a German; and I should as soon think of calling a full-blooded American a Chinaman, as a German a Dutchman."

"Of course you are right, Captain, though I am not alone in the use of the word," replied the magnate.

"But it is more common among uneducated people than with people of even fair education. I do not accept Brugsch's explanation, but cling to the Bible story as I learned it in my childhood. I don't think Brugsch's explanation comes under the head of what is called the 'higher criticism,' or that it places him in the column of those who represent the 'advanced thought' of the present time; for he follows the Scripture record, and does not seek to invalidate it. But we are going to run into the basin, and it is time we were moving," added the commander, as he called the first officer, and ordered the anchor to be weighed.

"Do you have to pay to go through the canal, Captain Ringgold?" asked Mrs. Belgrave, after the commander had given his orders.

"Of course we do," replied the captain; and about all the party gathered around him to hear what he had to say. "As Mr. Woolridge said, the canal is good paying stock to the holders of the shares. It cost a vast sum of money, and it is worked and kept in running order at an immense expense."

"I asked a foolish question, and I might have known better," said the lady.

"Every vessel that goes through to Suez has to pay a round sum for the privilege."

"Do all ships have to pay the same amount?"

"Certainly not; for that would be very unfair. They pay by the ton; and every vessel carries a register, in which her tonnage is given. The Guardian-Mother's is 624 tons. About everything is French in this locality; and the rate charged is ten francs a ton, or a little less than two dollars. I shall have to pay a bill of $1,248 in our money."

"That looks like an enormous price," suggested Mrs. Woolridge.

"In addition to this charge, we have to pay from ten to twenty francs for a pilot, depending upon the tonnage, and the same for each passenger. Through the greater portion of the canal the speed of steamers is limited to five miles an hour; otherwise the swash of the propeller would injure the embankments on either side. It takes steamers about sixteen hours to go through to Suez."

"But that is over six miles an hour," Uncle Moses objected.

"The three lakes, making nearly thirty miles of the distance, are wide enough and deep enough to permit steamers to go ahead at full speed, which will more than make up the difference, and include the stay at Ismaïlia. There are sometimes unavoidable delays. A vessel may get aground, and bar the passage for a day or two. The canal is not in all places wide enough for one large steamer to pass another, and there are sidings, as on a single track railroad, where it can be done, a little more than three miles apart. Posts are set up every five kilometres to indicate the distances."

"Anchor aweigh, sir," reported the first officer.

"Heave it up," replied the captain, and went to the pilot-house.

The "Big Four" had gone on board of the Maud, and she got under way at the same time. The pilot was on board of the ship, and none was taken for the little steamer, which was regarded as the tender. Captain Scott had his plan of the harbor before him, and he could have taken his craft into the basin without any assistance; but he was required to follow the ship.

Port Said owes its existence to the canal, and without that it would amount to nothing. It is located on the eastern end of an island which is a part of the narrow neck of land which divides Lake Menzaleh from the Mediterranean. It was thought when it was laid out that it would become a considerable city; but it has not yet realized this expectation, though it has now a population of over seventeen thousand. Six thousand of this number are Europeans, the French predominating. The making of the harbor, or "Grand Basin Ismail" as it is called, was another difficult task for the canal company; for it has an area of 570 acres, which had to be excavated to the depth of twenty-six feet by dredging.

The Guardian-Mother, followed by the Maud, passed through the channel, which is marked by red and green lights, to the basin, where the former was moored at one of the walls. The town could not be seen by the tourists till the ship entered the basin, and then it was found to be a place of no small importance. It contains

two good hotels, where one may board at one for three dollars a day, and at the other for two and a half.

It was necessary for the steamers to coal at this point, and the party went on shore. From the deck they could see up the principal street. The French post-office, for there is also an Egyptian, was close to the wharf; and they hastened to that, for most of them had written letters to their friends at home. It was still Egypt, and the place was true to its national character; for the travellers were immediately beset by a horde of beggars, and bakshish was still a popular clamor. The shops were like those of other regions, though they did not seem to be doing a very thriving trade; for the entire surrounding country was either a desert or a morass, and there were few to go shopping.

There was really nothing to be seen there, and the passengers soon returned to the ship, impatient to proceed on the passage through the canal; but the night was coming on, and the commander decided to make an early start the next morning, for he wished his charge to see the country as they passed through it, and especially the steamers on their way to India and China. After dinner the company gathered in the music-room; but it was observed that the commander and Dr. Hawkes were absent. They had remained in the cabin, and were in conversation.

"What is the present condition of your patient, Doctor?" asked the captain as soon as they were alone.

"He is doing very well, and is in a fair way to recover in a short time," replied the surgeon.

"After we get through the Red Sea, we strike out on a voyage of ten days or more, and I am not anxious to retain this villain on board," continued the captain. "I owe him nothing, though I shall treat him with common humanity. In a word, I wish to get rid of him as soon as possible."

"There is nothing in his present condition to prevent you from putting him on shore at any time,—to-night, if you are so disposed," replied Dr. Hawkes in decided terms.

"You would oblige me very much, Doctor, by broaching this subject to him. I suppose he has money, though I know nothing about it, and he can pay his way at one of the hotels here," suggested the captain.

"We had the United States Consul with us at dinner, as you are aware, and he can inform you whether or not there is a hospital here. I will see Mazagan at once, and do as you desire. I will see you in your cabin in half an hour," said the surgeon, as he went forward to the hospital.

Captain Ringgold went to the music-room, where the consul was enjoying himself in listening to Miss Blanche, who was giving him some account of the voyage; and she had just mentioned "The Battle of Khrysoko," of which the consul wished to know more. The captain called him aside, and proceeded to question him in regard to the care of the patient in the town.

"I have a wounded man on board, and I wish to get rid of him," he began.

"Wounded in the battle of which Miss Woolridge was telling me?" asked the official.

"Precisely so; but he is not of my party, and is the biggest scoundrel that ever went unhung;" and the commander gave a brief account of his relations to Mazagan. "Is there a hospital in Port Said?"

"None, except for *fellahs* and other laborers. If he is a respectable man, perhaps I can find accommodations for him at the Hotel de France," answered the consul. "I will go and see the landlord at once, and report to you in half an hour."

"Come to my cabin on the upper deck."

In less than the time he had stated he came back, and reported that the hotel would take him at sixty francs a week. While he was in the cabin the doctor presented himself.

"Does this patient require a nurse?" asked the consul.

"He does not. In the last two days he has greatly improved," replied the doctor, "though we keep a man near him to prevent him from doing any mischief."

It was settled that the patient should be sent on shore that night to the hotel, and the consul returned to the music-room.

"Mazagan protests against being sent ashore here; and I have no doubt he would do the same at Ismaïlia or Suez," said Dr. Hawkes. "He insists upon seeing you, and declares that he has important business with you. If you do not seriously object, perhaps that would be the easiest way to quiet him."

"Can he walk?" asked the commander.

"As well as you can, Captain. He has a lame shoulder; but he can help himself with his left hand, and I have put his right arm in a sling, to prevent him from using it," answered Dr. Hawkes.

Captain Ringgold struck his bell, and sent for Knott to conduct the patient to his cabin. In a few minutes Mazagan was seated in the chair he had occupied once before as a prisoner.

"You wish to see me?" the commander began rather curtly.

"I do, Captain Ringgold. You talk of sending me ashore at this place. I protest against it," said the prisoner; for such he was really.

"Do you intend to remain on board of my ship for an indefinite period?"

"Until you settle my account with you," answered the pirate, as self-possessed as though he had been the victor dealing with the vanquished.

"Don't say anything more to me about your account!" added the commander, fiercely for him. "Your protest is of no consequence to me, and I shall put you ashore to-night!"

"You don't know what you are doing, Captain Ringgold," said the wounded man, with a savage scowl on his face. "The Fatimé was old and worn out, or your tender could not have crushed in her side. Let me tell you that my noble master, the Pacha, ordered a new steam-yacht of a thousand tons a year ago; and if you treat me with this inhumanity, he will follow you all over the world till he obtains his revenge."

"Knott, take this villain away." Page 201.
"Knott, take this villain away." Page 201.

"That is enough of this nonsense!" said the captain, springing from his chair, and calling for Knott, who was at the door.

"If you pay me the two hundred thousand francs, that will be the end of the affair," added the prisoner.

"I will never pay you a centime! Knott, take this villain away, and have him conveyed to the Hotel de France at once!" said the commander.

Knott obeyed the order, taking the pirate by the left arm. Mr. Boulong was instructed to carry out the order given. In five minutes more the Moor was marched up the quay between two seamen, and handed over to the landlord. At daylight the next morning the Guardian-Mother and the Maud sailed on their way through the canal; and nothing more was seen of Captain Mazagan.

CHAPTER XXI

THE CONFERENCE ON THE SUEZ CANAL

The Grand Basin Ismail, at Port Said, is only an extension in breadth of the canal, and the Guardian-Mother had only to proceed on her course by the narrow water-way through the desert. The Maud followed her closely, having nothing to fear on account of the depth of the water; and even the ship had plenty under her keel. But it is said that, by what appears to be a curious reversal of the ordinary rule, the very large steamers are in less danger of running aground than those of smaller dimensions.

When the commander stated this canal axiom to the passengers assembled before the starting on the promenade, Uncle Moses objected strenuously to its truth, and Dr. Hawkes warmly supported him. The statement did not look reasonable to them.

"Is it claimed that a vessel drawing twenty-five feet of water is in less peril than one needing only eighteen feet of water to float her?" asked the lawyer.

"The facts seem to prove this; but you will say that it is so much the worse for the facts," replied the captain, laughing at the earnestness of the non-nautical gentlemen; and even the ladies understood the matter well enough to be interested in the dispute.

"The affirmative side of the question must prove its position," suggested the doctor.

"Which the affirmative will be very happy to do," replied the commander very cheerfully. "If the bottom of the canal were a dead level, paved like Broadway, and the depth of the canal were just twenty-six feet in every place, with a perpendicular wall on each side, your theory would be entirely correct, and the affirmative would have nothing more to say. But the bottom is not paved, and there are no walls at the sides to secure a uniform depth."

"Then the canal is not twenty-six feet deep, as the affirmative has laid down the law," added Uncle Moses.

"That looks like a lawyer's quibble," replied the captain with a hearty laugh. "You have opened the road for the retreat of the negative."

"The facts set forth by the speakers in our conference fail to be facts," persisted the legal gentleman.

"The fact was given as a general truth that the depth of the canal is twenty-six feet; but I think that no person as reasonable as Squire Scarburn of Von Blonk Park would insist that it should be absolutely of fully that depth in every part in order to comply with the general truth of the statement. The courts don't rule in that way. I read lately of a life insurance company which refused to pay a policy on the plea that the holder had been a drunkard; but the court ruled that the use of intoxicating liquors, or even an occasional over-indulgence, did not constitute a drunkard."

"A wise ruling," added the squire.

"We call a person a good man; but even the affirmative does not insist that he shall be absolutely without sin, stain, or fault in order to entitle him to this designation."

"There would not be a single good man in that case," laughed the doctor. "We admit the general truth that the canal is twenty-six feet deep."

"The canal has been dug out of loose sand for the most part, and it would have been impossible to make it of uniform depth. Some of the largest steamers in the world pass through the canal on their way to India, China, and Australia. The Orient Line has the Ophir, a twin-screw ship, about five hundred feet long, and others nearly as large.

"This big ditch across the isthmus has an average width of three hundred feet, or two hundred less than the length of the Ophir. She could not, therefore, get across the channel. There is a current in this water, and fierce winds sometimes blow across it, and both of these affect the inertia of the vessels. A comparatively small steamer like the Guardian-Mother can be twisted about by these causes, and her bow or her stern may catch on the sloping sides."

"You have made out your case, Captain Ringgold; and the moral is that general truths are not invariably true," said Uncle Moses good-naturedly.

"I only hope we shall not get aground," added Mrs. Belgrave.

"We are fairly started now, and we have Lake Menzaleh on one side, and a low sandy plain, once covered with water, on the other," continued the commander. "It is difficult to believe that the swamp and lagoon on the starboard were once covered with fertile fields, watered by two of the branches of the Nile, where wheat was raised in abundance, from which Rome and other countries were supplied with food."

"What vast flocks of birds!" exclaimed Mrs. Woolridge.

"Those are flamingoes, just rising from their resting-place," added the captain. "They were white just now as we looked at them; notice the color of the inside of their wings, which are of a rose-tinted pink."

"But what became of the wheat-fields that were here?" asked Mrs. Blossom, after they had observed the wild birds for a time.

"The sea broke in and covered the rich lands with sand and salt; and there are towns buried there now."

"Goodness, gracious!" almost screamed Mrs. Blossom. "There's another steamer sailing on the land!"

"It appears to be so, but is not so," replied the commander.

"It is really so," added Mrs. Woolridge; and all the party gazed with interest at the phenomenon.

"Only apparently so," the captain insisted.

"Please to explain it to us, Commodore," said Miss Blanche, who had long ago applied this title to him.

"With pleasure, Miss Woolridge. It is the mirage, from the Latin *miror*, to wonder, which appears to be what you are doing just now. The steamer you see sailing along the shore is an optical illusion, a reflection, and not a reality. Refraction, which is the bending of the rays of light, produces this effect. If you look at a straight stick set up in the water, it will appear to be bent, and this is caused by refraction. The learned gentlemen present will excuse me for going back to the primer of physics."

"We are quite satisfied to have the memory refreshed," replied the doctor.

"The air around us is of different densities, which causes the rays of reflection of

our ship to be bent, sending the image up on the shore. What sailors call 'looming,' often seen on our own shores, is produced in the same way; and we often see an island, or a vessel, looming up away above the water, from which it is sometimes separated by a strip of sky. The mirage is often seen in the desert, with a whole caravan up in the air, sometimes upside down.

"An object is often seen when at a considerable distance from it. In the Arctic regions ships below the horizon, or hull down as sailors phrase it, are revealed to other ships far distant by their images in the air. From Hastings, on the English Channel, the coast of France, fifty miles distant, from Calais to Dieppe, was once seen for about three hours. In 1854 a remarkable exhibition of the mirage was witnessed in the Baltic Sea from the deck of a ship of the British navy. The whole English fleet, consisting of nineteen sail, distant thirty miles from the point of observation, were seen up in the air, upside down, as if they had been hung up there by their keels.

"The Fata Morgana is a sort of mirage seen in the Strait of Messina. A person standing on the shore sees the images of men, houses, ships, and other objects, sometimes in the air, sometimes in the water, the originals frequently magnified, passing like a panorama before the beholder. The vapory masses above the strait may cause the pictures to be surrounded by a colored line. When the peasants see it, they shout 'Morgana! Morgana!'"

"What does that word mean?" inquired Miss Blanche.

"The French from which it is derived is '*Morgaine la Fee*,' from a sister of King Arthur of the Round Table, who had the reputation of being a fairy, which is *fata* in Italian."

"But what is that round table?" asked Mrs. Blossom very innocently.

"You must excuse me, my dear woman," replied the commander, looking at his watch. "The Suez Canal is the subject before us, and I am talking all the morning about other things."

"But it is collateral information, called out by the mirage; and the illustrations you mentioned are quite new to me, for one," added Dr. Hawkes.

"I like this kind of a conference, where the side matters are all explained," said Mrs. Belgrave. "But it is a pity the boys are not here, for they are not getting any of the cream of this conference so early in the morning."

This was enough for the commander, coming from her; and he immediately hastened to the stern of the ship, where he hailed the Maud, and ordered her to come alongside. The four sailors who had attended the party in the excursion to Cairo and up the Nile were directed to go on board of the tender, and take the places of the "Big Four." The Guardian-Mother had to go into a "siding" to permit a steamer to pass her at this point, and the transfer was easily made.

However it may have been with the others, Louis Belgrave was glad to get back to the ship, where he could sit by the side of Miss Blanche, and answer the many questions she was continually asking; for she had an inquiring mind. As she often remarked, Louis always seemed to know all about everything. Perhaps if he had been with the party all the time, he might have lost some portion of his reputation as a walking encyclopædia; for when he was to be with her on any excursion, he took extraordinary pains to post himself upon the topics likely to be considered.

"You notice that post near the siding," said Captain Ringgold when the party on the promenade had been re-enforced by the addition of the young men, and the steamer began to move again. "That is one of the five kilometre posts; and you will find them all the way to the Red Sea."

"What is a kilometre?" inquired Mrs. Woolridge.

"I have talked so much that I will ask Mr. Belgrave to explain it," replied the captain.

"It belongs to the French metrical system, which most people have come to believe is the best in the world. I suppose everybody here knows what a meridian is, for it was explained when we were talking about great circles and geographical or sea miles. A meridian is a great circle reaching around the earth, and passing through the equator and the poles. A quadrant of a meridian is the quarter of a meridian, extending from the equator to either pole. This is something that does not vary in extent. A commission of five learned men, especially in mathematics, was appointed by the French Academy, at the instance of the government, to adopt a standard, and they made it a metre, which is the ten millionth part of the quadrant of a meridian. The metre is 3.28 feet of our measure, with five more decimal places after it.

"Ten metres make a decametre, and one thousand metres make a kilometre, and ten thousand metres make a myriametre. Without bothering with all these decimals, a kilometre is about five-eighths of a mile. Five kilometres make three

miles and one-tenth, which is the distance between these posts," said Louis in conclusion.

"How came you to be so ready with your explanation, Mr. Belgrave?" asked Miss Blanche, with a pleasant smile of approval.

"Captain Scott had talked the whole thing to us on board of the Maud while he steered the steamer," replied Louis.

"But he knows five times as much about metres as I do; for I could not have explained the meridian business," interjected the captain of the Maud.

"Five miles an hour is slow travelling; but it enables us to see the country, and also to talk about it," said Dr. Hawkes.

"If you don't mean that I am talking too much, Doctor"—

"I certainly do not mean that, and I hope you will keep it up," interposed the surgeon.

"Then I will say that the canal is run on the 'block system,' except on the lakes, where the ships can go at full speed," added the commander.

"Where are the blocks? I don't see any," said Mrs. Blossom.

"They are all along the canal."

"I don't know what is meant by the block system," added Mrs. Belgrave.

"The railroads in England and the United States, or many of them, are run by this method. The whole length of the road, or canal in this case, is divided into short sections. On the railroad no train is permitted to enter a section till all other trains are out of it, and a collision is therefore impossible. The system is controlled by telegraph, by which signals are ordered at either end of the division. On the canal the director at Port Tewfik controls the movements of every ship on its passage either way. These posts mark the sections. You will learn more of it when we get to the other end of the canal."

The breakfast gong sounded at this time, and the party were not so eager for knowledge as to pass over the morning meal.

CHAPTER XXII

THE CANAL AND ITS SUGGESTIONS

The tourists had been up long enough to be in excellent condition for breakfast; and the Asiatic breezes from the south-east were cool and refreshing, for they came from the mountains of the peninsula of Sinai, where Moses had received the law from Heaven. There was something inspiring in this thought to the minds of the more religious members of the party when the commander announced the proximity of the sacred mountain after he had asked the blessing.

"How far is Mount Sinai from where we are now?" asked Mrs. Woolridge.

"I cannot tell you just how far it is at this moment, for my charts are in my cabin," replied Captain Ringgold. "We are not so near it as we shall be later; but you will all see it after we get into the Red Sea. We will defer the subject till that time; and I should not have mentioned it if the south-east wind had not suggested it."

"I got a glance at an enormously big steamer ahead of us just as we were leaving the promenade," added Mr. Woolridge. "She looked as large as Noah's Ark, and appeared as though she was sailing over the land."

"Perhaps she was quite as large; for the pilot tells me that the Ophir is just ahead of us," added the commander.

"What is the Ophir?" asked Mrs. Belgrave.

"She is the largest of the Orient Line of steamers, and one of the finest ships in the world. I remember that in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible it says that the ark was larger than any British man-of-war; and probably the statement is still correct, though by a narrower margin than when the learned editor completed his work. The Empress of India and two other barbette ships of her class in the English navy have a displacement of 14,150 tons, and the last built Cunarder, the Lucania, exceeds 13,000 tons. The ark was 525 feet long, reducing her 300 cubits to our measure, which is about the length of the Ophir."

"I should like to go on board of one of those great British steamers that sail to

the other side of the earth," said Mrs. Belgrave.

"Possibly we may have an opportunity to do so at Ismaïlia or Suez. I will ascertain when we arrive at these places," the captain replied to the lady; whose simple requests and hints were law to the gallant commander, who was a bachelor in the best possible preservation.

The company returned to the promenade without any unnecessary delay; for all of them were interested in the canal itself, and in the sights to be seen on its shores. The great steamer ahead of the Guardian-Mother was much nearer than when the party went below, and it soon appeared that she had "taken the ground." But it proved to be only a temporary hitch, for she went ahead again before the American craft reached her.

"They are at work all the time on the canal to prevent these accidents, and several changes have already been made in the original plan of the canal," said the commander. "Monsieur Lesseps, who projected this wonderful enterprise, and whose energy and perseverance carried it through to its completion, made a voyage through the canal in the Austral, one of the largest of the Orient Line, though not so large as the one ahead of us, for the purpose of observing any defects. The result has been that several improvements have been adopted which it is expected will remove all the difficulties."

"Is Monsieur Lesseps still living, Captain?" inquired Captain Scott.

"He is at the age of eighty-seven this year. His success with the Suez Canal led him to undertake the construction of the Panama Canal. The company was formed with the prestige of the great engineer's success on this isthmus, and the shares were readily sold. The work was begun; but it was a more difficult undertaking than Suez, and the company suspended payment four years ago. Speculators and 'boodlers' had 'monkeyed' with the finances, and the vast scheme is a failure. Whether it will ever be accomplished remains a question for the future."

