

www.libtool.com.cn





www.libtool.com.cn

www.libtool.com.cn

www.libtool.com.cn





Frontispiece.

See page 177.

THE ARBOUR IN FANNY'S GARDEN.

www.libtool.com.cn

www.libtool.com.cn

THE
www.libtool.com.cn

ADVENTURES
OF A
LITTLE FRENCH BOY.

BY
ALFRED DE BRÉHAT.

Translated from the French,

WITH FIFTY ILLUSTRATIONS BY ED. MORIN.

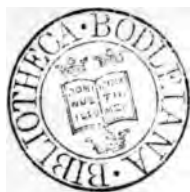
LONDON:
BELL AND DALDY, 186, FLEET STREET.
1863.

250. p. 106.



www.libtool.com.cn

LONDON:
PRINTED BY R. CLAY, SON, AND TAYLOR
BREAD STREET HILL.



TO

MY YOUNG FRIEND, L. J. HETZEL.

I ONCE noticed you when you were absorbingly occupied. With one hand, you were stroking a large cat, which submitted to your touch with the lazy indifference peculiar to her race; with the other, you held a book which is deservedly a favourite with children, I mean "The Swiss Family Robinson."

You seemed to be enjoying yourself very much.

Your mother, with loving eyes, watched you from the drawing-room; and from his study window your father regarded you with an expression of the deepest affection, as if he were asking God to turn aside from your young head the stormy trials of life.

Seeing so much happiness produced by a child's book, it occurred to me to write one so as to prolong your

pleasure when you should have finished reading the "Swiss Family Robinson."

On the morrow I commenced writing the "Adventures of a Little French Boy."

I do not pretend to compete with such a masterpiece as the book which so delighted you ; my ambition will be quite satisfied if the true adventures of Jean Belin give you half as much pleasure as you felt in the perusal of the delightful German story.

I know that your father shares largely in all your enjoyment, so I hope, my dear young friend, that both you and he will accept this little book as a tribute of the author's sincere affection.

ALFRED DE BRÉHAT.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
THE SNOW-BALLS—PIERRE CAILLAUD—THE LITTLE VIOLIN-PLAYER— SUZETTE VILLEMOT	1

CHAPTER II.

JEAN BELIN AND LANDRY CANTINAUD—THE BATTLE AND THE BATH OF MILK—JEAN'S PROTECTORS—SUZETTE VILLEMOT AND FIRMIN NIVELLE—A WISE PROJECT	8
--	---

CHAPTER III.

ENTRANCE TO THE MANUFACTORY—DIFFICULTIES AT THE OUTSET— MONSIEUR PEARSON—FERGAURAND THE FOREMAN—LITTLE VICTOR —FORTUNÉ, FANNY, AND BEPPO—UNKIND PLAY—JEAN'S GOOD NATURE AND CLEVERNESS	15
---	----

CHAPTER IV.

JEAN'S CRITICAL POSITION—HIS INNOCENCE IS RECOGNISED—VICTOR AND BEPPO'S GRATITUDE—PÈRE CAILLAUD AND FIRMIN NIVELLE ARE PARDONED—FIFTEEN SOUS A DAY—FORTUNÉ'S BAD DISPOSITION—HE IS CONDEMNED TO EAT DRY BREAD—LITTLE MARIA—THE TWO PARTIES—THE INVITATION	22
---	----

CHAPTER V.

JEAN'S FOLLIES—BAD INFLUENCES—VICTOR'S FRIENDSHIP—JEAN RE- CEIVES A LETTER—REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS—HE LEARNS TO READ—A LESSON TO VAIN PEOPLE—LANDRY THE TELL-TALE	29
--	----

CHAPTER VI.

PERSEVERANCE AT HIS STUDIES—VICTOR'S ILLNESS—JEAN'S DEVOTION TO HIS FRIEND—PROGRESS—LITTLE MARIA'S TIMIDITY	37
--	----

CHAPTER VII.

SERIOUS EVENTS—MONSIEUR PEARSON LEAVES THE MANUFACTORY— PROJECTED EMIGRATION TO CEYLON—DEPARTURE—"JULIE," THE THREE-MAST SAILING VESSEL, AND HER FOURTEEN PASSENGERS . . .	44
--	----

CHAPTER VIII.

COMMENCEMENT OF THE VOYAGE—THE SEA AND THE LAKE OF ENGHIEU —LANDRY'S LEMONADE—FORTUNÉ'S AND LANDRY'S MISHAP—THE SEA-SICKNESS AND THE TAR—THE STUFFED CUSHIONS IN THE CUDDY.	PAGE 49
---	------------

CHAPTER IX.

THE CHILDREN ON BOARD SHIP—JEAN'S PROMOTION	55
---	----

CHAPTER X.

FORTUNÉ'S WHALE—THE SHARK AND ITS PILOT-FISH—CURIOUS FISHING —JEAN'S PRESENCE OF MIND—MARIA'S FORK	60
---	----

CHAPTER XI.

THE CAPE SHEEP—BIRD-FISHING—FORTUNÉ OVERBOARD—THE LIEU- TENANT'S DEATH—AWFUL STORM—THE REEFS—THEY SPRING A LEAK —THE SHIPWRECK—THE CAPTAIN