"The poor old man and his son were dragged into the mire, and were even committed to prison, though they were soon released," added Mr. Woolridge. "I think he was a great man, and I was exceedingly sorry for his misfortunes."

"He will never receive the honor he deserves on our side of the Atlantic, I fear," added Captain Ringgold. "After rich and powerful potentates had rejected the scheme, Lesseps still cherished it. Over sixty years ago, when he was an

employe in the office of the French consul at Tunis, he was sent to Alexandria on business. Here he was subjected to a residence of some time in quarantine. He was supplied with books by the French consul there, and among them was Lapère's Mémoire. The author was Napoleon's engineer, whose report that the level of the two seas was not uniform, had set aside the schemes to connect them by a canal. Lesseps considered his views, and some years after made the acquaintance of Lieutenant Waghorn, favorably known in connection with the Overland Route to India by the way of Egypt. The route by descending the Euphrates River to the head of the Persian Gulf was also considered. It appears, therefore, that Lesseps was cogitating his great enterprise for nearly forty years before the work was completed."

"I cannot see the immense importance of this canal as you gentlemen represent it; but I suppose it is because I am a woman," said Mrs. Belgrave.

"It is of the greatest importance to England," replied Mr. Woolridge. "Over twenty-five hundred British vessels went through the canal in 1888; for England has a vast empire in Asia, to say nothing of Australia and other colonies in the East. Of other nations of Europe, France sent two hundred and seventy-two ships through the canal, Holland one hundred and twenty-four, Germany one hundred and twenty-two, and others less than a hundred each."

"But how many American vessels went through?" asked Captain Scott.

"None were mentioned in the report I saw; and the number must have been very few. The canal is of vastly less importance to the United States than to England, France, Holland, and Spain, all of which have colonies in the East. Since the war, our maritime commerce has been immensely reduced, though our ships still make voyages to India, China, and various ports of the East. Then the distance saved to our vessels would be much less. Roughly estimated,—in fact, guessed at,—I should say that the distance from New York to Ceylon, near the southern cape of India, is four-fifths of that around Cape Good Hope. The heavy dues for passing through the canal are an item, and it would not pay to save two thousand five hundred miles out of twelve thousand five hundred."

"But the saving from London to Bombay is forty-four per cent," added Mr. Woolridge. "From Marseilles to the same port it is nearly sixty per cent. The United States 'is not in it'"—

"*Are* not in it, papa," interposed Miss Blanche with a silvery laugh.

"No, my dear; *is* not in it," returned the magnate, with a loving smile. "I know the government is said to have ruled for the plural, but I don't accept the ruling. Why, what does *E pluribus Unum* mean if not the singular number? For what did we fight the War of the Rebellion if not to prove that the United States *is* one government, and *are* not forty-four of them at the present moment."

"But the grammar, papa?" asked Blanche.

"The grammar is all right, my child. What are the news, Blanche? The company is or are, just as you pay your money and take your choice," said the father, chucking the fair maiden under the chin.

"Our friend is quite right, and, so far as the canal is concerned, the United States *is* not in it," added the commander, laughing at the turn the conference had taken.

"How far have we gone so far, Captain?" asked Miss Blanche.

"Ten o'clock," he replied, consulting his watch. "We have been moving at this snail's pace for five hours, and made twenty-five miles, or forty kilometres. In five more we shall come to El Kantara, where the caravan route from Egypt into Asia crosses the canal."

"Do the camels have to swim across the canal?" asked Mrs. Blossom.

"They do not; but it cost the canal company some money to save them the trouble of doing so," replied the captain. "El Kantara means 'the bridge;' and there used to be one across the outlet of a lake there. The bridge was removed by the company, and a ferry substituted for it."

"I suppose all vessels have to go through the canal in the daytime," said Mrs. Woolridge.

"Not at all; the system of signals is arranged for day or night. Vessels with an electric search-light or projector which will show up an object three-quarters of a mile ahead are allowed to navigate the canal at night. We could do so if so disposed; but we wish to see the country. The channel is lighted at night by illuminated buoys."

"What sort of boys?" inquired Mrs. Blossom, who was struggling to grow wise, and had a long distance to travel in that direction.

"Iron ones," answered the captain.

"Iron boys!" exclaimed the good lady. "How could they point out the way through the canal?"

"They swim in the water, and the pilots understand the language they speak," said the commander gravely.

"Iron boys that swim and speak!" ejaculated the excellent lady. "I think you must be fooling with us, Captain Ringgold."

"You have put your foot in it again!" exclaimed Mrs. Belgrave in a whisper. "Don't say another word!"

"A buoy is a floating body in the shape of two inverted cones united at their bases, made of copper or plate iron. They are used all over the world to mark the bounds of channels, sometimes with fog-bells on them, rung by the action of the waves," continued the commander. "They are moored to the bottom here as elsewhere, and have a gas-light burning on them all the time."

"A gas-light!" exclaimed Mrs. Woolridge; "where is the gas-house?"

"There are several of them on the canal, and not one for each buoy, which is filled with gas, and contains a supply that will last for six weeks. Some folks who never went to sea suppose a lighthouse is to give light on the water, when they are only to mark certain localities, and to give ranges to navigators. These buoys are for the same purpose, and not to light up the canal. But here is El Kantara."

"I think you said this place was on the road to Syria," said the magnate. "People who go to the Holy Land from Egypt, and most of them do go that way, take a steamer from Alexandria to Joppa, or Jaffa as it is now generally called, and do not go by camel-back over this road."

"They do not; but they may go over it at some time in the near future," added Professor Giroud. "The Egypto-Syrian Railroad has been projected, and it is to pass over this route."

The travellers found quite a village at El Kantara, with a hotel, and other places for the refreshment of travellers. Passengers from the steamers seldom land here. The ship proceeded on her way, and the party caught a glimpse at a boat-load of camels crossing the canal. From this place to Fort Said the course had been perfectly straight through Lake Menzaleh, which ends here.

"If you will look to the left," said the commander after a time, "you will see a considerable body of water. That is the upper part of Lake Balah, through which the canal passes. About a mile and a half distant is a lot of sandstone rocks like that of the Memnon statues. They appear to belong to an altar, and the inscription informs the visitor who can read it that they were parts of a temple erected by Seti I. in honor of his father, Ramses I., and completed by Ramses II., his son. There may have been a city here, but there are no signs of it now."

The steamer passed through the Balah Lakes; for there are several of them, containing some islands. The canal is protected by high banks of yellow sand, and beyond is the desert, with hills in the distance. Coming out of the lakes, the canal passed through a deep cutting, which was the worst place encountered in doing the work. It is the highest ground on the isthmus, averaging fifty-two feet above the sea; and a ridge of this territory is from seventy to one hundred feet high, through which the digging had to be carried. There are some curves here, the canal is the narrowest in all its course, and vessels more frequently get aground here than in any other portion. The road to Syria passed over this elevation, which is called "the causeway" in Arabic.

The Ophir went through without sticking in the sand, and the Guardian-Mother was likely to do as well. A solitary mosque and a châlet of the Khedive were passed, and the ship was approaching Lake Timsah when the gong sounded for lunch, and the air of the desert had given the tourists an appetite which caused them to evacuate the promenade with hasty steps.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE MYSTERIOUS ARAB IN A NEW SUIT

The cabin party of the Guardian-Mother were on the promenade in time to observe the entrance into Lake Timsah. It is near the seventy-five kilometre post from Port Said, or half way through the canal to the head of the Gulf of Suez, the most northern portion of the Red Sea. The city of Suez is several miles to the south-west of this point; for Lesseps, for some reason said to be political, avoided the old town, and carried the canal to the other side of the inlet, and below it.

Lake Timsah has an area of about six square miles. It is not a deep body of water, and the canal had to be built through it as through Lake Menzaleh. Its water is now of a pale blue, very pretty to look at. Before any work was done here, it was a mere pond, filled with reeds; but it has been cleaned out and made more healthy for the surrounding country.

On its northern shore is the town of Ismaïlia, having about two thousand inhabitants, which has become a place of some importance. The railroad from Cairo is extended to it by a branch, the main line following the canal to Suez. It has a couple of hotels; and its principal square, on which the best one is situated, has the name of Place Champollion, showing that the French remember their learned men.

While the canal was in process of construction, Ismaïlia was the centre of operations. It was handsomely laid out, not unlike the city of Washington, which is one of the handsomest in the world; but, like the new places in our great West, it was built in a hurry, under the pressure of a drive of business, and the sanitary conditions were neglected. The important fresh-water canal, which is near the railroad all the way from the Nile, furnishes the only drinking-water of this town and of Suez; but the sewers of the new town had no other outlet.

Of course the town was soon invaded by fever, which caused it to be deserted; and it has never recovered its former prosperity, though not wholly for this reason, for the completion of the canal destroyed its business basis. Ismaïlia was the focal point of the great ceremonials at the opening of the canal. The Empress

Eugénie of France, the Emperor Frederick of Germany, then crown-prince, and other noted persons, were present; and the celebration is said to have cost the Khedive twenty million dollars.

The town has improved somewhat of late; the viceroy's château, which had become much dilapidated, has been restored, and portions of the desert, irrigated from the canal, have been transformed into fine gardens. Though the climate is agreeable and the air dry, it is not likely to become a pleasure resort. A couple of small steamers run from this port to Port Said, while the railroad connects it with Suez.

The steamer remained a couple of hours at the station, as did the Ophir; and the commander obtained permission for the ladies to pay her a visit. She is a magnificent specimen of naval architecture. Her saloon, staterooms, drawing-room on the upper deck, were magnificent apartments, most luxuriously furnished. Her appointments for second-class passengers were extensive and very comfortable, far better than on many Atlantic steamers.

The ubiquitous donkey, and especially the donkey-boy, were here; and the "Big Four," with the exception of Louis Belgrave, who attended Miss Blanche on the visit to the Ophir, accompanied by Don, went on a frolic to the town. They made a great noise and waked up the place, but they committed no excesses. When they returned to the ship, they found Louis and Miss Blanche showing the captain and the surgeon of the big steamer over the Guardian-Mother. The beautiful young lady had evidently fascinated them, and they had been extremely polite to the party, perhaps on her account. They appeared to be interested in the steam-yacht, and expressed their belief that nothing more comfortable and elegant floated.

The steamers got under way again, and proceeded through one of the two channels through the blue lake. The ladies waved their handkerchiefs to the officers and passengers of the Ophir; and their greetings were heartily reciprocated, for the American party had plainly made an impression upon the English people, partly perhaps by the style in which they travelled, but probably more by the beauty of the ladies, with Miss Blanche as princess, and the others were under forty and still good-looking. The lake is only five miles long, and the steamers soon passed into the cut at the south of it.

"Along this region many ruins have been found, some of them of Persian structures," said the commander after the ship had left the lake. "Pharaoh-Necho,

600 B.C., built a canal from Suez to Lake Timsah, with gates, which Herodotus describes, and informs us that the vessels of the period went through it in four days."

"I wish you would tell us something about Herodotus, Captain, for his name has been frequently mentioned in Egypt," said Mrs. Woolridge.

"And about Diodorus and Strabo, also mentioned in the lectures," added the magnate. "I have forgotten all that I ever knew about these gentlemen."

"I am in the same boat, Captain," the doctor responded.

"I shall leave those subjects to the professor. But we are approaching some objects of interest, and we will defer the matter to another time," replied the commander. "Do you see a white dome on the starboard? That is the tomb of Shekh Ennedek; and it is rather a picturesque affair here in the midst of the desert."

"Was he a fighting character?" asked Mrs. Belgrave.

"Not at all; far from it. He was a wealthy Arab chief. He made the pilgrimage to Mecca, which is the duty of every faithful Mohammedan; and he seems to have been greatly impressed by it, for he gave his cattle and his lands to the poor, and spent the rest of his life on the greenish territory we have just passed through, in religious meditation."

"He was a good man if he was a Mohammedan," added the lady.

"We don't believe that all the good people in the world belong to our church," added the captain. "Do you all remember who Miriam was?"

More than half the party could not remember.

"She was the sister of Moses; and she first appears, doubtless as a young girl, watching the Nile-cradle of her infant brother. The land next south of Lake Timsah, made green by the water, is called Gebel Maryam, probably after the sister of Moses. She was a prophetess; but she found fault with the marriage of her brother, for which she was afflicted with Egyptian leprosy. As you find it in the Bible (Numbers xii.), Moses asked the Lord: 'Let her be shut out of the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in again. And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days.' An Arab legend points out this spot as the place where she spent that time, and from which it gets the name of Maryam."

"That's nice, Captain Ringgold!" exclaimed Mrs. Blossom. "I wish you would tell us more Bible stories."

"Some people believe that the Mediterranean and the Red Seas were connected in some remote age of the world, or at least that the latter extended to the north as far as Lake Timsah," continued the commander, without noticing the suggestion of the amiable lady. "In proof of this supposition, certain shells found in the Mediterranean, but not in the Red Sea, have been thrown up in digging for the canal through Lake Timsah.

"We are approaching what is called the Serapeum," said the captain.

"What! more of them here? I thought we had used up all the Serapeums," said the magnate with a laugh.

"The present one is of a different sort," answered the commander. "But the ruins found in this vicinity were supposed to belong to a Serapeum such as several we have seen on the Nile; but Lepsius says they could not have been a part of a temple to Serapis, but were monuments built on the ancient canal by Darius.

"It is high ground here, comparatively speaking; and you observe that the cutting of the water-way is through a rocky formation, with rather high banks on each side. There is quite a little village above; and, as it is getting dark, we shall pass the night here in the siding-basin."

"Who is that man on the forecastle of the Maud?" asked Captain Scott as the little steamer came into the basin.

"I don't know," replied Captain Ringgold. "I had not noticed him before. He looks like an Arab, though he is taller than most of them."

A flight of steps ascended to the top of the embankment at the station of the little town. The Maud passed close to them on her way to her berth for the night. Abreast of them the Arab on the forecastle leaped ashore, but made a gesture as though the movement had given him pain. He went up the steps and disappeared.

"Who was that man, Knott?" asked the captain when the seaman came on board of the ship.

"I don't know, sir; I called upon him to give an account of himself as we were crossing Lake Timsah; but he could not understand me, pointed to his mouth, and shook his head, meaning that he could not speak English. He did not do any

harm, so I let him alone; for Don was running the engine, and I did not like to call him from his duty. He kept his face covered up with a sort of veil, and would not say anything. I thought I would let him alone till we came to a stopping-place, and I could report to you."

"When did he go on board of the Maud?" asked the captain.

"I don't know, sir. The first time I saw him was on the lake. Spinner had the wheel, Don was in the engine-room, and the rest of the ship's company were on the upper deck looking at the sights. I inquired, but no one had seen him."

"Did you ever see him before?"

"I don't think I ever did, sir. He had on what looked like a new suit of Arab togs, and he kept his face covered up, as I said."

If Captain Ringgold was not troubled, he was perplexed. He had observed the stranger distinctly as he went up the steps, but he could not identify him as a person he had ever seen before. Of course it came into his head at once that the tall Arab was Captain Mazagan, and he said as much to Scott.

"We left him at the hotel at Port Said; how could he be here?" asked the captain of the Maud.

"He must have smuggled himself on board of the little steamer when we were at Ismaïlia; for he was first seen out in the lake."

"How could he have been at Ismaïlia?" Scott inquired.

The commander went to his cabin, and looked over his "Bradshaw," in which he found that a steamer left Port Said at seven o'clock every morning, and arrived at Ismaïlia at noon. It was possible that Mazagan had come by this conveyance; and he gave Scott the information.

"Probably he stopped at the station while we were on board of the Ophir, or your party had gone to the town," said the commander. "It was easy enough for him to stow himself away in the cabin of the Maud while no one but Philip was on board of her."

"I supposed we had got to the end of the pirate when I saw him trotted on shore to the hotel," added Scott.

"So did I, though he made some huge but very indefinite threats when I saw him

last," mused the commander. "But why did he go on board of the Maud, when he could have gone to Suez by the railroad?"

"I don't see," replied Scott. "He is a Moor, and must be as revengeful as his 'noble master,' as he calls him. It was the Maud that did his business for him, and I was at the wheel of her when she smashed into the side of the Fatimé. I only hope his grudge is against me and not against Louis Belgrave."

"You mention the idea I had in my mind when I asked why he went on board of the Maud, Captain Scott," said the commander. "Perhaps it is a lucky chance that I sent for the 'Big Four' so that they might hear all that was said about the scenes through which we were passing."

"You mean that it may have been a lucky chance for Louis or for me; but I believe it is a luckier chance for the pirate, for I think I should have thrown him overboard if I had seen him on our deck," said Scott.

"Then there would probably have been a fight on board of the Maud, and work made for our surgeon in your party. It may have been lucky for all that you were called on board of the ship. But we must take care that he does not resume his voyage in the morning with us."

Captain Ringgold took all necessary precautions. A watch was kept on board of both vessels; and when they started on the remainder of the trip through the canal in the morning, nothing had been seen or heard of Mazagan. It was agreed that nothing had better be said about the matter; and when the cabin party, with the "Big Four," gathered on the promenade at five o'clock in the morning, not one of them, except the big and the little captain, suspected that an enemy was near, if the stranger really was Mazagan, of which they could not be sure.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE TOY OF THE TRANSIT MANAGER

The village of Serapeum has had an existence of over twenty years; and its pleasant little gardens looked very inviting in the fresh morning air to the members of the cabin party as they took their places on the promenade, which had come to be about as well defined as their seats at the table. The air was soft and agreeable; and after their refreshing sleep the tourists were in excellent condition to enjoy the continued passage through the canal, of which, however, there were only about forty-one miles left, and the commander expected to be at Suez by noon.

Captain Ringgold had not said anything to any person except Scott about the mysterious stranger with a veil over his face; but the ship and her consort had been well guarded over night, and a search for stowaways was made when the morning watch came on duty. Not even an Arab tramp could be found, and the commander was confident the tall Mussulman had not again found a hiding-place on board of either vessel.

"We shall soon have a change of scene," said Captain Ringgold, as he joined the party on the promenade. "We are still in the desert, though the fresh-water canal makes a streak of green along its banks, for it extends to Suez, and even across the bay to the entrance of the canal."

"The prospect is not very exciting just now," added Mr. Woolridge, as the screw began to turn, and the ship moved away from her moorings.

"We shall come to the larger of the Bitter Lakes in less than an hour," replied the captain. "There is nothing very exciting about them; but Brugsch identifies these lakes with the Marah of the Bible, though others do not agree with him. In Exodus xv. 23 we read," and the speaker took a paper from his pocket: "'And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters ... for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah.' But the bitter spring which Moses sweetened by casting into it a tree is in the peninsula of Sinai."

"Shall we go there?" asked Mrs. Blossom, beginning to be excited, as she always was when scriptural subjects came up in connection with the journey; and she

had studied the Bible more than any other book, and probably more than all others combined.

"At the proper time I shall have something to say about Mount Sinai, and I hope to place you in a position to see it in the distance; but at present we are not prepared to consider the matter. You can now see through the cutting an expanse of water, which is the great basin, as the larger lake is called.

"As stated before, the Red Sea formerly extended to Lake Timsah, over forty miles farther than now, and the lakes before us were then a part of the sea. The deepest water was twenty-four to forty feet below the Mediterranean, with a heavy crust of salt on the bottom, though the smaller basin required a great deal of dredging. In the spring of 1869 the Prince and Princess of Wales were present in this locality, and took part in the ceremonial of 'letting in the waters.'"

"'Wails for the multitude of Egypt,'" added Uncle Moses.

"Ezekiel, chapter and verse forgotten," replied the commander.

"Thirty-two, eighteen," said the bulky lawyer.

"Are there any whales in the lake?" asked Felix.

"You can fish for them, my lad; but the particular Waleses of whom I spoke were not 'in it,'" continued the captain. "These Wales did not spout, though they probably said something; but they let in the water instead of blowing it out, as respectable whales do at sea. The waters of the two seas came together, and notwithstanding the joyousness of the occasion, the meeting was not altogether amiable and pleasant at first. Each representative of the different bodies seemed to pitch into the other, and the onslaught created a great commotion for a time. If they were ever united before in the distant past, they appeared to have forgotten all about it.

"The war was short and decisive, and the waters soon settled down into a peaceful condition, as you will find them to-day. They have apparently shaken hands, and accepted the task of promoting the commerce of the world. But here we come to the great basin. The lake is about six miles wide. Here is the lighthouse, and there is another at the other end of it, each of them sixty-five feet high."

The shores of the lake are flat and sandy, and the water is of a bluish green hue. There is a well-defined channel through it. As there is no longer any danger of

washing the banks of the canal, steamers increase their speed, and the Guardian-Mother made the next twenty miles in less than two hours. As the captain had promised, it was a change of scene, and it was very agreeable to the party. In the distance could be seen the Geneffeh range of hills, which were a relief in the landscape from the desert. In them are rich quarries of marble and limestone which are profitably worked.

The passage through the canal had become monotonous to the travellers after they had passed through the lakes, for it was a desert on both sides. Shortly after, the water-way was cut through sandstone, and after that the soil was clay, or a mixture of it with lime; but the last part of the course was through depths of sand again. The tide on the Red Sea rises from five to seven feet, and its flow extends about four miles up the canal.

"Looking ahead, you can see an expanse of water, which means that we are coming to the end of our canal travel," said the commander. "I suppose no one will be sorry for it; for we have had all our social arrangements as usual, and there has been something to see and much to learn all the way."

"It has not been at all like my canal travel at home," added Uncle Moses, who was the oldest person on board of the ship by one month, by which time Dr. Hawkes was his junior, and they were only fifty-four. "I went from Syracuse to Oswego by a canal boat when I was a young man. The trip was in the night, and I slept on a swinging shelf, held up by ropes; and we were bumping much of the time in the locks so that I did not sleep so well as I did last night. But what water have we ahead, Captain?"

"It is an arm of the Gulf of Suez, which is itself one of the two great arms of the Red Sea."

"It appears to be well armed," said Uncle Moses, who could be guilty of a pun on extreme provocation.

"Like yourself, it is provided with two arms, but it does not shoot with them," replied the captain. "On our left are the ruins of Arsinoe, which was an ancient port, once called Crocodilopolis; and, by the way, Lake Timsah was once Crocodile Lake, and doubtless the saurians formerly sported in its waters."

"About Arsinoe?" suggested the professor.

"Probably you know more about it than I do, Professor."

"I know little except that it was a commercial city of Egypt, built by Ptolemy II. The name is that of several females distinguished in one way or another in the ancient world, and the word is usually written with a diæresis over the final *e*, so that it is pronounced as though it were written Arsinoey. The city thrived for a time, and was the emporium of eastern Egypt; but the perils of the navigation in the north of the Red Sea diverted the trade into other channels, and the place went to decay. It was named by Ptolemy after his sister, who was married at sixteen to the aged king of Thrace. There is a bloody story connected with her life, which I will not repeat; but in the end she fled to the protection of her brother in Egypt, and after the fashion of that age and country, he made her his wife."

"You have not been in Asia any of you yet, or even as near that continent before as you are at this moment," continued the commander, as the ship passed out of the canal into the gulf.

"I thought we had been in Asia," interposed Mrs. Belgrave.

"Certainly we have," added half a dozen others.

"Isn't Scutari in Asia, Captain?" asked the lady.

"To be sure it is, and we all went over there from Constantinople," replied the commander. "I had forgotten that, and you are not so innocent as I began to make it appear. But you have Asia on one side and Europe on the other."

"Well, we had that on the Bosporus, when we made that trip to the Black Sea in the Maud," added the lady, who seemed to be pleased because she had caught the captain in a blunder.

"Then you have been in all the grand divisions of the earth except South America, and I have no doubt you will go there before we come to the finish of this voyage. Here is the station; and you observe that there is a bridge across the canal by which the traveller can proceed to Suez, which you can see upon the point on the other side. The donkeys and donkey-boys abound here as everywhere in Egypt, and boats can be obtained to ferry you over to the town. But as we shall remain here a day or two, I think we had better go into the basin. We can then go where we please in the Maud."

It was lunch time when the two vessels had been secured, and the party adjourned to the cabin. As soon as the meal was disposed of they returned to the

upper deck, and seated themselves in the arm-chairs, for there was much to be seen. Port Tewfik is the proper name of the place at the station, but most of the people are Frenchmen, and they all call it Terreplein.

"At this station the office of the canal company, which you can see from the deck, is located. It has a garden in front of it, on an avenue adorned with lebbec trees. You see that tall tower with balls and flags on it; and it is from this point that all the movements of vessels in the canal are controlled. But I think we had better land, and see it for ourselves."

The company went on shore, and proceeded to promenade the environs. One of the first things that attracted their attention was a colossal bronze bust of Lieutenant Waghorn, who had been presented to them by Captain Ringgold in one of his talks. It was erected to his memory by the canal company, and is a graceful tribute of the French to the originator of the overland route. The inscription was in French, and Louis translated it for the benefit of the observers.

"But I cannot translate the bass-relief on the bronze," he added.

"That represents Lieutenant Waghorn embarking with the mails in an open boat at Suez, an incident that actually occurred. It is said that this gentleman, after spending the best years of his life in his efforts to establish a quicker route between England and her vast colonies, died in poverty in London in 1850; but I hope it is not true," the commander explained. "We will now apply for admission to the office of the manager."

The permission was obtained, and the party ascended to the upper room of the building. Monsieur Chartrey, the superintendent of the transit department of the canal, was very polite to them, and explained everything to them in English. On a low table which occupied all one side of the apartment was what looked like a metal trough about fifteen feet long. A model of this apparatus was exhibited in England, and there it was called "the toy," a name which is still retained.

On a shelf above the table are about fifty models of ships, each bearing the flag of some nation. The toy is a model of the canal, with its sidings, stations, and the lakes. When a ship enters the canal at either end, a little ship is placed in the relative position it occupies; and when one sails out of it, its representative in the trough is removed. All the stations are connected with this office by telegraph, just as the railroads are controlled in modern times; and when a vessel passes from one section, or block, it is reported to the manager. A man is always watching; and as news comes in, he makes the proper changes in the model

ships. Where a steamer is to tie up for the night is ordered from this office.

Monsieur Chartrey was very heartily thanked for his courtesy and kindness, and the party left to look at the docks, quays, and basins of Terreplein; but they were precisely the same as they had seen in various ports of Europe, especially at Havre. The commander had ordered the Maud to be in readiness for a trip, and it was decided to spend the rest of the afternoon at Suez.

The first question the captain put on his return to the ship was as to whether anything had been seen of the mysterious Arab stranger; for the officers had been cautioned not to admit any person on board. Mr. Gaskette had remained on board of the Maud, and made the same report. With the four seamen who had attended the company up the Nile on board, and with the second officer and Don, the little steamer left her landing-place, provided with a pilot, and steamed by the channel over to the city of the desert, as it has been called.

CHAPTER XXV

A VISIT TO THE SPRINGS OF MOSES

The utility of the Maud was fully demonstrated at Suez, if there had been any doubt of it before, as a tender, and Captain Ringgold recognized it especially at this time; for the question of taking her out of the water, and giving her a place on the upper deck, had been referred to this point in the voyage, and it was yet to be settled.

Port Ibrahim is the walled basin south-west of Port Tewfik, or Terreplein as the French call it, extending out to the deep water of the Gulf of Suez. The shores are bordered with a shoal in every part. To a practical person the motive of De Lesseps in avoiding the city of Suez was probably to strike the water at the deepest point, rather than political.

The party took their places in the standing-room of the Maud, which had been prepared for their reception. The "Big Four" were again in their element, though the pilot had everything his own way. A channel describes about a quarter of a circle from the deep water and the very end of the canal to the north side of the city, in which there is depth enough for the smaller class of vessels engaged in its commerce.

Most of these crafts were dhows, similar to the felucca with which the party had become familiar in the Archipelago, and the boys observed one just astern of them with great interest. They are used on the Malabar Coast in the East Indies as well as in the Red Sea, where it is called a *baggala*, though dhow is the more common name in the far East. They are over two hundred tons burden, and of all sizes below that. They have been used for commerce and piracy, which is also true of the felucca of the Mediterranean.

"She sails like the wind," said Captain Scott, after they had looked the craft over.

"She is bigger than the Samothraki, whose acquaintance we made in Pournea Bay," added Morris.

"I have read something of the craft in stories about the Malays; and a craft of that sort suggests piracy to me every time, especially since our experience in the

Archipelago," replied Scott.

"There are no pirates up here," said the pilot with a laugh, for he spoke English and understood all that was said.

"What do those dhows bring up here?" asked Louis.

"Coffee from the ports of Arabia, spices, gums, senna, rose-leaves, and other drugs and perfumes," replied the pilot.

"What becomes of these articles then?"

"Some of them are used in Suez; but most of them go by the railroad to Cairo, or other parts of Egypt, and I suppose some of them get to Europe and America."

"They are all rather costly merchandise, and one of those dhows can carry a big freight of them," added Louis, as he went aft, for Miss Blanche was there.

The pilot brought the Maud up to the custom-house quay; and the dhow, which was not far behind the little steamer, came alongside the pier near her. The company landed, and proceeded to do the town. The pilot appeared to be a Frenchman, and he volunteered to act as a guide for the strangers. They found the streets very narrow, and not in the best condition. They passed over to the south side of the city, where they obtained a fine view of the Gulf of Suez.

"Across the water you see the Ataka Mountains, about 2,700 feet high; and sometimes they show the colors of the garnet and amethyst. A fine view is obtained from the top of them, but it would give you a hard climb," said the guide. "On the other side of the bay it is Asia, Arabia Petræa."

"We shall go down to the Springs of Moses to-morrow," added the commander. "Are you a pilot in that direction?"

"In all directions, Captain," answered the pilot. "Here is the Hotel Suez quite near us, if you wish to visit it."

"We have no occasion to do so."

"It is a first-class house, fitted up in English style, and kept by a German."

"What is the price there by the day?" asked the captain from curiosity.

"Sixteen shillings for the best fare."

"Four dollars a day."

"But they have two prices. I have been to New York, and over some of America, as I have over the rest of the world, and I know your money. For people like yourself, who want the best, breakfast or tiffin is one dollar."

"Breakfast or what?" asked Mrs. Belgrave.

"Tiffin," the commander explained. "It means luncheon, and is used by English people in India."

"Dinner a dollar and a half. The rooms are at different prices. For the second-class fare the prices are just half as much as the first."

"There are a couple of the waiters," said Mrs. Woolridge. "They are nice-looking men, not very black."

"They come from India, and make better servants than Arabs," added the guide.

"How slender their forms, and what delicate features they have!" exclaimed the New York lady.

"You are likely to see a good many of them in the course of the next month or two," suggested the captain, as the walk was continued in the town. "The houses are about the same as they were in other parts of Egypt, and they have the same ornamented lattices behind which the ladies inside can see you without being seen."

The party looked into the quarters of the Arabian sailors, consisting of low hovels, but did not enter. The population of the town is now about 15,000. Before the time of the canal, it was an Arab village of 1,500, with low mud shanties. It was like the desert around it; for no water was there to brighten the foliage, if there was any, for not a tree or a plant was to be seen. The water used was of poor quality, brought from the Springs of Moses by camels and donkeys. It was a poverty-stricken place. But the opening of the fresh-water canal from the Nile vivified everything, and vegetation has come into being since this event.

The party examined this canal, to which the place is so much indebted for its present appearance, as well as no little of its prosperity. It is six and a half feet above the level of the Red Sea, and its flow into the conduits for the supply of the city, as well as the waste into the sea, is regulated by a large lock, with gates. Near this they found the camel-camp, and not less than five hundred of these

animals were there at the time; and the pilot said he had seen as many as a thousand of them there at once. They form the caravans to and from Arabia and Egypt, as well as into Syria.

The tourists climbed a little hill near the château of the Khedive, from which they obtained a fine view of the surroundings, which included parts of Asia and of Africa. This elevation is said to be the site of the ancient Clysma, a fortified place, built to protect the ancient canal of Darius. The party, especially the "Cupids," were beginning to be fatigued; and the guide conducted them to the pier, which is a notable feature of the locality.

"This pier is a mile and three-quarters in length, and reaches over to Port Ibrahim, conveying there a conduit from the fresh-water canal," said the pilot in a perfunctory manner, as though he had had considerable experience as a guide. "It is forty-eight feet wide, and is built of artificial stone, like the great piers at Fort Said. It is erected on a sand-bank, which curves around in the shape you see the pier. The land you observe at the end of it, about fifty acres of it, was made out of the earth dug out of the canal. The building you see near the shore is a mosque; and there are several others. We will walk along the shore to the little steamer."

The travellers were occasionally assailed by a mob of donkey-boys; but no notice of them was taken, and they reached the Hotel Suez near the landing-place. The guide pointed out an island near the shore on which was located the English Cemetery. There are at the west of the town an English and a French hospital. The party embarked, and the guide went to the pilot house. In a few minutes more they were on board of the ship.

It was not yet dinner time, and the arrangements for the trip to the Springs of Moses were made. In the evening, attended by the pilot, Felix and Captain Scott went over to the town again, instructed to visit the hotels and ascertain, if they could, whether the veiled Arab was lodging at any of them. While they were absent the company in the cabin reviewed the pilgrimage of the Israelites, and the events which led to the receiving of the Law by Moses on Mount Sinai, in which the commander conducted the inquiry, and read many passages from Exodus and Numbers.

About ten o'clock in the evening Captain Scott and Felix reported the result of their mission. The pilot was well acquainted with the keeper of the Hotel Suez, and the information desired had been readily obtained. A person answering to

the description, though he wore no veil, had come to the hotel. He was suffering much pain from a lame shoulder, and had gone to the French hospital for treatment. They had inquired about "Monsieur Abdelkhalik," as he had given his name at the hotel, and were informed that he was "comfortable," which was all the attendants would say.

The commander sent for Dr. Hawkes, and told him about his former patient. Mazagan had been very imprudent and even reckless, and his present condition was simply what might have been expected, was the doctor's reply. He might be out again in a week, not sooner, and might not for a month. The captain was satisfied there would be no further movement on the part of the pirate while he remained at Suez.

After breakfast the party embarked again in the Maud. Four sailors in charge of Knott were sent on board, and the first cutter of the ship was taken in tow, to be used in making the landing. The men remained on the forecastle, and the pilot and Knott were already good friends. But the "Big Four" were requested to stay with the party at the stern. The little steamer went out of the basin and down the canal to the bay. As soon as she came into the open water, the commander took the floor.

"On your right is Africa; on your left is Asia. You have probably had enough of Egypt, and now we will confine our attention to Asia; and we have pleasant Asiatic breezes from the east this morning. The country on your left is Arabia, and nearest to you is the Peninsula of Sinai. It has the Gulf of Suez on its west shore, and the Gulf of Akaba on its east coast. I spoke to you of Brugsch's theory that the Israelites journeyed east, with some diversions by divine command, till they came to the Sarbonic Lake, in which he said that Pharaoh and his host perished.

"Now you are on that portion of the Red Sea where it is more generally believed that the fugitives crossed and Pharaoh's army was ingulfed. The king heard that the wanderers had not passed the fortifications on the isthmus, and he believed they were 'entangled in the land.' Then he began the pursuit, with 'the six hundred chosen chariots.' The Israelites fled before him, and crossed the waters in the manner described in the Scriptures.

"Setting aside the miracle of the parted waves, there are still doubting critics who affirm that they crossed the gulf at low tide on these sands where the pier is built, as was frequently done by caravans before the canal was built. The Egyptians

continued the pursuit, reaching the gulf before the tide turned, and attempted to follow them; but a strong south-west gale sprang up, driving the waters furiously before it, to the utter destruction of the whole army and its chariots.

"But I accept the narrative as it is written (Exodus xiv.); and I should like to argue the case with any one who takes the view of Brugsch, or other critics who try to explain the miracle on natural grounds."

The pilot anchored the Maud as near the shore as the depth would permit, and the party were taken ashore by the sailors in the cutter. The springs are about a mile from the landing, and the walk through the sand of the desert was trying to the ladies and to the fat gentlemen. The pilot acted as guide.

"Ain Musa, as it is called, is an oasis a mile and a quarter in circumference. As you see, it is covered with date-palms, tamarisks, and acacias, and everything grows luxuriantly," the Frenchman began. "The Arabs who live in the mud hovels you see, raise fine vegetables here; and, like all Arabs, they will expect a bakshish."

The springs were found to consist of several pools of rather muddy water. The largest of them, shut in by an old wall, is said to be the one called forth by the rod of Moses from the rock; but the tradition is accommodating, and, if you choose, it is the one whose bitter waters were sweetened by the casting in of the tree.

The party had brought a luncheon with them, and it was served by Sparks at the usual hour. They had a delightful time under the trees, and listened to an explanation by the professor of the natural formation of the springs. In the middle of the afternoon they embarked, and returned to the ship in the canal basin.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE VARIOUS ROUTES TO MOUNT SINAI

The next day was Sunday; and, in accordance with the custom from the beginning of the voyage, no unnecessary work was required to be done by any person, and the business of sight-seeing was discontinued. But all were at liberty to observe the day in their own way. Religious services were conducted by the commander on the deck or in the cabin, which were usually attended by all. Most of them went to church on shore when it was convenient; but going to see the edifice or the pictures they did not regard as a devotional exercise.

It was a warm and pleasant day for the seventeenth of January, in latitude 30°, about the same as New Orleans or the northern part of Florida; and the service was held in Conference Hall, as the carpeted section of the promenade deck had come to be called. The captain began the exercises by reading selections from Exodus xv.:—

"Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him a habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.... Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea. The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone."

Several "Gospel Hymns" were sung, and the sermon read by the commander was as nearly fitted to the surroundings as any he could find in his collection. After the service Mrs. Blossom struck up "Turn back Pharaoh's Army, Hallelu!" in which those who knew this Jubilee Singers' melody joined. The conversation that followed naturally turned in the direction of the Peninsula of Sinai, which they could see from the deck.

"Are we going to Mount Sinai, Captain Ringgold?" asked Mrs. Belgrave, in a rather decided tone for her, as though she intended to have the question settled this time.

A great deal had been said by the ladies from Von Blonk Park in relation to this

proposed excursion; but for some reason of his own the commander had not yet given a definite answer. They all attended the same church at home, and the captain and the two ladies were members of it. While the others of the party were deeply interested in the Biblical history, they were not so enthusiastic as the two ladies mentioned.

"Are we going to Mount Sinai?" replied the commander, repeating the question of the owner's mother, "No!"

It was a decided "no" this time, and the jaws of the two Von Blonk Parkites suddenly dropped. Everybody in the company knew that the commander would do anything, even to swimming across the gulf where the children of Israel had walked over, to oblige her, and they were very much surprised at the emphatic negative.

"I shall not finally decide this interesting question without giving my reasons," continued Captain Ringgold. "It would be an extremely interesting excursion to me, as well as to the others. Though I have been to Suez before, I have not made the trip, and I should be as glad to go as any person present. Many travellers go there, especially clergymen, to whom it is in a sense professional, aside from the interest their studies would naturally create in the subject, and the excursion finds a place in many excellent books of travel. I do not consult my own personal desires so much as the situation and circumstances in which we are placed.

"Although we call our voyage an All-Over-the-World affair, the title is considerably exaggerated in the truest and most literal sense; for if we devoted the rest of our natural lives to the work, we could not go everywhere. It is impossible to visit every country on the earth even, and we must use judgment and discretion in determining where we will go. We are travelling by sea, making only such excursions inland as the facilities of the country we visit will conveniently permit. Such trips as we make of this kind must be regulated or controlled by conditions over which we have no influence.

"Times and seasons form an important consideration. We are going to India, and the season is advancing. The southern end of the Red Sea is in latitude 12° north, where you are likely to see some hot weather; and the longer we delay, the hotter it will be. We shall sail from here Tuesday morning; and if we do not make a run up into the Persian Gulf, we shall probably be at Bombay by the first of next month. That city is in latitude 19°, or about that of the south side of Cuba, of

which you know something. We shall see plenty of extremely hot weather, but we wish to avoid it as much as possible.

"There are several routes to Mount Sinai, three from Suez, and two from ports south of it. It will take from two weeks by the shortest route to four by the others. It is a very fatiguing journey if made with due diligence, and it would require a full month for us to see the country properly. My first objection is the time it would require.

"In the next place, the expense is from forty to fifty francs a day, eight to ten dollars, for each person, over a hundred dollars a day. If the result justified it, I should not object to the expense, and I don't think Uncle Moses would. There are no hotels in this region, and you would have to camp out, live in hovels, or at best in the monastery; and the trip would involve a great deal of discomfort to persons not accustomed to roughing it. The 'Big Four' might make a pleasant affair of it, but most of the others would not.

"All the preparations for the excursion have to be made at Cairo, where dragomans who contract to supply tents, camels, food, and everything required are to be found, and I was approached by three of them at Shepheard's Hotel."

"Then the trip seems to be impossible now, and it is useless to talk about it," suggested Mr. Woolridge; and the captain thought he could perceive an expression of relief on his face.

"It is not impossible," added the commander with a smile. "We can go to Tur, 140 miles south of Suez, and there we shall find camels and a contractor, though perhaps not for so large a company. I do not think our party would enjoy the trip whichever way we might go. It is a rough country, a group of mountains. The Monastery is 5,014 feet high, and it must be cold weather up there in January. The Jebel Musa, which is usually regarded as the Holy Mountain, is 7,363 feet high; but even Mount Sinai itself is disputed ground, and the question 'Is Mount Serbal the Sinai of Scripture?' is discussed by the critics. Serbal is 8,712 feet high, the loftiest, I believe, on the peninsula, and is nearer to the gulf than the others.

"I believe the discomfort and exposure of the trip render it impracticable at the present time and at the present season. The guide-books indicate the months of March and April as the best for the excursion; and it is too early to go now with comfort, not to say enjoyment. Of course I do not know what Mr. Belgrave, under the advice of his guardian and trustee, will do with the Guardian-Mother

when our present voyage shall be completed; but if he should retain the steamer, I should recommend him to make a trip across the ocean at the right time, and up the Mediterranean, by the Gulf of Iskanderun to Alexandretta, which is near the head waters of the Euphrates River, a proposed route to India by the Persian Gulf, of which I may have something to say another day.

"From this city the steamer could take in the ports of the Holy Land, or her passengers could journey through Syria by land, with tents and dragoman. The ship could then be left at Port Said, the party could come through the canal to Suez in the Maud, or by some other conveyance, and then make a business of exploring the Peninsula of Sinai," said the commander in conclusion.

"That arrangement would suit me much better," added Mrs. Belgrave. "I have been groaning at the necessity of going home without seeing the Holy Land. I shall keep this plan in my mind as one to be carried out in a couple of years if my son does not object to it."

"The Guardian-Mother shall not go out of commission until this voyage is completed," replied Louis promptly. "Captain Ringgold is engaged as commander for life, and he will attend to the accomplishment of my mother's wishes."

"I thank you, Mr. Belgrave, for the confidence thus reposed in me, and I shall be most happy to command the steamer on such a voyage," replied the captain. "We cannot calculate on events of the future with too much assurance."

The day passed away quietly with reading and singing, and very early in the morning the passengers heard an unusual sound of activity on the part of the ship's company. The captain had given orders the night before to have everything made ready for hoisting on deck the Maud. He had announced his intention to the "Big Four" in his cabin, and given his reasons for his decision. Scott and Felix regretted this change in the programme of the voyage more than the other two.

"The Red Sea is sometimes a very stormy place," said the commander. "I have feared more than anything else when you have been sailing in the Maud that she might get separated from the ship in a fog, or in some other manner, and that the little steamer might come to grief, however well she might be handled; for she certainly is not large enough for an independent voyage.

"In the very last paper I received from New York, I read of a new steam-yacht to

be built by a millionaire for the voyage around the world which has lately become the fad of millionaires. One item struck my attention; that she was to be armed with four cannon whose calibre was not given, as well as with a supply of small arms. The wealthy voyager was afraid of pirates, or some other freebooters on the Malabar and Malay coasts, as well as among the islands of the Indian Ocean and those of the Pacific.

"As you are aware, I took the same precautions myself; and I only regret now that I did not take on board more guns and small arms. We have had occasion to use our twelve-pounders on one occasion, and perhaps, if the ship had reached the coast of Cyprus at the time I expected, I might have found them useful. I do not anticipate any trouble from native pirates wherever we may go; but I think the Maud is a temptation to Arabs and other natives.

"In 1882 Edward Henry Palmer, an Englishman, while on a peaceful mission with two officers of the British service, was murdered by the natives, with his two companions, near Suez, but on the other side of the gulf. If I were sure that the ship could always be near enough to defend the little steamer if attacked, I should feel different about it. Then we are liable to encounter fearful storms, cyclones, in the Indian Ocean, and I think it is more prudent to have the little craft on our deck, rather than in the water."

Neither Captain Scott nor Felix was disposed to argue the question, and they said nothing. Early in the morning the work of preparation began with the removal of everything heavy from the Maud that was not a fixture. She was a large steam-launch to be hoisted on the deck of a steamer no larger than the Guardian-Mother; but the task was satisfactorily accomplished by lunch-time. The afternoon was used in bracing the craft in her position, and putting everything around her in ship-shape condition.

The space occupied by Conference Hall had been taken; but the captain had set the carpenter at work to extend the promenade six feet aft, and the work was completed before night. The carpet was laid, and the arm-chairs removed to the new Conference Hall. The awning overhead was to be lengthened out by the sailmakers among the crew.

Mr. Shafter had always insisted that his force was too small, and the captain admitted the truth of his position. Felipe Garcias had stood on the books of the ship as third engineer for several months; and John Donald was made fourth engineer. The chief was entirely satisfied with the appointments. Pitts returned to

his place on the forecastle as a seaman. The "Big Four" had staterooms in the cabin. After all, the change was only the restoration of the old order of things before the ship arrived at Gibraltar.

At daylight the next morning the Guardian-Mother hauled out of the basin, and started on her voyage for the other extremity of the Red Sea.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE CONFERENCE ON THE PROMENADE

The promenade did not wholly change its name after it became Conference Hall, and had been enlarged and improved. It was as popular a resort as it had ever been when the ship was under way and there was anything to be seen. The place was occupied when the ship hauled out of the basin in the early morning of January 19; for the passengers had all asked to be called at five o'clock.

It seemed a little strange to go to sea without the Maud astern, and with the principal members of her ship's company seated with the others on the promenade. The commander had engaged a pilot for the whole length of the Red Sea; for it is full of rocks and reefs, making the navigation difficult and dangerous, though it has been thoroughly surveyed, and the chart is speckled with small islands and coral reefs.

"I could give you the Arabic names of some of the surroundings as we proceed," said the captain, who had taken a position where he could observe the movements of the vessel, and it enabled him to look into the pilot-house through the after windows when he desired to do so.

"Please don't, Captain Ringgold!" exclaimed Mrs. Belgrave. "It makes my jaws ache even to hear them."

"But there are some things which have no other names, and they must sometimes be used. That buoy on the starboard has no English name; but it is of no consequence, and I will not try to speak it. On the opposite shore is the Gebel Ataka, which you have noticed before. By this time you have learned that gebel is a mountain, and *jebel*, as you will find it on your map of the Peninsula of Sinai, means the same thing. *Ras* is a cape. Formerly I knew many more words than now; for it is very easy to forget a foreign language."

"There is a lightship on the starboard," said Louis, who was seated between his mother and Miss Blanche.

"That is the Zenobia, on Newport Rock," added the captain. "Now look to the shore on the left, which is called Abu Darraj. Perhaps you had better write it

down and remember it; for the people in this vicinity believe the Israelites crossed the Red Sea where the ship is at this moment. The water was formerly very shallow here, and a passage for vessels had to be dredged through it. Napoleon and some of his generals were here, and tried to cross over on horseback; but the sea served him as it did Pharaoh and his army; the wind changed, and the tide rolled in so that he was compelled to retreat."

There was nothing more to be explained, and the commander went to the pilot-house; but the air was delightfully pleasant, and the sun rising over the mountains of the peninsula was a beautiful sight. The ladies were in raptures, and some of the gentlemen shared the enthusiasm. The boys left their seats, and walked about the upper deck. Then Miss Blanche thought she had better walk for a time before breakfast, and very soon the whole party were occupied in the same manner. The commander had appointed a conference at nine o'clock, and several interesting subjects were to be considered.

Captain Ringgold was not disposed to drive his ship at her best speed, which was over sixteen knots an hour; but he had instructed Mr. Shafter, the chief engineer, to give her about fourteen knots, for she was more comfortable at this rate than when forced to do her utmost, to say nothing of the saving of coal. At this rate she would arrive at Bombay in ten days, including a stop of one day at Aden. In this time he expected to accomplish a great deal in the school of the conference.

The weather was fortunately all that could be desired, though the Red Sea sometimes behaves very badly; and at the time appointed the members of the party were all in their places on the promenade. The little table, with its vase of flowers brought from the gardens of the Terreplein, was in position. Mr. Woolridge was one of the first to take his arm-chair. He had at first been rather indifferent in regard to the instruction element of the ship, but had become quite interested since he had been called to the platform as a speaker.

The commander was the first to take the platform; and he appeared with a rose in the lappel of his coat, which probably would not have been there if Mrs. Belgrave had not placed it there. She was very fond of flowers, and had arranged quite a collection of potted plants, as well as filled all the vases on board with cut flowers from the village.

"The subject first in order seems to be the Red Sea; and we have not yet spoken of it in detail, though we have had considerable to say about it. I shall purposely omit some things which will be explained when we come to them. I am glad to

see that you have brought your diaries or note-books with you, as I suggested, and you can write down the names of notable sights and the figures I shall give. I wish to say that I have always prepared myself for these occasions, and do not talk to you at random.

"The Red Sea is an arm of the Indian Ocean, with the Gulf of Aden, about 800 miles long, as a connection between them. The Persian Gulf, with the Gulf of Oman, forms a similar body of water, and they will probably render the same service to England and India that the Red Sea does at the present time. Arabia lies between them. The sea on which we are now sailing is 1,200 miles long."

"Badaeker gives the length as 1,400 miles," said Louis.

"He gives it in English miles," replied the commander. "A degree of a great circle is 69.07 English, or statute miles as we call them, or 60 geographical sea miles or knots. This distinction has been fully explained to you before. For ordinary purposes the number of sea miles is to the number of statute miles in the ratio of six to seven. In other words, there will be six-sevenths as many knots as statute miles, and conversely, seven-sixths as many statute as sea miles. Six-sevenths of 1,400 is 1,200; and thus we agree.

"The Red Sea varies in width from 100 to 200 miles, and in the broadest part it is 205 sea miles. We are still in the Gulf of Suez, and shall be till about five this afternoon. On the African side you will see mountains all the way to the strait, with only sand between them and the water. There is nothing that can be called a town between Suez and Koser, over 300 statute miles. All around the sea are coral-reefs; and we shall pass a lighthouse on one right in the middle of it. Not a single river flows into the Red Sea, for there are no rains in Egypt; and if there were on either side, the desert would absorb all the water.

"This sea has the reputation of being a hot region. The thermometer ranges from 70° to 94°, and sometimes the mercury mounts to over 100°, always in the daytime, and it may fall to the freezing point at night, though rarely. As on the Nile, the rule is hot days and cool nights, though you may find some of the latter uncomfortable farther south, for the water has shown a temperature of 100°.

"The water is somewhat salter than the ocean, because no rivers empty into it, and because of excessive evaporation. It has been said by some scientists that, if the Red Sea were entirely enclosed, it would become a solid body of salt in less than two thousand years. I suppose they mean that all the fluid would evaporate, and the salt in it would remain at the bottom. We will not worry about it.

"The average depth of this sea is 2,250 feet, and the greatest 7,200. I have nothing more to say about it; but while I am up I will say a few words about the new route to India of which I have spoken before. The Gulf of Iskanderun, sometimes called Scanderoon, is the north-east corner of the Mediterranean. Its eastern shore is within a hundred miles of the headwaters of the Euphrates River, which is navigable for small craft to Bir. Sixty years ago some preferred it to the Suez route. A grant of money was made by Parliament, two iron steamers of small size were put into the river; and though one of them was sunk, the other went through to the Persian Gulf.

"It was shown that this route was about a thousand miles less in distance than any other to Kurrachee, the nearest port in India. But political influences were at work against it, first from Egypt, and then from some of the Powers, in the belief that it would give England an advantage in the affairs of Asia, and the scheme was dropped. Now we will take a walk of half an hour about the ship; for school-children need rest and recreation.

"But I wish to remind you again that you are now near the ancient world; for Arabia is in sight all the time, and Assyria, Babylonia, Syria are beyond it. The professor will have the floor after the intermission."

During the recess the party walked about the deck and observed the mountains, which were still in sight on both sides. Four bells, or ten o'clock, was the signal for them to come together again. Whatever might be anticipated farther south, the air was soft and pleasant, and not over warm, about 70° in the shade.

"My excellent friend, Mr. Woolridge, has just reminded me of the promise made by the commander that certain ancient travellers over the world should be taken up, as we have frequent occasion to quote them," Professor Giroud began. "There are only three of them of any especial note, the first of whom is Herodotus, 'the Father of History,' as he is often called, and was worthy of the title.

"He was born about 485 years before the time of Christ, at Helicarnassus, a Greek colony of Asia. This was about the time the Persians were invading Greece. When this city obtained its freedom, there was a dispute about the method of government, in which he was involved, and which caused him to leave his native place. For the ancient time, over two thousand years ago, when they had no railroads and steamboats, his travels are remarkable for their extent. He went all over Asia Minor and Greece proper, as well as the islands of the

Ægean Sea. He visited Macedonia, Thrace, and the coasts of the Black Sea.

"What was more remarkable, he penetrated to the Persian Empire and Babylon, and toured Egypt more thoroughly than most modern travellers. Then he extended his wanderings to Sicily and lower Italy. He was alive at the first of the Peloponnesian War; but what became of him, when or where he died, is not known.

"He spent the greater part of his life in travel, though not for pleasure, but in acquiring knowledge which he intended to make useful to the world. He was the most eminent geographer of his time, and he may father that science as appropriately as that of history. But he treated many other branches of knowledge, like the races of men and their peculiarities, mythology, archæology, and, in fact, everything that came within the range of his observation. He was a man of a high order of intellect, a philosopher in his criticism of governments. Modern scholars are greatly indebted to him, and his works are still extant. He did not have the highest style of composition; but he was an honest man, and he wrote as he talked. You can understand the frequent references to him in modern books of travel.

"Not as favorable a notice can be given of Strabo, who was an ancient geographer. He was born about sixty-four years before Christ, at Amasia in Pontus."

"Where was that?" asked the magnate, who was taking the deepest interest in the exercise.

"It is a name given to a country in the north-eastern corner of Asia Minor, on the Black Sea, the ancient name of which was Pontus Euxinus, or Euxine Sea, from which it got its name. His mother was of Greek descent, and nothing is known of his father. I suppose you all know what strabismus means."

"I am sure I don't," replied Mrs. Blossom; and probably she was the only one who could answer in the negative.

"In plain terms, it means cross-eyed; and doubtless Strabo obtained his name from having this defect in his eyes. Whether any of his family were called so before him is not known. He studied with various learned men in Greece, Rome, and Alexandria. It does not appear that he had any occupation, but devoted all his time to study and travel. He wrote forty-seven books, and those on geography were very valuable; for he wrote from his own observation, though

sometimes he is very full, at others very meagre. He is regarded as by no means the equal of Herodotus.

"The third of whom I am to speak is Diodorus Siculus."

"You have put a tail on his name, Professor," added the magnate.

"That is as much a part of his name as the rest of it, as used by scholars. It means that he was born in Sicily. Very little is known about him beyond what he told himself. He lived in the time of Julius Cæsar and Augustus, and for a long time in Rome. He travelled in Europe and Asia for material. He wrote a history of the world from the creation to the time of Julius Cæsar. Some of the volumes are lost, and some of them are still read.

"Diodorus was deficient in the qualifications of a historian; and about all that is valuable in his writings is the mass of facts he gives, from which he was not competent to make the proper deductions. The material he gathered is valuable; but the thirty years he spent in the composition of his works have not purchased for him the literary reputation of Herodotus, or even of Strabo."

"I am very much obliged to you for your lecture, and I hope others besides myself have profited by it," said Mr. Woolridge.

The professor bowed, and took some manuscript from his pocket.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE ANCIENT KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD

When the promenade had been transformed into Conference Hall, the arrangement for the maps had not been forgotten, and the frame had been set up against the after end of the pilot-house. It covered the two windows; but they were not needed when the ship was at sea. When the professor made his bow, Mr. Gaskette exposed to the view of the audience a map which had been completed before the steamer arrived at Port Said; and all the way through the canal he and his assistants had been busy upon others.

"Perhaps I ought to apologize for this map, Captain Ringgold," said Mr. Gaskette, when he had unrolled the huge sheet; "for the boundaries of these ancient countries are so indefinite in the great atlas that I have not been able to lay down all of them."

"You have done exceedingly well, Mr. Gaskette, and I think the professor can ask for nothing better than you have given him," replied the commander.

"Certainly not," added the learned gentleman. "I can give the boundaries no more definitely than they are presented on this beautiful map. I am extremely delighted to have the assistance which it will afford me. The artist might have guessed at some of the division lines, as others have done. He has given us Mesopotamia, Susiana, and the region between them, and that is all I desire.

"Perhaps I shall disappoint you, Mr. Commander, by the meagreness of my description of these ancient countries; for these subjects in detail would be very tiresome to the company under present circumstances, and I propose to bring out only a few salient points in regard to them," said the professor.

"The only thing I feared, Professor, was that you would go into them too diffusely, forgetting that your audience are not savants, or even college students, such as you have been in the habit of addressing. I am very glad to find that you have just the right idea in regard to the situation," replied Captain Ringgold.

"It is fortunate that we agree," continued the instructor, as he took the pointer and turned to the map. "This map lays before you the region lying to the north-

east of Arabia, on the port hand of the ship, as the commander would say; and with your imagination you can look over these mountains and sands and see it. You observe that Syria is on the west of the northern part of it, with Armenia just where it is now, on the north of it, though there was more of it then than now; for in ancient times it reached to the Caspian Sea. An old lady in the country at whose house I used to spend my vacation used to call things that could not be changed as fixed as the laws of the 'Medes and Parsicans.' She meant the Medes and Persians; and Media, now a part of Persia, was the eastern boundary of the region mapped out On the south-east is Susiana, now a large portion of Persia.

"This beautiful map tempts me to be more diffuse than I should have been without it; but it gives you a bit of ancient geography which will do you no harm. There are two great rivers which extend through this territory, the Euphrates and the Tigris, though both of them unite and flow into the Persian Gulf. Of the former of them the commander has spoken to you this morning. Scholars have not been able to locate Paradise, or the Garden of Eden, with anything like precision; but it is generally supposed to have been between these two great streams. Some think it was not a place at all, but only a location given to a moral idea; others place it in the mountains of Armenia or Northern Mesopotamia."

"The pesky Bible critics!" exclaimed Mrs. Blossom; but Mrs. Belgrave "hunched her" as the good lady expressed it.

"All this region has been in the possession of various masters, and even the countries themselves are very much mixed. Assyria was the eastern portion of the northern part," continued the professor, indicating the location with his wand. "In the British Museum and elsewhere you have seen bass-reliefs and figures brought from the ruins of Assyrian cities, and in these the country is called Assur. In Genesis x. 11, we read: 'Out of that land [Shinar] went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh.' This was said of Nimrod; Shinar was a name of Babylonia.

"The history becomes complicated, and is a record of the achievements of the Assyrian kings, Tiglath-Pileser, Sargon, Sennacherib, and others. It would not be profitable to go over them. The Babylonian monarchy was before Assyria was founded. The government was a despotism with nothing to soften it, and the religion was the worship of many gods. Its history dates back from 913 to 659 years before the birth of Christ, though there are tablets which carry it back to 2330 A.D. The empire began to decay in the reign of Sardanapalus, when the

governor of Babylon and the king of Media conspired against it; and Nineveh was captured and destroyed a little more than 600 years before Christ."

The commander announced another recess at this time, though the party appeared to be very much interested in the story of these ancient countries, closely connected with Bible history. Half an hour was spent in walking the deck and gazing at the shores, which were still the same, for the ship was yet in the Gulf of Suez. After this rest the professor resumed his place on the rostrum.

"This is Babylonia, as it is now called to distinguish it from Babylon, the city," said the instructor, as he pointed to the region along the shores of the southern Euphrates, and to the city on both sides of it. "In the Scripture it is called Shinar, Babel, and 'the Land of the Chaldees.' It was and is a very rich and fertile country, extensively irrigated in modern times. Susiana is now a part of Persia, and the rest of the territory represented on the map is included in Turkey in Asia.

"The people were of the Semitic race; in other words, they were descended from Shem, the son of Noah; but Babylonia in the past and present is a land of many races and languages, and the readers of the inscriptions have been bothered by the variety of tongues. The British and the New York Museum have figures and tablets revealing the history of Babylonia. But it takes an archæologist to translate their discoveries. The relations of the monuments indicate that the antiquity of Babylonia reaches back about as far as that of Egypt. A stone in the British Museum brought from this locality has the name of Sargon I., king of Akkad, is reliably vouched for as coming down from the year 3800 B.C.

"The ancient tablets inform us that Narbonassar ascended his throne in 747 (all these dates are B.C.). He reigned fourteen years, which were taken up in wars with Assyria, in which the latter got the best of it in the end. Then, in 625, invasions from the east afforded the Babylonians the opportunity of throwing off the yoke of Assyria, and Nabopolassar became king. In 604 he was succeeded by his son Nebuchadnezzar, who was accounted one of the greatest monarchs that ever ruled the empire.

"In the forty-three years of his reign he recovered the lost provinces of the kingdom, and made his country the queen of the nations of his time. He rebuilt the city of Babylon, and restored all the temples and public edifices. It is said that not a single mound has been opened in this territory in which were not found bricks, cylinders, or tablets on which his name was inscribed. He captured Jerusalem, and a year later destroyed it, sending most of its people to Chaldea.

He died in 561, and was succeeded by his son.

"This son was murdered; and there was confusion again till 556, when the throne was usurped by Nabonidus, the son of a soothsayer, who became a wise and active prince, and his reign ranks next in importance to that of Nebuchadnezzar. His name is found in almost all the temples unearthed. After he had ruled seventeen years, all Babylonia revolted against him because he neglected his religious duties, as well as those of the court, leaving all the business to be done by his son Belshazzar.

"At this point the historians get mixed again. Some say that Belshazzar was the last king of Babylonia. In Daniel v. 30, we read: 'In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom.' Xenophon informs us that Babylon was taken in the night while the inhabitants were engaged in feasting and revelry, and that the king was killed. To this extent sacred and profane history agree. The country became a Persian province. Then it was conquered by Alexander the Great, who died in Babylon in 323. It was also a part of the Roman Empire at two different times.

"In 650 the successors of Mohammed overthrew the Persian monarchy, and the province was the seat of the caliphs till A.D. 1258. On the Tigris in this region is the city of Bagdad, the capital of a province of the same name. Here lived and reigned the Caliph Haroun al-Raschid, or Haroun 'the Orthodox,' who is more famous in story than in history, though he was a wise ruler, a poet, and a scholar, and built up his domain. I have disposed of the two principal empires of this region, pictured on the map; and the next in order is Persia."

"You haven't told us about the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, said to be one of the great wonders of the world," suggested Mrs. Belgrave.

"They are hardly historical; but I will give you what I recall in relation to them. One writer says they were built by Queen Semiramis, the wife of Ninus, an alleged founder of Nineveh. She was a beautiful girl, brought up by Simmas, a shepherd, from whom her name is derived. One of the king's generals fell in love with her and married her. Then he himself was smitten by her beauty, and wanted her himself; the husband was good-natured enough to commit suicide, and she became queen. Ninus soon died in a very accommodating manner, and Semiramis reigned alone for over forty years.

"Others regard the wonderful gardens as the work of Nebuchadnezzar. Diodorus Siculus and Strabo have described them. They are said to have covered about

four acres, built on terraces, supported by arches of brick or stone, and were seventy-five feet high. They were watered from a reservoir at the top, to which water was forced from the Euphrates. Fountains and banquet halls were placed on the various terraces, as well as gardens of flowers. Trees, groves, and avenues gave a variety to the scene, and the view of the vast city was magnificent."

The professor retired; and another recess followed at the word of the commander, who thought his school was doing admirably, and he was anxious not to overdo the matter.

"I am afraid it will take all day for me to dispose of the subjects assigned to me," said the professor, as he took his place again.

"I hope it will," replied Mr. Woolridge. "Very much to my surprise, I have become deeply interested in the subjects you present, Professor."

"It is better than the theatre," added Miss Blanche in a low tone to Louis.

"I shall give you only a few fragments in regard to Persia, and leave Syria to be considered when the Guardian-Mother makes her trip to Palestine. Persia is called Iran by the natives, and it is the largest and most powerful native kingdom of Western Asia. It includes the provinces of Susiana, Persis, and Media on the map, and extends from the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea, with Afghanistan and Beloochistan on the east, and Asia Minor on the west.

"A considerable portion of the country is mountainous, and between the Elburz range and the Caspian Sea is an extinct volcano 18,600 feet high. About three-fourths of Persia is practically a desert for want of rain or artificial irrigation. In California, Colorado, and other States, our people have transformed just such regions into fertile districts. But in spite of the fact that such a large portion of the country is a desert, some parts are exceedingly fertile and beautiful. Some immense valleys, even a hundred miles wide, are of this character, and the productions of the country are varied and valuable. It has no navigable rivers, though many of large size and volume, some of which are beginning to be used for purposes of irrigation. There are many salt lakes.

"The climate is varied; as Cyrus said to Xenophon, 'The people perish with cold at one extremity, and are suffocated with heat at the other.' The population has been estimated from forty down to eight millions; and the latter is probably about correct. Roads are utterly neglected, and the people live in mean houses, generally of earth or mud, and the wealthy are not much better housed than the

poorer class. The trade is of little importance. There are silk manufactures in nearly every province. Cotton and woollen fabrics, carpets, shawls, and felt goods are largely produced; and the trade is carried on between the chief towns of Persia with the interior of Asia by caravans. They exchange these goods for cloth, printed calico, tea, coffee, and fancy goods. Teheran in the north is the capital and the most important place; Ispahan is in the centre, Shiraz in the south, and Bushire is the principal seaport on the gulf.

"The government is an absolute monarchy of the most pronounced kind, though somewhat influenced by the priests, the dread of private vengeance, and insurrection. Taxation is heavy, and very burdensome to the subjects. Persia has a standing army of 200,000, but it is said to exist largely on paper. Incidentally you have learned considerable about the history of the country, and I shall not go over it. The present shah, as he is called, is Nâsr ed-dîn, born in 1831. He ought to be a progressive monarch, for he has visited England and France several times."

The professor retired, and the conference adjourned till afternoon.

CHAPTER XXIX

VIEW OF MOUNT SINAI IN THE DISTANCE

When the professor concluded his lecture for the forenoon, the audience scattered, some of them feeling the need of more exercise; but Captain Ringgold went to the pilot-house. Like the cabin passengers, he immediately gave his attention to the mountains of the peninsula; for the African shore was little better than a blank, with nothing there worthy of notice. The pilot was an intelligent man, and he proceeded to question him in regard to the peaks in sight.

Just then there was nothing difficult in the navigation; and Twist, the quartermaster, was at the wheel, steering the course which had been given out, south south-west half west. The pilot knew the mountains as though they had been old friends of his for a lifetime. It did not take the commander long to learn his lesson; and he returned to the deck, where the passengers were gazing at the lofty points, thirty to forty miles distant, but still very distinctly seen in the clear air of the day. As soon as the captain appeared they gathered around him. He had ordered all the spy-glasses on board to be brought out, and those who had opera or field glasses had been to their staterooms for them.

"Isn't it time to see something, Captain Ringgold?" asked Mrs. Belgrave, to whom he had directed his steps.

"There is always something to be seen in a narrow gulf like this, though we shall be out of sight of land to-morrow morning when you come on deck. We are now abreast of a plateau 1,600 feet high, which extends for about thirty miles along the coast. It is a part of the desert of Kaa, which extends to the southern point of the peninsula, over which you would have had to travel first by camel for nearly twenty miles, if we had gone to Mount Sinai by the only route open to us.

"We have seen about deserts enough," added the lady.

"Then you are the better prepared for the immense contrast between plains of sand and the rich lands of India, covered with the most luxuriant foliage. Now we have it at its best!" exclaimed the commander.

"What do we have? I don't see anything."

"We have Mount Serbal, which some believe is the genuine Mount Sinai," continued the commander, as he pointed out the loftiest peak in sight, and which was readily distinguished from all others.

All the passengers had by this time gathered near him; for all of them were anticipating a sight at the lofty height which had given a name to the peninsula, though its real name is Arabia Petræa, as we used to read about it in "Stephens's Travels" sixty years ago.

"That mountain is the highest on the peninsula; and if it is not the real Mount Sinai, where the law was delivered to Moses, some insist that it ought to be, for they say it is loftier, grander, nobler, and more worthy the great event than the one which is generally assigned as its location," said the captain. "As you have been informed before, Serbal is 8,712 feet high."

Mrs. Blossom did not appear to be satisfied. Evidently she desired to "gush" over the Holy Mountain; but the doubt as to "which was which," as she stated it, bothered her very seriously, and she was not at all friendly to the "pesky Bible critics," who had raised the doubt as to its identity.

"Jebel Musa!" shouted the commander a couple of hours later; and the party gathered around him again.

"What on earth is that?" demanded the good lady.

"Keep cool, Sarah," said Mrs. Belgrave to her. "The captain will tell you all about it in due time."

"Jebel, or gebel, means a mountain in Arabic; Musa is sometimes spelled Moosa; and the whole name, I suppose, is 'Mountain of Moses,'" the commander explained as soon as he had enabled every one to see the peak that went by this name. "In other words, that is what nearly everybody who knows anything about the matter believes to be the true Mount Sinai."

"Mount Sinai!" almost screamed Mrs. Blossom, who had apparently determined not to be harassed by any more doubts, for what everybody believed to be true must be so. "I should like to die on that mountain," she declared, wringing her hands in a sort of rapture.

"Don't make yourself ridiculous, Sarah," interposed Mrs. Belgrave in a whisper.

"How can a body look on Mount Sinai without being stirred up?" demanded the

good woman.

But whether it was Jebel Serbal or Jebel Musa, Mount Sinai was there; and doubtless most of the company were as much impressed by the fact as the excellent lady from Von Blonk Park, though they were less demonstrative about it. Mrs. Belgrave was silent for a time; and then she struck up one of Watts's familiar hymns, in which the others joined her:—

"Not to the terrors of the Lord,
   The tempest, fire, and smoke,
Not to the thunder of that word
   Which God on Sinai spoke;
But we are come to Zion's hill,
   The city of our God,
Where milder words declare his will,
   And spread his love abroad."

As the gong sounded for lunch the ship was off Tur, but too far off to see the place, if there was anything there to see; and the commander mentioned it only as the port to which they would have sailed if they had gone to Mount Sinai. The "Big Four" were more interested in the Arabian craft they saw near the shore, for they always keep close to the land. Their captains are familiar with all the intricate reefs where large vessels never go. They are very cautious sailors, and on the least sign of foul weather they run into one of the creeks which indent the coast. They never sail at night; and if they have to cross the sea, they wait for settled weather.

At the hour appointed for the afternoon conference the passengers were all in their places; and however the report of his lectures may read, the listeners were deeply interested, partly because they were inspired by a desire for knowledge, and partly on account of their proximity to the countries described. A map of the peninsula of Arabia had been unrolled on the frame, with enough of its surroundings to enable the audience to fix its location definitely in their minds. The professor came up smiling and pleasant as he always was, and the boys saluted him with a round of applause.

"My subject this time is Arabia, which the natives call Jezirat-al-Arab, and the Turks and Persians Arabistan. It is a peninsula, the isthmus of which reaches across from the south-eastern corner of the Mediterranean to the head of the Persian Gulf," the professor began, indicating on the map the localities mentioned with the pointer. "Asia abounds in peninsulas, and Arabia is the great south-western one. From north-west to south-east it extends 1800 miles, and is about 600 wide. It has an area of 1,230,000 square miles, which is a very indefinite statement to the mind, though given in figures, and I will adopt the commander's method of giving a better idea by comparison with some of the States of your own country.

"It is nearly five times as large as the State of Texas, the most extensive of the Union, and almost twenty-six times as large as the State of New York. They do not take a census here; and estimates from the best information that could be obtained make the population five millions, which is less than that of the State of New York. Mr. Gaskette has colored a strip of it along the Red Sea, about a hundred miles wide, in green, as he has Palestine and the other parts of Turkey in Asia shown before you. A large portion of Arabia consists of deserts, the principal of which is the Syrian in the north.

"Ptolemy, not the king but the geographer, divided Arabia into three sections,—Arabia Petræa, after the city of Petra; Arabia Deserta, the interior; and Arabia Felix (Arabie Heureuse in French), which does not mean 'the happy land,' as generally translated. Milton says, 'Sabean odors from the spicy shores of Araby the blest.' The words meant the land lying to the right, or south of Mecca, the Oriental principal point of the compass being the east and not the north.

"The proper divisions at the present time are the Sinai peninsula, Hedjaz, which is the northern part of the green strip; Yemen, the south part (formerly Arabia Felix); Hadramaut, which borders the Arabian Gulf, the ante-sea of the Red; and Oman, a mountainous region at the entrance of the Persian Gulf, an independent country, under the government of the sultan or imam of Muscat, as the territory is also called.

"We do not know much about the interior of Arabia, one-third of which is a desert, part of a zone reaching over all of Africa and Asia. El-Hasa, along the Persian Gulf in the east, for such a country, is level and fertile, and is really a Turkish province, like those on the west coast. A short rainy season occurs on the west coast, which only fills up the low places; and there is hardly a river, if there is anything entitled to the name, which is strong enough to go alone to the sea from any distance inland. Fine fruits are raised, especially in Yemen, as well as coffee, grain, tobacco, cotton, spices, aloes, frankincense, and myrrh.

"Sheep, goats, oxen, camels, and horses are raised for domestic use. Gazelles and ostriches live in some of the oases, where also the lion, panther, hyena, and jackal seek their prey. The magnificent Arabian horse has been raised here for a thousand years. The camel is one of the most useful animals of this country; and some suppose he is an original native, for his likeness is not found among Egyptian drawings and sculptures. There are plenty of fish and turtle along the coast.

"The original Arab is found here, and there is something about him to challenge our admiration. He is muscular, though of medium height, and is sharp and quick-witted by nature. He has some leading virtues, such as hospitality and good faith; he is courageous and temperate, perhaps because wine and spirits are forbidden in the Koran. But he is a sort of a natural robber, and seeks a terrible revenge for serious injuries. His wife, and there are often several of her, does the work, keeps house, and educates the children. Some Arabs are settled in towns or oases, and others lead a wandering life.

"'Blessed is the country that has no history,' for it is usually the record of wars. Arabia has nothing that can properly be called history; but it has been concerned in the wars of Turkey and Egypt. What there is relates to the birth and life of Mohammed, and his wars to promote the increase of his followers; and I shall tell you the story of the Prophet at another time."

The professor retired after the usual applause. Some walked the deck, watching whatever was to be seen, especially the Arabian dhows, and occasionally a large steamer passed; and some went to sleep in their staterooms. The course of the Guardian-Mother had been varied as much as the soundings would permit as she approached the Jubal Strait, which is the entrance to the Gulf of Suez, in order to give the passengers a view of some interesting scenery.

"There is the Jebel Zeyt," said the commander, as he pointed out a group of hills, called mountains by courtesy, of a reddish hue. "Those hills are 1,530 feet high, and this locality is famous in story. The material of the elevations is hæmatite, which Dr. Hawkes can explain better than I can."

"It is a native sesquioxide of a reddish color, with a blood-like streak," added the surgeon, laughing.

"Do you understand it, Mrs. Blossom?" asked the captain, turning to that worthy lady.

"I am sure I don't," protested she, blushing.

"The sesquipedality of that word is trying to all of us, I fancy, and I am in the same box as the lady; for I am as sure as she is that I don't know the meaning of the word," added the professor.

"Of course you don't, for it is a technical term," replied the doctor. "It means an oxide in which two atoms of a metal combine with three atoms of oxygen.

Please to remember it, Mrs. Blossom."

"I don't even know what an ox-hide is," returned the lady promptly; for the professor had vindicated her by not understanding a definition himself.

"We will settle that another time, if you please," interposed the commander. "These rocks are said to be so powerfully magnetic as to affect the compasses of ships passing them. The water is sometimes marked about here with patches of oil. Large sums were expended in this vicinity in boring for petroleum; but none of any account was found. Probably the red mountain has given its name to the sea, though that is not known."

"Possibly Sinbad the Sailor was in this strait when the loadstone drew out the bolts in his ship, though he does not give the latitude and longitude of the place in the story of his adventure," suggested Louis. In the evening the passengers looked at the lights, and retired at a seasonable hour.

CHAPTER XXX

SOME ACCOUNT OF MOHAMMED THE PROPHET

The passengers of the Guardian-Mother fell back into their former sea habits when there was nothing particular to be seen, and only the young men appeared on deck before seven o'clock. Mrs. Belgrave and Louis were the first to meet the commander on the second morning. He had been to the pilot-house several times during the night; but he was an early riser, and had already looked over the log slate, and visited every part of the ship.

"Good-morning, Mrs. Belgrave; good-morning, Louis; I hope you have both slept well," said the captain, saluting them.

"I have slept like a rock all night long," replied the lady.

"I have fallen into sailors' ways, so that I go to sleep whenever I lie down," added Louis. "I could sleep my four hours on board of the Maud, and wake at the right time without being called. But where are we now, sir?"

"You see the lighthouse ahead; that is in latitude 25°. We are now nearly as far south as the first cataract on the Nile, as far south as we went in Africa."

"I can understand that better than simple figures," said Mrs. Belgrave.

"But we went a little farther south than that off Cuba," suggested Louis.

"We shall cross the Tropic of Cancer while we are at luncheon," added the commander. "You learned at school that this boundary was at twenty-three and a half degrees north of the equator, and it is generally so stated, though it is not quite accurate."

"I wish you would explain this at the next conference, Captain Ringgold, for what you say is a surprise to me," said Louis.

"I will do it in a general way, though I am not an astronomer in the scientific sense of the word," answered the captain. "We are approaching the Dædalus lightship. I suppose you remember the name."

"I know that Dædalus was a very ingenious artist of Athens, who planned the Cretan labyrinth, invented carpentry and some of the tools used in the trade; but I don't know why his name was given to this lighthouse."

"I cannot inform you why it is so called, if there was any reason for doing so; very likely it was given to it for no reason at all, as some of the ships in the British navy are supplied with classical names for the mere sound of the words, as Agamemnon, Achilles, though with some reference to the trade of the originals in war."

"Why is it placed here all alone in the middle of this sea?" asked Louis, who had looked about it for any signs of rocks.

"It is built on a dangerous reef which is never above water, though some small round black rocks are seen at low tide awash. They look like the kettles in which cooks get up a boiled dinner; and for this reason the Arabs call the reef Abu Kizan, which means the 'father of pots.' As you perceive, the ship is now out of sight of land; for the Red Sea is a hundred and twenty miles wide at this point. But there is the gong for breakfast, and we must attend to that."

The usual hour for the conference was nine o'clock when the ship was at sea. So far the weather was remarkably pleasant; the north-west wind was very gentle, and the ship hardly pitched at all. At the regular hour the passengers had assembled on the promenade. The map of Arabia had been placed on the frame as before, and it was understood that Mohammed was to be the subject of the conference.

"What has become of Koser, Captain Ringgold?" asked Mrs. Belgrave, as the commander joined the party.

"We passed it about two o'clock this morning," replied the captain.

"I felt some interest in that town; for when we were on the Nile we came to a place where the Arabs wanted us to take the journey of four days across the desert to Koser on camels," the lady explained.

"It is the first port in Egypt we come to, and was formerly an important place, though the Suez Canal has diverted the greater part of its trade. It was one of the chief outlets for the productions of Egypt, especially grain, while those of Arabia and other Eastern countries passed in by the same route. The poorer Mohammedans of Egypt make their pilgrimage to Mecca this way, journeying

across the Arabian Desert on foot or by camel, and by steamers or dhows to Yembo.

"General Sir Ralph Abercromby, who commanded the British army at Abukir when the French had possession of Egypt, landed at this port, marched across the desert to the Nile, which he descended to Cairo, where he found that the French army had surrendered to the English. The population has fallen from seven thousand to twelve hundred. The more wealthy Egyptians and Arabs make their pilgrimage now by the way of Suez, and in the season there are plenty of steamers to take them to Yembo.

"We are now nearing the Tropic of Cancer, and when we have passed it we shall be in the Torrid Zone, in which are situated all those places on the globe where the sun is ever directly overhead. The tropics are generally said to be twenty-three and a half degrees from the equator, which is near enough for ordinary purposes, but it is not quite accurate. When the sun is at the summer solstice, June 21, it is overhead on this tropic, and enters the constellation of Cancer, after which it is named. Nicer calculations than I can follow show that the sun is not precisely overhead at this place every year. In January of this year the tropics were in latitude 23° 27' 11.84", which places it nearly three miles farther south than the location usually named. I yield the floor to Professor Giroud."

"I am informed by the commander that we shall be off Yembo, the nearest seaport to Medina, at about half-past three this afternoon; and this place is a hundred and thirty-two miles from it. The two cities of Medina and Mecca are the holy places of the Mohammedans. The principal and enjoined pilgrimage of the sect is to the latter, though many devout Moslems visit the other with pious intentions.

"Mecca is the birthplace of Mohammed; but, for reasons which will presently be given, he went to Medina at the age of fifty-two, where he lived the rest of his life, and died there. What I have to say of Medina will come in better after we have followed the prophet through the first portion of his life.

"I give the name according to the best English authorities at the present time, though some call it Mahomet still, as we call it in French. The word means 'praised' in Arabic. Mohammed the Prophet was born at Mecca about A.D. 570; but the precise year is not known, though the date I give is within a year of it. His father's name was Abdallah, a poor merchant, who died about the time of the child's birth. A great many stories have been invented in later years about the

mother and the child.

"The father was said to be the handsomest man of his time, and it is claimed that his wife Aminah was of a noble family. She was of a nervous temperament, and fancied she was visited by spirits. She was inclined to epilepsy, which may explain her visions. Mohammed was her only child. As soon as he was born, his mother is said to have raised her eyes to heaven, exclaiming: 'There is no God but God, and I am his Prophet.' It is also declared that the fire of the fire-worshippers, which had burned without going out for a thousand-years, was suddenly quenched, and all the idols in the world dropped from their pedestals."

"Goodness, gracious!" exclaimed Mrs. Blossom.

"The mother of the Prophet handed him over to a Bedouin woman to bring up, in order that he might have the benefit of the desert air; but the child appears to have been afflicted with his mother's malady, and the nurse returned him because he was subject to frequent fits. When he was six years old his mother died, and his grandfather adopted him; but the old man lived only two years after, and then he was taken by Abu Talib, his uncle, who, though poor himself, gave him a home, and continued to be his best friend through life.

"At first the boy gained a precarious living by tending the flocks of the Meccans. When he was twenty-five years old he went into the service of a rich widow named Khadija, having the blood of the same ancestors in their veins. Up to this time his position had been in a low grade of poverty. He did not take the advice of Mr. Weller, and 'beware of the vidders,' and his fortunes suddenly changed. Doubtless he was a handsome man, as his father was said to be; and he was too much for the susceptible Khadija, twice widowed, and fifteen years older than her employe, and she offered him her hand and heart, which he accepted.

"They had two sons and four daughters; but both of the former died in early life. He established himself as a merchant after his marriage; and he continued in the business, though he spent most of his time in meditation by himself. Up to the age of forty Mohammed was a strict devotee in the religion of his fathers, which was a species of idolatry. When he was about thirty years old Christianity had made its way into Arabia through Syria on one side, and Abyssinia on the other, and there were Jewish colonies in the peninsula. Though the missionaries of the new faith pervaded Mecca and Medina, the future Prophet was not converted, more is the pity!

"It was at this time that he was moved to teach a new religion which should

displace the idolatry of the people, and come into competition, as it were, with the teachings of the missionaries of Judaism and Christianity. He was forty years old when he received what he claimed as his first divine communication, on a mountain near Mecca. He declared that Gabriel appeared to him there, and commanded him to preach the true religion. It is now generally admitted that he was no vulgar and tricky impostor, and it cannot be known to what extent his inherited epilepsy or hysteria governed the alleged revelations.

"After his long and lonely vigils passed in meditation, he proclaimed what he insisted had been revealed to him; and at these times he appears to have been little better than a lunatic, for he was moved to the most frightful fanatical vehemence. He frothed at the mouth, his eyes became red, and the perspiration rained from his head and face. He roared like a camel in his wrath, and such an exhibition could hardly fail to make a strong impression upon his ignorant audience.

"His first revelations were related to Khadija and other members of his household; and they accepted his teachings, while his other relatives rejected them with scorn. His uncle called him a fool; and his adopted father never believed in him as a prophet, though for the honor of the family he remained his friend. After four years of preaching he mustered forty converts, slaves and men of the lowest social rank. Then he spoke more publicly, in response to new revelations commanding him to do so, denouncing boldly the superstitions of his people, exhorting them to lead pious and moral lives, and to believe in the one all-wise, almighty, and all-merciful God, who had chosen him as his Prophet. He held out the reward of paradise to those who accepted his religion, and the penalty of hell to those who rejected it.

"Two of the most sacred objects of the Arabians were the fetich of a black stone and the spring of Zemzem, both of which were believed to be endowed with miraculous powers for the healing of the body and the soul. These imparted a sanctity above any other charms to the Kaaba in which the stone and the fountain were to be visited. In the valley by the city stands the great mosque, in which there is an immense square holding 35,000 people. In the centre of it is the Kaaba, which is not a Mohammedan invention, for it existed ages before the Prophet was born. Pilgrimages had been made to it from Medina for many generations. The stone is perhaps a meteorite, set in a corner at a proper height for kissing.

"The Kaaba was one of the superstitions with which the Prophet had to contend;

and he was too politic, as well as too deeply rooted in his own belief, to think of abolishing it. He therefore converted the heathen shrine into an altar of his own faith, inventing the legend that it had been constructed by Abraham when he sent away his son Ishmael to found a nation. Though Mohammed was prudent in many things, he offended the people, particularly by prohibiting certain kinds of food. He condemned the Bedouin for killing their newly born daughters, and for other barbarous practices.

"Though the number of proselytes increased more rapidly, he had raised a fierce opposition against him. About this time his faithful wife Khadija died, and then his devoted uncle. His misery over these events was increased by the fact that his business failed him, and he was reduced to poverty. He tried to improve his fortunes by emigration; but the scheme was a failure. He was so persecuted by the Meccans that he had on occasions narrowly escaped with his life. After his return he married again; and afterwards he had as many as nine wives at one time, though he never took a second while Khadija was living.

"Now, good friends, I think we all need a rest, which the commander instructed me to give you at a convenient place in my remarks."

The professor retired from the rostrum, and the company scattered over the ship.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF ISLAMISM

Captain Ringgold permitted the day, which was only the second of the voyage, to pass away until half past three o'clock in the afternoon without again calling the conference together. The passengers appeared to be well occupied; for the boys had brought shuffle-board and the potato game on the planks, and everybody was enjoying these plays, either by taking part or looking on. The commander had taught them these amusements early in their sea experience, and they always became very hilarious over them.

Besides, he was prudent and judicious in the conduct of the study department; for the adults were not in training as students, and he was somewhat afraid of overworking them, and creating a dislike for the conferences. As he expressed it, he desired to make them hungry for lectures. The schoolroom, which had been made of the after cabin, and contained the extensive library of the ship, had been deserted for several weeks so far as its regular use was concerned.

Miss Blanche, Louis, Morris, and Scott formed a class, or rather several of them, and pursued their studies systematically under the professor; but they had been interrupted by the visit to Egypt and the trip to Cyprus, and their work was not resumed till the ship sailed from Suez. The recitations and the study were not confined to the classroom, but some of them were given on deck and in the cabin to individuals as the convenience of both permitted; and some of the hours of the first two days had been used in this manner.

"Now you can see Yembo," said the commander at half-past three in the afternoon, as he pointed out a town on the shore of Arabia. "The name is spelled in so many different ways it is hard to find it in the books. Sometimes it is Yembo, Yanba, and Yembu, and again it is Zembo, Zambu, and Zanba. It is Yembo on my charts, and for that reason I use it. It is of not much importance except as the port of Medina, the later home of Mohammed, where the professor will take you at the next conference this afternoon.

"But it is one hundred and thirty miles from its principal, and there are no railroads or stages here, and it must be a journey of four or five days by camel

over the desert. A pilgrimage to Medina is recommended to the faithful; but it is not required, as it is at least once in a lifetime to Mecca. Mohammed was buried there, and it stands next to Mecca as the holiest city of the world to the followers of Islam. But I will not purloin the professor's thunder. On the other side of the Red Sea is Berenice, the seat of the Egyptian trade with India in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus; but there is not much besides ruins there at the present time."

The conference met at four o'clock, and the map of Arabia still hung on the frame. The professor took his place, and pointed out Yembo on it, adding that Medina was two hundred and seventy miles north of Mecca.

"When I suspended my remarks this morning, Mohammed had failed to improve his fortunes by emigration, had returned to Mecca, and had married again," the professor began. "At his death he left nine wives, and how many more he may have had I am not informed."

"The wretch!" exclaimed Mrs. Blossom.

"The Prophet did not live in Von Blonk Park," suggested the instructor.

"If he had, he would have been driven out of town by a mob," added the lady rather spitefully for her.

"On this subject, if I should refer you to some of the patriarchs of the Bible, you would be able to see how much Christianity has improved the world in this respect. Among the wives of the Prophet was Ayeshah, the daughter of Abu Bekr, one of Mohammed's most enthusiastic disciples, a man of great influence in Mecca, belonging to the Koreish tribe, the religious aristocracy of the city.

"Everything except matrimony, though he had not married all these wives at this time, was in a bad way with Mohammed; for he had lost his property, and had excited a violent opposition to himself among the people, though some of his proselytes remained faithful to him. The pilgrimages to the Kaaba brought many people to Mecca from all quarters, including Medina. Among those from the latter he succeeded in converting several; for he still preached, and still had remarkable visions.

"At the next pilgrimage he obtained twelve more converts, and the one following seventy. All these new disciples sowed the seed of his teachings; and Medina, from which all of them came, appeared to contain the richest soil for the growth

of his doctrines. Cast out and persecuted in his own city, the Prophet decided to emigrate to Medina; for he was in close alliance with the converts from that place. In 622 he started on his flight from the city of his birth. This was the Hegira, which means 'the going away;' and from it the Mohammedans reckon their dates, as we do from the birth of Christ.

"The Prophet was attended by Abu Bekr, and followed by about a hundred families of his Meccan adherents; and his going away was not without danger, for his enemies were many and vindictive. But with his multitude he made his way over the desert, and reached his destination in safety. He was received for all he claimed to be by his converts there, and the current of his fortunes as a religious leader was suddenly and entirely changed. He was no longer a madman and an impostor. He had come out of his former obscurity, and now all the details of his daily life became matters of record.

"His modesty did not seem to stand in his way; and he now assumed the functions of the most powerful judge, lawgiver, and ruler of the two most influential Arabic tribes. He devoted his time and study to the organization of the worship of God according to Mohammed, his sole prophet. He was gathering in converts all the time, and his new home was entirely favorable to this work.

"There were many Jews there to whom he turned his attention, preaching to them, and proclaiming that he was the Messiah whose coming they awaited; but they ridiculed his pretensions, and he became furious against them, remaining their enemy till the last day of his life. Whatever good precepts Mohammed promulgated, there appears to have been but little of the 'meek and lowly' spirit of Him 'who spake as never man spake;' for in the first year of the Hegira he gave it out that it was the will of God, expressed by his chosen prophet, that the faithful should make war on the enemies of Islam; which was a sort of manifesto directed against the Meccans who had practically cast him out.

"But he had not the means to carry on war at his command at first in the open field: he assailed the caravans through his agents on their way to and from Syria, and succeeded in seriously disturbing the current of trade. His employment of the sons of the desert enabled him to form alliances with them, and thus obtain the semblance of an army. His first battle was fought between 314 Moslems and about 600 Meccans, and the inspiration of his fanaticism gave him the victory in spite of his inferior force.

"This event gave him a degree of prestige, and many adventurers flocked to his

standard. With an increased force he continued to send out expeditions against both of his old enemies, the Meccans and the Jews, exiling the latter. He was generally successful; and after one battle he caused 700 prisoners to be beheaded, and their women and children to be sold into slavery. But in 625 the Meccans defeated him; and he was dangerously wounded in the face by a javelin, some of his teeth having been knocked out. The enemy then besieged Medina; but Mohammed defeated them with the aid of earthworks and a ditch. In the sixth year of the Hegira, he proclaimed a pilgrimage to Mecca; and though the Meccans prevented it from being carried out, it led to a treaty of peace with them for ten years.

"This event enabled him to send out missionaries all over Arabia; and the next year he conducted a pilgrimage to Mecca with 2,000 followers, remaining there undisturbed for three days. After this he carried on war vigorously against more potent powers, whose rulers he summoned to become converts. Some yielded, and others scorned him, one of them beheading the Prophet's messengers. This brought on battles of greater magnitude, and in one he was badly beaten.

"He accused the Meccans of taking part against him, and marched against their city at the head of 10,000 men. It surrendered, and Mohammed was publicly recognized as ruler, and prophet of God. I will read one of his sayings, that you may better understand the man and his religion: 'The sword is the key of heaven and hell: a drop of blood shed in the cause of God, or a night spent in arms, is of more avail than two months of fasting and prayer. Whoever falls in battle, his sins are forgiven him, and at the day of judgment the loss of his limbs shall be supplied by the wings of cherubim.'

"In one of his expeditions against the Jews, a Jewess who had lost a relative in a fight against him placed a piece of poisoned roast meat before him. He barely tasted it, but he carried the effects of the poison to his grave.

"His religion seemed to be firmly established, not only in Arabia, but it had been carried to foreign lands by the sword or by missionaries. He had it in his mind to conquer Syria; but the want of a sufficient army deterred him, and he was forced to content himself with the homage of a few inferior princes. In the tenth year of the new calendar he made his last solemn pilgrimage to Mecca, and then fixed for all future time the ordinance of the pilgrimage with its ceremonial, which is still observed in all Moslem countries.

"On his return from this visit he busied himself again with the project of

conquering Syria; for some great scheme seemed to be necessary to keep his followers in alliance, and extend his religion. While so engaged he was taken dangerously sick. He selected the abode of Ayeshah as his home. The house was close to the mosque, and afterwards became a part of it. He continued to attend the public prayers as long as he was able. When he felt that his end was near, he preached once more to the people, recommending Abu Bekr and Osama as the generals of the army whom he had chosen. In the last wanderings of his mind he spoke of angels and heaven only, and died in the arms of Ayeshah. He was buried in the night in the house of his faithful wife, which was for that reason taken into the mosque.

"His death produced great distress and an immense excitement among his followers. Even before he was dead the struggle began, and an influential official had prevented him from naming his successor by preventing him from obtaining the use of writing materials; but Abu Bekr was preferred, and received the homage of the chief men of Medina. Undoubtedly Mohammed was a man of great ability, and the possessor of some extraordinary gifts. There was much that was good in the person and his religion; much that Christianity preaches as the true faith to-day. He believed in the one God, however much he failed to comprehend his attributes.

"He claimed to be the Prophet of God, and preached piety and righteousness, and recommended chiefly that his followers should protect the weak, the poor, and the women, and to abstain from usury. In his private character he was an amiable man, faithful to his friends, and tender in his family. In spite of the power he finally obtained, he never appeared in any state, with pomp and parade; for he lived in the utmost simplicity, and when at the height of his power he dwelt like the Arabs in general in a miserable hut. He mended his own clothes, and freed his slaves when he had them.

"He was a man of strong passions, of a nervous temperament, and his ecstatic visions were perhaps the result of his inherited malady. He is not to be judged by our standard any more than King Solomon is; but there was a great deal of good in him, with a vast deal that was emphatically bad; for he was cunning and deceitful when it suited his purpose, extremely revengeful, as shown in his dealings with the Meccans and the Jews, and a wholesale murderer in the spirit of retaliation.

"He had read the Christian Bible, and not a little of his religion was borrowed from that. Glancing over the world, we cannot help seeing that Christian nations

have been the most progressive, while those of the Mohammedan faith have been far behind them, and have borrowed their principal improvements from those whose emblem is the Cross. To the end of time the Crescent will be overshadowed by the Cross."

The passengers had been much interested in the story of the Prophet, and the professor was warmly applauded as he gathered up his papers and retired from the stand.

"Unless we slow down I am afraid you will see nothing of Jiddah, which is the port of Mecca, and our nearest point to it," said the commander. "Though thousands of pilgrims are landed there every year on their way to obey the injunction of Mohammed, there is nothing there to see; and it is not a case of sour grapes."

"I wanted to ask the professor about the coffin of the Prophet being suspended in the air," interposed Mrs. Belgrave.

"That is pure fiction, madam," replied the professor. "The body of Mohammed is believed to rest within the mausoleum in the mosque; and there is no reason to doubt that it is on the spot occupied by Ayeshah's house, added to the sacred building. His body is supposed to lie undecayed at full length, on the right side, the right hand supporting the head, with the face directed towards Mecca."

The professor had to answer many other questions of no great importance.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE AGENT OF THE PARSEE MERCHANTS

The ancient kingdoms of the world had been disposed of by the professor, and all the countries of the Red Sea had been treated historically and geographically; and though the passengers still occupied the promenade, no more conferences were needed for the present. But it became a place for conversation, and all kinds of subjects were discussed there.

The commander pointed out the location of all the important places, or where any notable event had occurred; but none of them were of any great consequence, and they were too far off to be seen distinctly. The ship had reached the widest part of the sea, and all the rest of the course to the entrance was through the deep water in the middle; for the shores were studded with reefs, reaching out from forty to sixty miles from the land.

"How deep is the water here, Captain Ringgold?" asked Dr. Hawkes, at one of these conversation parties on the third day from Suez.

"The last time I looked at the chart, just on the parallel of 20° of north latitude, the sounding was 500 fathoms," replied the commander.

"Indeed? That is 3,000 feet; I did not suppose it was so deep as that," added the doctor.

"The bottom is very irregular in all parts of the Red Sea; and in some places it is more than double the figure just mentioned. When we were about sixty miles north of Jiddah, the sounding was 1,054 fathoms, or 6,234 feet."

"How deep has the water been found to be in the ocean?"

"As much as 4,000 fathoms of line have been paid out, with no bottom as the result. Soundings of 3,000 fathoms have been obtained. In the library you will find the 'Cruise of the Challenger,' which is the latest authority on this subject."

"I shall refer to it; thank you, Captain."

"On a little rocky island on our right," continued the commander, pointing to the

location, "is the town of Suakin, as it is generally called, though the proper word is Sawakin. It is a town of ten thousand inhabitants. It is abreast of Nubia, the Soudan, and is the outlet of its commerce. When the Mahdi War became a serious matter, England took possession of this port; and several battles were fought in the vicinity with the followers of the Mahdi, who seemed to imitate the example of Mohammed to some extent in his crusade. The place is still held by a British garrison, and about seven thousand pilgrims embark here every year for Mecca by the way of Jiddah."

"We all remember the war in the Soudan in which the Mahdi figured so largely," said Uncle Moses. "I should like to know something more about him."

"The meaning of the word is the guide, 'the well-directed one.' There have been at least half a dozen Mahdis in the history of Mohammedans, just as there have been Messiahs in Christian lands, all of them impostors of course. One appeared in Arabia, who claimed to be a successor of Mohammed who had disappeared; another presented himself in the northern part of Africa. One appeared in Egypt during the French invasion, and was killed in battle.

"The last one was Mohammed Ahmed; and like the rest of them he claimed to be a lineal descendant of the Prophet, divinely commissioned to extend his religion, and especially to drive the Christians out of the Soudan. He was in his earlier life an employe of the Egyptian government, but quarrelled with the governor of his province, and became a trader and a slave-dealer. At the age of forty he assumed the *rôle* of the Mahdi; and in that capacity he did a great deal of mischief. He captured the chief city of Kordofan, and made it the capital; he overwhelmed the army of Hicks Pacha, and finally shut up General Gordon in Khartoom, as has been related before. He died in 1885, and was succeeded by Abdallah. But he had deprived Egypt of even the nominal possession of the Soudan."

"He was a terrible fighter," added Uncle Moses.

"Fanatics usually are."

The voyage continued without any unusual incident till the ship was approaching the entrance to the sea. The shores on both sides became more precipitous, and heights of two thousand feet were to be seen. The commander pointed out Mocha, which has the reputation of sending out the finest coffee in the world; but this is said to come from Hodeida, a port north of it.

"Those hills on the left indicate the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, which was written

Babelmandel in the old geographies when I went to school. Bab means a gate wherever you find it; and this is the 'Gate of Tears,' so called from the perils it presented to the small craft of the Arabians; and many of them were wrecked here," said the commander when the party were gathered on the promenade as usual if anything was to be seen. "We are now in latitude 12° 30', and I notice that some of the ladies are becoming tolerably diligent in the use of their fans."

"It is time for us to begin to reduce our clothing," suggested Mrs. Belgrave.

"Be prudent about that, ladies; for I think we shall have some cool weather again when we get out from the land, though it has been growing warmer since yesterday," added the doctor.

"There is a strong current here, and some of the water comes up from the region of the equator; and, as you have been informed before, the temperature of it runs up to a hundred degrees," said the captain. "Here is the Island of Perim, a barren rock, three miles and a half long by two and a half wide, shaped like a crescent, with a good harbor between the two horns. The English took possession of it and held it for a year in 1799, and again occupied it in 1857, and later it was made into a coaling-station.

"As you perceive, it is fortified, and it has a British garrison. It has hardly any other population than coolie coal-heavers. It is a desolate-looking place, and there does not appear to be even a blade of grass growing upon it."

"Is it still Egypt on the other side of the strait?" asked Mrs. Belgrave.

"No; it is Abyssinia," replied the captain. "It is a country containing 200,000 square miles, nearly three-fourths of the size of Texas. It consists of tableland about 7,000 feet high, and there are peaks within its borders 15,000 feet high. It has a lake sixty miles long, and you have been told something about its rivers in connection with the sources of the Nile. It is rich in minerals, but the mines are hardly worked at all.

"There has been the usual amount of quarrelling as in former times among the chiefs of the various tribes in Abyssinia; but finally an adventurer named Kassa, after defeating various chiefs, caused himself to be crowned as King Theodore. He tried to form an active alliance with England and France; but no notice was taken of his propositions. He was so enraged at this neglect on the part of England, that he began to maltreat the missionaries and consuls of that country. The British sent agents to treat for the release of the prisoners; but the king shut

them up in the fortress of Magdala, though they brought a royal letter and presents.

"Of course England could not stand this, and she sent an army of 16,000 men to attend to the matter. They landed on the coast, and marched to Magdala. Theodore occupied a fort on a height with 6,000 men, and he hurled nearly the whole of his force upon a detachment of 1,700 British encamped on the plain below. The repeated attacks were repulsed every time, and the king was beaten. Then he sued for peace, and released the prisoners he held in the castle; but as he refused to surrender, the fortress was stormed and captured. Theodore was found dead where he had shot himself. The fort was demolished, and the British retired from the country. The expedition cost 45,000,000 dollars; but England always protects her citizens, wherever they are."

"Is it a Mohammedan country, like Egypt?" asked Mrs. Belgrave.

"It is not; it is nominally a Christian country, though its religion is of the very lowest type that ever was called by that name, wholly external, and morals are at a very low ebb. After the British left, a prince defeated his rival, and was crowned as Emperor John; but it is a single-horse monarchy. It has been at war with Egypt, which never got possession of the country as it desired. In 1885 Italy occupied Massowah, though for what purpose was never definitely stated. Three companies of its army were attacked by the Abyssinians, and nearly the whole of them were massacred; but the Italians did not avenge this assault."

The ship continued on her course along the coast of Yemen ninety miles to Aden, which the commander had before given out as his first stopping-place. Steam had been reduced so that the arrival should not be in the night. The passage had been made in about four days. The pilot came on board at six o'clock in the morning, and the passengers were already on the promenade. Two large steamers were at anchor in the roads, and were engaged in coaling and watering. A boat came off as soon as the ship anchored, containing an agent of the great Parsee merchants, who do most of the business of the town. He wished to see the captain, who was in his cabin.

"Good-morning, Captain," said the man, speaking very good English. "I have taken the liberty to bring off some newspapers."

"I am greatly obliged to you, for we are getting hungry for newspapers," replied Captain Ringgold as he took the package. "Excuse me for a moment and I will send them to the passengers, for I have not time to look at them now."

He tossed the bundle of papers up to Dr. Hawkes, and returned to his cabin.

"I shall be happy to take your orders for whatever you may need at this port, including coal and water, as well as provisions and other supplies," continued the agent.

The commander ordered both coal and water; for he knew about the Parsee merchants, and referred Mr. Gaskill, as he gave his name, to Mr. Melancthon Sage, the chief steward.

"What sort of goods do you furnish here, Mr. Gaskill?" asked the commander.

"Every sort, Captain Ringgold. This steamer does not belong to any regular line, I think," said the agent.

"It does not to any line, regular or irregular; and yet she is not a tramp," replied the commander with a smile.

"Is she a man-of-war?" inquired the visitor, opening wide his big eyes.

"She is not; she is a yacht, with a pleasure party on board who are making a voyage around the world."

"Ah, yes, Captain; I understand. There is another steam-yacht in the roads, over beyond the P. & O. steamer nearest to you. Perhaps you have seen her; she is painted white all over."

"I did not notice her. What flag does she carry?"

"She sails under the British flag. But you suggested that you might need other supplies. We can furnish your party with all the English goods they want, and there are first-class tailors and dressmakers here."

"My passengers must speak for themselves," answered the captain. "I fear you cannot furnish the supplies I need."

"We can furnish everything that can be named," persisted the agent of the Parsee merchants. "What do you require?"

"Two twenty-four pounders, brass, naval carriages, and all the ammunition needed for their use," replied the commander; and he felt as though he had made an impossible demand.

"We can furnish anything and everything you may desire in this line; in fact, we

can fit out your ship as a man-of-war. But do you need only two such guns as you describe, Captain Ringgold?" asked the business-driving Mr. Gaskill. "We have a lot of four of them, and we should like to dispose of them together."

"I will see the guns before I say anything more about the matter. When can you fill our water-tanks and coal-bunkers?" inquired the commander.

"We are very busy to-day, for we have several steamers to supply; but it shall be done before to-morrow noon."

"Now I will introduce you to our chief steward."

Mr. Sage insisted upon seeing his supplies before he named the quantity needed, and made an appointment on shore.

CHAPTER XXXIII

A DISAPPOINTMENT TO CAPTAIN SCOTT

Captain Ringgold knew something about Aden before he decided to make a stopping-place of it, and it was certainly a more agreeable location than Perim. The town—or towns, for there appear to be several of them—is described by a former resident as a sort of crater like that of a volcano, formed by a circular chain of steep hills, the highest of which is 1,775 feet above the sea level. The slope outside of them reaching to the waters of the Arabian Gulf, or the Gulf of Aden as it is now called, has several strings of hills in that direction, with valleys between them, radiating from the group to the shore.

Aden is a peninsula connected with Hadramaut, the southern section of Arabia, by a narrow isthmus, covered at the spring tides by the surrounding waters. Over it is a causeway conveying an aqueduct which is always above the sea level. The region looks as though it might have been subject to volcanic convulsions at some remote period. Within the circle of hills are the town and a portion of the military works. In its natural location, as well as in the strength of its defences, it bears some resemblance to Gibraltar.

This was the substance of what the commander told his passengers before they landed, and proceeded to give points in the history of the peninsula, which he had studied up, as he always did when approaching a new locality; and though he was a walking encyclopædia, he had not obtained this reputation without much study and labor in addition to his extensive voyages and travels "all over the world."

"A learned biblical scholar of the last century, who studied Oriental history in connection with the sacred record, identifies Aden as the Eden mentioned by Ezekiel in describing the wealth of Tyrus," continued the commander.

"But who was Tyrus, Captain?" asked Mrs. Blossom, who was wide awake when any scriptural name was used.

"He wasn't anybody, Mrs. Blossom; and when Ezekiel and some other of the prophets used the word Tyrus, they meant Tyre; and doubtless you have read about Tyre and Sidon."

"I never heard it called by that name before," added the worthy lady with a blush.

"Read Ezekiel xxvii. and you will find it. This place was known before the time of Christ, and was the centre of an extensive commerce with India, though it was also carried on by the Indus and the Oxus, the latter formerly flowing into the Caspian Sea. In the fourth century after Christ, the son of the Emperor Constantine established a Christian church here. In more modern history Aden has been a part of Yemen, along whose shores we sailed for more than a day on the Red Sea. The lines from Milton's 'Paradise Lost,' partly quoted before,

"'As when to them who sail
Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past
Mozambic, off at sea north-east winds blow
Sabæan odors from the spicy shore
Of Arabie the blest,'

alludes to this country. The Sabæans were the ancient people of Yemen, called Sheba in the Book of Genesis. They were a wealthy and powerful people, and it was probably the queen of this region who made a celebrated visit to King Solomon. But we cannot follow them now.

"Yemen changed hands several times, belonging to Abyssinia, Persia, and the caliphs of Arabia, and has been fought for by Portuguese, Turks, and Egyptians; but now it is a Turkish province. England had reason to demand satisfaction from the Arab authorities for injuries done to her Indian subjects. The negotiations failed, and there was evident treachery. England does her work thoroughly in such cases; and Aden was promptly bombarded, and then seized by a naval and military force in 1839. This is said to be the first territory acquired during the reign of Queen Victoria; and the nation's record is not so bad as sometimes stated.

"Aden was made a free port in 1850; and it has since had a large trade, increasing it from half a million dollars to sixteen millions. It is governed by English civil officers, and the military is in command of a brigadier-general. The troops are British and East Indian, and are of all arms of the service, including a troop of native cavalry, to which Arabs mounted on camels are attached. Now we are ready to go on shore," the commander concluded.

"How are we to go on shore, sir?" asked Scott.

"We have plenty of boats,—the barge, the first and second cutters, and the dingy," replied Captain Ringgold with a pleasant smile; for he understood what the captain of the Maud was driving at.

"Are you not going to put the little steamer into the water again, sir?" inquired the young captain. "She would be very convenient in going about this place, which is nearly surrounded by water."

"She would be indeed; but we shall probably leave Aden by to-morrow afternoon, and it would hardly pay to lower her into the water, for you know that

it requires a great deal of hard work to do so," said the commander, who was really very sorry to disoblige the young man, and he kept more than his usual smile on his face all the time.

"I think we could make the voyage very comfortably in her from here to Bombay, or wherever you are going," suggested Captain Scott.

"I do not consider a voyage of that length in such a small craft quite prudent, even if there were no other question to be considered. But it would take us at least half a day to put the Maud into the water, and as long to coal and water her, and otherwise fit her out. Then it is ordinarily a seven days' voyage from Aden to Bombay, and the Maud would get out of coal in half that time."

"But for the next five hundred miles the voyage is along the coast of Arabia."

"There are no coal stations except at Aden and Perim, so far as I know, unless you run up to Muscat, and I am not sure that there is any there," answered the captain of the ship. "I learned from Mr. Gaskill, the Parsee agent here, after I told him who and what we were, that he had heard of us before. Stories exaggerated beyond all decent limits have been told about us. Louis's million and a half have been stretched to hundreds of millions, and the Guardian-Mother has been regarded as a floating mine of wealth. I suspect that Mazagan spread such stories in Egypt, and they have travelled to this port."

"What have these stories to do with a voyage to Bombay by the Maud?" asked Scott, with something like a laugh; for he could see no connection.

"Mr. Gaskill asked me about the little steamer that was sailing with the ship; so that he had heard of her, for she came through the canal with us. I have thought of this matter before; and the little steamer would be a great temptation to the half-civilized Arabs that inhabit these shores, and they are sailors after their own fashion. I know you are not afraid of them, Captain Scott; but it would be easy enough for these pirates to fall upon you, capture the little steamer, and make an end of all on board of her."

"Where should we be while they were doing all this?" asked Scott with a smile of incredulity.

"You would be treated to some treachery at first probably; but even in a square, stand-up fight your chances against fifty or a hundred of these savages would be very small. In fact, I came to the conclusion, after your battle at Khrysoko, that

the armament of the ship was not heavy enough for possible contingencies, though the saluting-guns on the top-gallant forecastle are well enough for ordinary occasions."

"As your mind seems to be made up, Captain Ringgold, I will say no more about the matter," added Scott; and it was plain enough that he was sorely disappointed.

"I am very confident that Mrs. Belgrave and Mrs. Woolridge, since the trouble in the Cyprus bay, and after all that has been said since that event, would not permit their sons to go to sea again in the Maud; and I must say that their prudence is perfectly justifiable."

"Then we are not likely to use the Maud again?" asked Scott.

"Certainly not in these localities, though we may put her in the water at Bombay, Calcutta, and perhaps some other ports," replied the commander. "If anything should happen to you, or to any of your ship's company, I should never forgive myself."

"I don't see that she will be of any use to us hereafter," suggested the discontented young navigator.

"I advised her purchase mainly for use in the Mediterranean; and she has certainly been very useful, adding very much to the pleasure of the party."

"If you cannot use her, I should think you would sell her," added Scott. "Of whatever service she may have been, she seems to be played out, and is of no use at all now."

"You are nearer right, Captain Scott, than perhaps you suppose; and to be candid with you, I regard the Maud as very like an elephant on our hands."

"Then I hope you will sell her," replied the young man, with something like desperation in his manner. "For my part, I am entirely willing you should do so, sir."

"It is plainly impracticable to make any use of her in the next six months, except in harbor service, and we hardly need her for that," continued the commander. "I know that Louis and Morris do not wish to go to sea in her again; and I suppose Felix would prefer to be where his crony is."

"Cruising in the Maud is then decidedly a thing of the past," said Scott, with a feeble attempt to laugh.

"Then, if I should find an opportunity to sell the Maud at Aden, you will not be disappointed?" asked the captain, point-blank, looking earnestly into the face of the young sailor.

"If we are not to use her as we did before"—

"That is utterly impracticable in the waters of the Indian Ocean; for the perils I have suggested, to say nothing of typhoons and hurricanes," interposed the commander.

"Then I shall be perfectly satisfied to have her go," answered Scott.

"In the first typhoon or hurricane, and I expect to see such, we might be obliged to cut her loose, and launch her into the boiling waters to save the ship; for I find that she is too great a load to carry on our promenade deck, and we have no other place for her. We have had no storm to test the matter; if we had, she might have gone before this time. I have already spoken to Uncle Moses and Mr. Woolridge about the matter, and they not only consent, but insist, that the Maud be sold."

"I have nothing more to say, Captain Ringgold," said Scott rather stiffly.

Then he told the young man about the terrors of the mothers, the grave fears of Mr. Woolridge, who was a yachtsman, and was so confident that the little steamer would have to be cast into the sea, that Scott was somewhat mollified. He had made his reputation as a sailor, a navigator, a brave fellow, on board of her, and to lose the Maud seemed like destroying the ark which had brought him out of the floods of evil, and made a man of him.

The wise commander had evidently saved him from a life of iniquity, and the little steamer had been an effective agency in his hands in doing the work. He was absolutely clear that it was not prudent for the young navigators to sail the Maud over the Indian Ocean, and his conscience would not permit it to be done. He was afraid his decision might have a bad effect upon the young man, that it might even turn him from the paths of rectitude in which he had trodden for many months; but he trusted to himself and the co-operation of the other three members of the "Big Four" to save him from any such disaster.

The barge and the first cutter were manned at the gangway, and the party went on shore, prepared by what the commander had said to them to understand what

they were to see. Captain Ringgold was obliged to visit the Parsee merchants, while an army officer who had been presented to them showed them about the town. They found everything they could possibly desire at the shops (not stores on British territory). Louis procured the vehicles, and they all rode out to the fortifications, where they were greatly interested, especially in the water tanks, which have a capacity of nearly eight million gallons. The officer was exceedingly polite, not alone because the reputation of the wealth of the young millionaire had gone out before him, but because this is the rule with well-bred English people.

He was re-enforced by others, and the ladies had all the beaux they could manage; and Miss Blanche could have had all of them if she had not chosen to cling to Louis Belgrave. They were all invited to dinner in the cabin of the Guardian-Mother, and Mr. Sage was informed of the fact before he returned to the ship.

Before noon the Maud had been sold for four times the sum she had cost, to the Parsees, who wanted her very badly to ply between steamers and the shore in prosecuting their trade. Out of the price to be received was deducted that of the four guns and a liberal supply of ammunition of all descriptions.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE SUSPICIOUS WHITE STEAMER AT ADEN

Captain Ringgold had sold the little steamer for four times what she had cost the owners, but still for less than her value, for she was an exceptionally strong and handsome craft. On the other hand, he had purchased the naval material for "a mere song;" for it was not available for a man-of-war in modern times, and not of the kind used in the naval or military forces of England.

The commander had been a young naval officer from the beginning of the War of the Rebellion, and had attained the grade of lieutenant, so that he was a judge of the material he bought. He examined everything very critically before a price was named. The guns had been procured for a native East-Indian prince; but the ship that brought them to the shores of his country was not permitted to land them. He was deposed about the time, probably on account of the attempt to bring these guns into his domain.

The captain of the sailing-ship could not collect even his freight money, and he was forced to carry them off with him when his cargo was completed. His consignee suggested to him that the Imam, or Sultan, of Muscat would purchase his war material, and be glad to get it, and he had sailed for that port; but among the rocks at the entrance to the Persian Gulf his bark had been wrecked. The guns and ammunition were saved, for they were the captain's private venture, and he had stored them between decks.

The bottom of the bark was pounded and ground off, and the cargo in the hold was a total loss; but an English steamer had taken off the ship's company and the naval goods, and carried them to Aden. The unfortunate captain sold them for the most he could get to the Parsee merchants, who had kept them for years before they found a purchaser. They got their money back, and they were satisfied.

As soon as the commander finished his business with the merchants he hastened to join the party, who were still exploring the town. It contains about twenty thousand inhabitants, and everything was as Arabian as in the desert. He found his passengers just starting for a ride of about five miles; and, after he had been

introduced to the officers, he went with them.

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed Mrs. Blossom, as they were getting into the carriages, "what is the matter with that man?"

"Nothing is the matter with him, madam," replied an officer, laughing at the manner of the excellent woman.

"Why, I thought he had a hornets' nest on the top of his head," she added.

"He has nothing but his hair there."

"It would be just the thing for a mop."

"That is a Soumali Indian, and you will see a plenty of them," the officer explained. "In fact, you will find every sort of people here. These Soumalis are great dandies; for you see they dye their hair in red or yellow, and I suppose they think they are handsome. Probably you don't think so."

"I'm sure I don't. Why, the fellow has no clothes on but a sheet wrapped around him, and don't even cover his chest with that!"

"That's his fashion; and if you dressed him up like one of those Sepoys he would not feel easy. They have some fine horses and carriages here."

The vehicles had to stop presently when they met a caravan of camels, which had long since ceased to be a novelty to the tourists. They were driven, the officer said, by the real Bedouins of the desert, and by men of all shades of color, from jet-black to pale copper hue. The donkeys were not a strange sight; but when a couple of ostriches passed along the street, the visitors were all eyes. They were seven feet high; and they could capture a fly, if they would take such small game, off the ceiling of a room eight feet high. They were tame, and like the monkeys, gazelles, parrots, and other birds on the verandas, were kept as pets.

There were pretty little gardens along the roads; for the volcanic soil, when dug up and fertilized, makes productive land. There were plenty of rocks; but wherever there was a cleft or a seam, there was a growth of something green. Thirty or forty miles back in the country, there are green valleys and rippling streams. Abundant crops are raised within ten miles of the town, and the garrison and the people of the town are plentifully supplied with fruit and vegetables.

The officers showed the party through the fortifications, some of which strongly reminded them of Gibraltar. Our friends were greatly pleased with Aden, and especially with the attentions of the officers, who are to some extent shut out from social relations. The commander added the Parsee merchants and Mr. Gaskill to the number of invited guests, and entered warmly into the spirit of the affair. Mr. Sage had replenished his stores from the market, and he was in good condition to meet the requirements of the occasion.

After a lunch at the Hôtel de l'Europe, Captain Ringgold left the company to return on board of the ship, where the war material had already been sent. The tourists found the town very like an English city, and after Egypt and the isthmus they enjoyed the contrast. The first cutter was waiting for him, and he went to the pier.

More than once during the forenoon he had obtained a view of the white steamer anchored in the roads, and he had inquired in regard to her, but had been able to obtain no very definite information concerning her. She was a steam-yacht of about the size of the Guardian-Mother, as nearly as he could judge, painted white, and she looked like a very beautiful vessel.

Captain Ringgold had inquired in regard to her of the merchants. Had they seen the owner who was making the cruise in her? They had. He was a man thirty or thirty-two, with a fine black beard, and a lady had said he was a remarkably handsome man. His informant thought he was a foreigner, though he spoke English as fluently as the officers of the garrison. He was dressed in the latest style of European garments when he came on shore, and the Parsee had been unable to form an opinion in regard to his nationality.

The carpenter of the Guardian-Mother had constructed something like a magazine in the hold of the ship for the ammunition which had been taken on board before she sailed. It was large enough for the new supply, though some further precautions were taken for the safety of the contents. The four twenty-four pounders were placed, two forward and two aft, the former on the forecastle, and the latter in the space on deck abaft the boudoir.

The guns were mounted on naval carriages, and portholes were to be prepared on the passage to India. The two twelve-pounders were to remain on the top-gallant forecastle, where they had always been; though they had been used on the Fourth of July, and for saluting purposes only, except in the Archipelago, where they had done more serious work, and had doubtless saved Miss Blanche and Louis

from capture.

The commander sincerely hoped there would never be an occasion to make use of either the old or the new guns, for he was eminently a man of peace; but he was prepared to defend his ship, either from pirates, belligerent natives, or Captain Mazagan when he had recovered from his wound. Probably he would not have thought of such a thing as increasing his means of defence if Mazagan had not followed the ship as far as Suez.

After he had looked over the white steam-yacht which lay beyond the British steamer as well as he could, and gathered all the information in regard to her and her commander, he could not help thinking of the last threats of Mazagan. He had been assured that Ali-Noury Pacha was as vindictive as ever, and that he had long before ordered a new steamer to be built for him. Did the white steam-yacht belong to him?

Mazagan, evidently for the want of care, had irritated his wound, and gone to the hospital at Suez. He could learn nothing in regard to him there; but it was entirely impossible that he could have come to Aden, for no steamer had passed the Guardian-Mother on her passage. The white steamer had no doubt come through the canal before her.

The commander could not solve the problem. He decided to "take the bull by the horns," and settle the question before he sailed the next day. He had dressed himself in his best uniform in the morning, and he decided to pay a visit to the white steam-yacht before he slept again. It was to be a visit of ceremony; and he ordered the crew of the barge to put on their clean white uniforms, for he intended to go in state.

All the passengers were still on shore, and there was no one to go with him if he had desired any company. He wished to inform the Pacha, if the owner proved to be he, and he was on board, that he was prepared for any and every thing. If His Highness attempted any trickery or treachery in the direction of the members of his party, or any one of them, he would blow the white steamer out of the water, even if she belonged to the Sultan of Morocco. In fact, he had worked himself up as much as he ever could into an angry frame of mind.

If he was waiting for Mazagan to come to Aden,—for the pirate must have written to him in regard to his intentions, if he had any,—the persecution of the Americans was to be continued over the Indian Ocean. He was to command this magnificent steamer, as he had the Fatimé, and would be ready to retrieve his

misfortunes in the past. But Captain Ringgold was "reckoning without his host."

He descended the gangway steps, and took his seat in the stern-sheets of the barge with compressed lips; for he intended to meet the Pacha face to face, and this time at his own instigation. Possibly his crew were physiognomists enough to wonder what had come over the captain; for they had never seen him when he looked more in earnest. The captain nodded at the cockswain, and the bowman shoved off. The crew gave way, and no boat ever presented a finer appearance.

"To the white steam-yacht beyond the P. and O. steamer," said the commander; and said no more.

The men bent to their oars, and they were soon in sight of the beautiful vessel, as everybody called her; and Captain Ringgold could not but indorse the general verdict; at least, he thought she was quite as handsome as the Guardian-Mother, which was enough to say of any vessel in his estimation. The barge made a landing at the platform of the gangway.

"May I be permitted to go on board?" asked the captain of the sailor who stood at the head of the steps.

"Yes, sir; she is open to ladies and gentlemen to-day," replied the man.

The commander ascended the steps to the bulwarks, where the seaman was evidently doing duty as a sentinel, though he was not armed.

"What steamer is this?" asked the visitor; for he had not yet seen the name of the steamer.

"The Blanche, sir," replied the man very respectfully; for the commander's uniform had made its proper impression.

"The Blanche!" exclaimed the captain of the Guardian-Mother, starting back as though a red-hot shot had struck him.

"Captain Ringgold, I am delighted to see you."
"Captain Ringgold, I am delighted to see you." Page 337.

It was very remarkable that the steamer should have that name; but he preserved his dignity, and concluded that the name had been given for some member of the owner's family; and he saw a lady seated near the rudder-head, who might be the owner of the name. He looked about the deck,—what of it could be seen,—

though most of it was covered by the house, extended nearly from stem to stern, as on the Guardian-Mother. Everything was as neat and trim as though she had been a man-of-war. He could see two twelve-pounders on the side where he was; and he concluded there were two more on the other side.

But if this craft was to chase and annoy his party, she was not well enough armed to be a match for his own ship; and with the feeling he had stirred up in his mind, he congratulated himself on the superiority of the ship he commanded. The seaman informed him that he was at liberty to look over the vessel, for it was believed to be the finest her celebrated builders had ever completed.

"I desire to see the captain of this steamer," replied Captain Ringgold, declining the permission extended to him.

"He is in his cabin, sir, and I will call him down," replied the man.

The captain gave him his card, and the sailor mounted to the promenade deck. He had not been gone two minutes before the captain rushed down the steps as though he were in a desperate hurry.

"Captain Ringgold, I am delighted to see you!" shouted the captain of the Blanche before the visitor had time to make out who he was. "I am glad to see you on the deck of my ship!" And he extended his hand to the commander of the Guardian-Mother.

"Captain Sharp!" roared the visitor, seizing the offered hand, and warmly pressing it.

It was a tremendous let-down for him, after he had roused all his belligerent nature into action, to find Captain W. Penn Sharp in command of the suspicious steamer.

CHAPTER XXXV

GENERAL NEWRY'S MAGNIFICENT YACHT

The biography of Captain Penn Sharp had been quite romantic within the preceding year. In company with his brother he had been a detective in New York during the greater portion of his lifetime. He had been an honest and upright man; but in spite of this fact he had saved a competence for a man of small desires before he was fifty years old. He had never been married till the last year of his life.

He had what he called a "profession," and he had attended to it very closely for twenty years or more. When he "had a case to 'work up,'" he took it to his humble lodging with him, and studied out the problem. There was nothing in his room that could be called a luxury, unless a library of two hundred volumes were classed under that head; and he spent all his leisure time in this apartment, having absolutely no vices. He was a great reader, had never taken a vacation, and saved all his money, which he had prudently invested.

In his younger days he had been to sea, and came home as the mate of a large ship when he was twenty-two. His prospects in the commercial marine were very promising; but his brother, believing he had peculiar talent for the occupation in which he was himself engaged, induced him to go into the business as his partner. He had been a success; but men do not live as he did, depriving himself of rest or recreation, without suffering for it. His health broke down.

Confident that a voyage at sea would build him up, he applied to Captain Ringgold for any place he could offer him. Only the position of quartermaster was available. He was glad to obtain this on board of such a steamer. He had told his story, and the commander needed just such a person. Mrs. Belgrave had married for her second husband a man who had proved to be a robber and a villain. Her son Louis had discovered his character long before she did, and, after fighting a long and severe battle, had driven him away, recovering a large sum of money he had purloined.

Captain Ringgold ascertained in Bermuda that the villain had another wife in

England. He promoted his quartermaster to the position of third officer, and set him at work as a detective on the case. The recreant husband had inherited a fortune in Bermuda, had purchased a steam-yacht, and was still struggling to recover the wife who had discarded him, believing the "Missing Million" was behind her.

The deserted English wife had been sent for by her uncle, who had become a large sugar planter in Cuba. Sharp found her; and her relative had died but a short time before, leaving her a large fortune. The wretch who had abandoned her was arrested for his crimes, and sent back to New York, and was soon serving a long sentence at Sing Sing. He had been obliged to leave his steam-yacht, and it had been awarded to his wife.

By the influence of Captain Ringgold, Penn Sharp had been appointed captain of her; and he had sailed for New York, and then for England, in her. The lady was still on the sunny side of forty, and Sharp had married her. After this happy event, they had sailed for the Mediterranean; and the commander and passengers of the Guardian-Mother had met them at Gibraltar. How Captain Penn Sharp happened to be in command of the Blanche was a mystery to Captain Ringgold, though it was possible that the million or more of Mrs. Penn Sharp enabled her to support such a steam-yacht.

It seemed as though Captain Sharp would never release the hand of the commander of the Guardian-Mother, who had not only been a good friend to him in every sense of the word, but he had unintentionally put him in the way of achieving the remarkably good fortune which had now crowned his life.

"I don't know what to make of this, Captain Sharp," said he of the Guardian-Mother. "Are you in command of this fine steamer?"

"Without a ghost of a doubt I am," replied he of the Blanche, with a renewed pressure of the hand.

"Of course I am astonished, surprised, astounded, as I ought to be on an occasion like this. About the last I knew of you, you had just got married. Have you become so accustomed to married life that you are ready to leave your wife on shore while you wander over the ocean again?" asked the visitor in a good-humored, rallying tone.

"Not a bit of it, my dear Captain. My wife is worth more to me than all the money she brought me, though she is as much of a millionaire as young Mr.

Belgrave, we find. She is on board of the Blanche at this moment; and Ruth will be delighted to see you and all your people."

"I am glad all is so happy with you, and I may be tempted to marry myself," laughed the commander.

"You are already tempted, and you will yield to the temptation."

"I have not been tempted like Adam in the garden; if I had been, I should have swallowed the apple whole," replied Captain Ringgold, who had never said so much before on this delicate subject to any person. "It will have to be Adam this time that does all the tempting. But I wish you would explain to me how you happen to be fixed up here like Aladdin in one of his fairy palaces. I suppose, of course, you are sailing in your own steamer?"

"Not at all; for though we have money enough now, we are not disposed to throw it away upon a ship with so much style about her as the Blanche carries over the ocean. But I have not asked you about your party on board of the Guardian-Mother. I like that title, and if I had had the naming of the Blanche, I should have called her the Protecting Grandmother, or something of that sort."

"The company on board of my ship are all in excellent health and spirits. By the way, we have a dinner party at six, and you and your wife must assist; and it will be a most unexpected pleasure."

"I will go; but it is four now, and we haven't half time enough to do our talking. But come to my cabin; and then, if you will excuse me for a moment, I will notify Mrs. Sharp, so that she may be ready for the dinner."

Captain Sharp sent the sailor at the gangway to show the visitor to his cabin, while he went aft on his errand. Captain Ringgold found the cabin consisted of two apartments, one of which was evidently his wife's boudoir; and nothing could have been more elegant or convenient. In fact, it was Oriental magnificence, though the portion appropriated to the commander was fitted up with the usual nautical appliances. The occupant of the cabin soon appeared; and he acted as though he wanted to hug his visitor, though he satisfied himself by taking his hand again. He evidently credited the captain of the Guardian-Mother with both his wife and his fortune.

"Now take this arm-chair, Captain Ringgold, and we will have it out," said the commander of the Blanche. "My wife will be ready in an hour, and she will be

delighted to see Mrs. Belgrave and the rest of the party; for she is particularly fond of that lady, though they have both been in the same relation to Scoble."

"I think the name of Scoble has not been mentioned for nearly a year on board of the Guardian-Mother. But you told me, Captain Sharp, that you and your wife were not the owners of this fine craft," suggested the visitor, leading to the solution of the mystery which perplexed him.

"We are not; and I am sailing in the employ of General Newry," answered the other; and Captain Ringgold imagined that the name was spelled in this manner, though there was a twinkle in the eyes of the speaker.

"General Newry; I never heard of him. One of those Englishmen who have won their spurs and their fortunes in India, I suppose," added the visitor.

"Not at all; and he is not even an Englishman."

"Not an Englishman!" exclaimed the puzzled captain. "Is he a Frenchman with that name?"

"Not even a Frenchman."

"I came on board of the Blanche almost angry enough to break something, for certain members of my party have been hunted and hounded the whole length of the Mediterranean; and I am determined to put a stop to it," said Captain Ringgold, getting back some of the spirit in which he had boarded the steamer. "I am of the same mind still."

"You will have no further trouble with your troublesome customer," said Captain Sharp, with a very agreeable smile.

"How do you know?"

"As the boys say, because I know; I do not guess at it."

"You do not understand the matter."

"I know more about it than you do."

"Do you know Ali-Noury Pacha?"

"I do; intimately."

"Then you know that he is one of the greatest scoundrels that ever went six

months without being hung," said he of the Guardian-Mother warmly.

"There I must beg to differ from you. He may have been what you say in the past, but he is not in the present," replied he of the Blanche, quite as decidedly as the other had spoken.

Captain Ringgold proceeded to demonstrate the truth of his remark concerning the Pacha by relating his experience from Mogadore to Alexandria, detailing the plots and conspiracies of His Highness and his agents against the peace and safety of his party. Captain Sharp admitted the truth of all the attempts to capture Miss Blanche and Louis Belgrave.

"Then you must admit that he is an unmitigated scoundrel," added Captain Ringgold.

"Much that you charge to him was the work of his agents."

"He hatched up the conspiracy with Mazagan, for Louis heard every word of it in the café at Gallipoli. The attempt was made in Pournea Bay in the Archipelago to take Miss Blanche and Louis out of the Maud."

"I grant it; but Mazagan far exceeded his instructions, as he did at Zante."

"How much money did the Pacha offer Mazagan to obtain the persons mentioned?"

"Twenty thousand dollars, or a hundred thousand francs; but that is a bagatelle to him. The Pacha is another man now," added the ex-detective impressively.

"How long has he been another man?" asked Captain Ringgold with something like a sneer.

"Over six months."

"But Mazagan has been operating the same old scheme in Egypt within two months," protested the commander of the Guardian-Mother very vigorously.

"Then he was not acting under the instructions of the Pacha."

"We should have found it difficult to believe that if you had told it to us in Cairo," said the objector in a manner that might have made one who did not know the captain decidedly belligerent. "Mazagan told Louis that the Pacha had offered him two hundred thousand francs if he succeeded in his enterprise, or

half that sum if he failed."

"Then the fellow lied!" exclaimed the captain of the Blanche.

"He told Louis if he would persuade his trustee to give him half the full amount of the reward, he would collect the other half of His Highness, as promised in case of failure."

"That Mazagan is a villain and a scoundrel I have no doubt," said Captain Sharp. "Since the affair at Zante, the Pacha has had no hand in the matter."

"But the steamer of His Highness, the Fatimé, has been in Rosetta in command of Mazagan," put in the objector with earnestness, believing his reply would demolish the truth of his companion's statement.

"That can be explained," answered the commander of the Blanche. "If you believe there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, it is quite time for me to tell my story; and I hope you will take a different view of the Pacha's present character, as I believe you will."

"Where is the distinguished Moor now?" asked Captain Ringgold, carelessly and flippantly, as though it was of no consequence to him where he was.

"He is in the cabin."

"In the cabin!" exclaimed the commander of the Guardian-Mother, leaping out of his chair with an utter lack of dignity for him. "What cabin?"

"The cabin of the Blanche, of course."

"Is this his steamer?"

"It is."

"You told me it was General Newry's," said the visitor with a frown, as he buttoned up his coat as though he was about to take his leave of such a disagreeable locality. "General N-e-w-r-y."

"N-o-u-r-y is the way he spells it," interposed the ex-detective. "Sit down, Captain. He is a general of the highest rank in the army of Morocco, and he prefers to cruise under this title."

"If this is the steamer of Ali-Noury Pacha, it is time for me to leave."

"I hope you will hear my story before you go; for I assure you I have been honest and sincere with you, telling you nothing but the truth. I hated and condemned the vices of His Highness as much as you do, Captain; I have told him so to his face, and that was the foundation of his reformation."

Captain Ringgold concluded to hear the story.

CHAPTER XXXVI

AN ALMOST MIRACULOUS CONVERSION

It was a long story which Captain Penn Sharp told of his relations with Ali-Noury Pacha; and his visitor was so incredulous at first that he appeared to have solemnly resolved not to accept anything as the truth. But the character of the speaker left its impress all along the narrative; and Captain Ringgold was compelled to believe, just as the hardened sinner is sometimes forced to accept the truth when presented to him by the true evangelist, though his teeth were set against it.

"You gentlemen with millions in your trousers pockets are subject to perils which we of moderate means are not exposed to," the commander of the Blanche began.

"That means you, and not me," suggested the visitor.

"You have the reputation of being a rich man, whether you are one or not. My wife is rich, and I am only well off; but never mind that now," replied Captain Sharp. "I saw General Noury, as we will call him after this if you do not object, for that is the name by which he chooses to be known, in Gibraltar several times, and I knew all about your affair with him there; but I did not get acquainted with him, for I despised him as much as you did.

"I sailed from the Rock, and took my wife to a great many of the ports of Europe, and some in Africa, including Egypt; but I am not going to tell you about our travels. We went from Alexandria to Malta, Syracuse, and to Messina; and it was at this last port that I fell in with General Noury. His steamer, I forget her name,"—

"The Fatimé; but Felix McGavonty always called her the Fatty."

"The Fatty anchored within a cable's length of me before I had been there two hours, and the Pacha went ashore at once. That night my wife was sick, and I went to the city to procure a certain medicine for her. I happened into a shop where no one could speak English, and I don't speak anything else. I was just going off to find another place where they did speak English, when a gentleman

rose from a chair with some difficulty and offered his services.

"It was General Noury. He had been drinking, but was not very badly off. He was as polite as a dancing-master, and helped me out so that I got what I wanted. He spoke Italian as though he had known it in his babyhood. I was very much obliged to him, and thanked him with all my might. He left before my package was ready, and I soon followed him.

"My shot brought down one of the bandits."
"My shot brought down one of the bandits." Page 351.

"As I entered the street that leads from the Corso Cavour to the shore I heard the yells of a man in trouble. I always carried my revolver with me, and I had handled a good many rough villains in my day. I started at a run, and soon reached the scene of the fight. I found two men had attacked one; and though the latter was bravely defending himself, he was getting the worst of it. I saw that he was going under, and I fired just as the man attacked dropped on the pavement.

"My shot brought down one of the bandits, and the other rushed towards me. He had brought down his victim, and he wanted to get rid of me so that he could go through his pockets. I fired at him, and he dropped the long knife with which he was going to stick me on the pavement. There it is over the window;" and the captain pointed to it. "He was wounded; and then he ran away, for he did not like to play with a revolver. Before I could get to him, the other assassin got on his feet and followed him, though he moved with no little labor and pain; but my business was not with him, and I let him go.

"The man who had been attacked was trying to get on his feet, and when I came up to him I found it was General Noury. He had been stabbed in the shoulder, and he was bleeding very freely. With my assistance he walked to my boat, and my men placed him in the stern-sheets. I found that he was bleeding badly, and I was no surgeon. The Hotel Vittorio was on the other side of the street, and some one there could tell me in English where to find a doctor.

"Two gentlemen at the door were smoking. They were talking in English, and I told them what I wanted. They were both Americans, and one of them was a doctor. He volunteered to go with me. He said the patient had a bad wound. He went back to the hotel for his case of instruments, and then went on board of the Viking with his patient. It would make your dinner very late if I should give you all the details of the general's case. Dr. Henderson stopped the flow of blood, and attended to his patient for three weeks on board of the steam-yacht.

"When he was in condition to be moved to the Fatty, he did not wish to go. My wife had nursed him as she would have nursed her own brother, and as she had her uncle in Cuba. When he was convalescent he treated her with the most profound respect. Mazagan came on board to see him, and told me he had just come from Athens. But the general was plainly disgusted with him, and wanted to get rid of him. He gave him the command of the Fatty, and ordered him to wait for him at Gibraltar.

"Dr. Henderson was travelling for pleasure, and he liked it so well that he wanted more of it; but he had spent all his money, and had no more at home. He came on board of the Viking, and lived there. His friend had left, and he was alone. He had been a very skilful practitioner in New York City, but his thirst for travel would not permit him to wait long enough to save sufficient money from his abundant income.

"Of his own free will and accord General Noury told me that he was leading a miserable life in spite of the wealth that he possessed, the honors that crowned him in Morocco, and the leisure that was always at his command when the army was not in the field. As he summed it up himself, his vices had got the better of him. He could not respect himself. I could see that there was something left of him. I went to work on him. I am not an evangelist myself, and I did not take him on that tack.

"I have no doubt that I had saved his life; and no man was ever more grateful for the service I had rendered him. My wife was such a houri as he had never seen in a harem. We both talked with him about the beauty of a good and useful life. In a word, we redeemed him. My wife is a sincere Christian, and she did more of it than I did. He was absolutely penitent over his sins, his dissipation, the wrongs towards others he had committed, though he was still a Mohammedan; but a great deal of the prophet's creed would pass for Christianity. We both saw that it would be useless to attack his religion; for he was a Moslem to the marrow of his bones.

"More than anything else he was penitent over his relations with you and your party. The general was certainly infatuated over the beauty of Miss Blanche; but it was as an artist runs mad over a picture. He solemnly assured me he never had an unworthy thought in regard to her. He looked upon her as a beautiful child, whose image haunted him day and night. If you had permitted him to see her, that was all he wanted. No such thought had ever entered his head as that of putting her in his harem, even if he had succeeded through his agents in

capturing her; though he was urged forward to this by the insults you heaped upon him.

"I mean that you spoke the truth to him, nothing more, as I did. He desires to beg your forgiveness, and he would cross the Atlantic for the purpose of doing so. We stayed at Messina three weeks, and at the end of that time General Noury was quite well again. He gave Dr. Henderson a hundred thousand francs, and wanted me to take five times that amount; but I positively refused to take a cent from him. To shorten up the story, we became fast friends, including my wife. He had sent the Fatty off, and I invited him to remain on board of the Viking. He was in a hurry to get to Gibraltar; and I soon found that he had a reason for going there.

"He told me that the Fatty was old and slow, and more than a year before he had ordered the finest steam-yacht that could be built; and the Blanche was the result of the order. He named her after the highest ideal he had ever been able to obtain of human loveliness; but he had written this letter from Madeira, before he had had any trouble with you. Ruth and I were ready to go to England by this time, and we conveyed the general to Gibraltar. He had received a letter from his English agent informing him that the Blanche was finished.

"He ordered his man of business to ship the best English ship's company he could gather together at liberal wages, and proceed to Gibraltar. We found her there. He insisted that I should sell the Viking, for which he found a customer, and take the command of the Blanche. My wife should have any and all the accommodations on board she desired, and we would make the voyage around the world, an idea he borrowed from you, Captain Ringgold.

"I accepted the offer because I liked the general, and my wife was more pleased with the plan than I was. I was to have my own way about everything, and he acted in princely style. My first business was to improve his reputation in Gibraltar. He gave a very large sum to the charities of the city; and where the officers and soldiers had benefit associations he filled up their coffers. He did not drink a drop of spirits or wine, and would have signed a total-abstinence pledge if I had asked him to do so. I am not quite old enough to be his father; but if he had been my son I could have had no more influence over him.

"The general came to me to know how he should settle his accounts with Mazagan, informing me that the villain had offered him twenty-five thousand francs for the Fatty, and claimed the fifty thousand due him. I told him he had

made a bad bargain with the wretch, but as he had promised he must perform. The vessel was worth at least double what he offered; but I advised him to take it, for money was no object to him compared with getting rid of this villain. Mazagan took possession of the Fatty, and that was the last of her."

"No, it wasn't," interposed Captain Ringgold; and he gave a brief account of the "Battle of Khrysoko," with the events leading to it.

"Good for Captain Scott!" exclaimed the commander of the Blanche. "I am glad she has gone to the bottom, for that is the best place for her. We sailed from Gibraltar to Madeira, where the general made himself solid with the people there in the same manner as at the Rock. He apologized to everybody he had insulted, and he was quite a lion before we left the port. Then we went to Mogadore; and there he scattered his harem, on the plea that he was going around the world; but he told me it would never be gathered together again, that or any other.

"The general would have gone to New York in the Blanche if you had been there, for the sole purpose of apologizing to you, and begging you to forgive him for all the injuries he had done or had attempted to do you. It is only five o'clock, and now you must see General Noury. I was going to the Guardian-Mother this evening to make an appointment for him; for I thought you would be busy all day."

"I am quite ready now to meet him, and to give him my hand," replied Captain Ringgold. "I must say that this is the greatest conversion on record, considering that the Pacha is still a Mohammedan."

"I think so myself; but my wife will never be satisfied till she has made him a convert to the Christian religion," replied Captain Sharp, as he led the way to the cabin of the general.

They were promptly admitted; and the owner of the Blanche started back, and stood with clasped hands gazing at Captain Ringgold.

"General Noury, this is Captain Ringgold, commander of the Guardian-Mother," said Captain Sharp.

"Most sincerely, I am very glad to see you, General Noury," added the visitor, advancing with extended hand to the Pacha, for such he was still in spite of the change in his name.

"I feel more like throwing myself on my knees before you, after the Oriental

manner, than taking you by the hand," replied the general, though he took the hand tendered to him. "I have grievously wronged and insulted you, and I ask to be forgiven with the most sincere and long-continued sorrow for the injuries I have done you."

"General Noury, I am happy to take by the hand as my friend one who has passed from the darkness into the light; and as my own religion teaches me to forgive those who have wronged me, I am glad to make the past, as it lies between us, a total blank."

"And my religion teaches me to seek the forgiveness of those I have injured, or tried to injure. We will not differ over our faith, different as they are; and on my part there shall henceforth be nothing else to make us at variance."

"And nothing on my part," responded Captain Ringgold, again pressing the hand of the Pacha.

The general was invited to visit the Guardian-Mother, and dine with the party in the cabin. Captain Ringgold was then conducted to the after part of the ship, and there found Mrs. Sharp, who was delighted to see him. The Pacha presently came out of his cabin dressed in evening costume, but in European style, and the trio embarked in the barge. As they approached the anchorage of the ship, strains of martial music came from her deck, which the commander could not explain. It appeared that some of the invited officers had sent a regimental band on board as a compliment to the steamer and her passengers.

The long absence of the commander had begun to excite some uneasiness, for he had not been seen since the middle of the forenoon. The addition of even three more guests to the crowded table upset the calculations of the accomplished steward, and he was obliged to add another table. While he was doing so, the captain told his passengers "of the mighty things that had happened." He could not tell the whole story; but he begged all on board to receive the Pacha kindly and politely, for he had forgiven everything, and he honored him for the bravery and resolution with which he had put his vices behind him. "Get thee behind me, Satan!" was the way he phrased it.

"He was placed at the right of Captain Ringgold."
"He was placed at the right of Captain Ringgold." Page 359.

The general was then presented to all the party, passengers as well as invited guests. It may have required an effort on the part of the former to carry out the instructions of the commander; but the Pacha declared that he was delighted with his reception. He was placed on the right of Captain Ringgold, as the guest of honor, and treated with distinguished consideration by all the people from the shore.

The dinner was Mr. Melancthon Sage's crowning effort, as he had been ordered to make it. Not a word was said, or an allusion made, to the scenes of the past in which the trouble had bubbled up. The commander made a speech, and proclaimed his temperance principle so originally that the military guests hardly missed the wine to which they were accustomed. Some of them spoke, mostly of the ship and her agreeable passengers; but all agreed the Pacha made the speech of the evening, which was a comparison between his own country and those in which he had spent so large a portion of his life. In the first place, he was a very handsome man; his English was perfect; and he had a poetic nature, which developed itself in the flowery language he used.

It was a very delightful occasion, and everybody enjoyed it without any drawbacks. The Maud was at the gangway to take the party ashore; for the Parsee merchants had invited the military officers to make use of her. By eleven o'clock all were gone in that direction. Captain Ringgold had intended to sail for Bombay the next day; but the extraordinary event which had transpired at Aden decided him to remain another day.

The party from the Blanche, attended by the commander, were put on board of their steamer, in the barge. On her return Captain Ringgold was very anxious to ascertain what impression had been made upon the passengers by His Highness the Pacha. They insisted that he was not the same man at all, and that they had been pleased with him. Had he really reformed his life? Mrs. Belgrave had heard from Mrs. Sharp a fuller account of the conversion of the sinner in a high place, and she believed it.

Louis Belgrave sat at the side of Miss Blanche, and she had little knowledge of the intentions of the Pacha so far as she was concerned. He had treated her with the most scrupulous politeness and reserve, and she admitted that she "rather liked him." Mrs. Blossom declared that he was still a heathen, and wondered that

Mrs. Sharp had not converted him to Christianity while she was about it, as she would have done if she had had the opportunity. But the good woman would probably have lost her case if she had tried to do too much at once.

The next day the intercourse between the two steamers was renewed; and the Pacha was decidedly a lion, though he conducted himself with extreme modesty. The impression he continued to make was decidedly in his favor. He assumed nothing on account of his wealth, his lofty station, or anything else. The passengers dined that day in the cabin of the Blanche, with about all the guests whose acquaintance the general had made on board the Guardian-Mother.

In the afternoon it was decided by the unanimous vote of the company on board of the Guardian-Mother that the two steamers should sail the next day for Bombay together. The "Big Four" had been properly noticed by the Pacha, and they had all made friends with him. He had talked with Louis a good deal, for he had become very well acquainted with him at Mogadore; and Scott even thought it possible such a man, "made of money," might yet buy a steamer for him.

The Maud, with the Parsee merchants and all the friendly officers, followed the two magnificent steamers to sea the next day, and both vessels fired salutes for them at parting. The party were going to India; new sights, different from anything they had ever seen before, were to open upon them, and it is more than possible that the young men on board would fall into some stirring adventures as they proceeded. The company of the Blanche was likely to bring with it some attractions, and to change somewhat the order of events on board both vessels. But the narrative of the voyage will be found in "ACROSS INDIA; OR, LIVE BOYS IN THE FAR EAST."

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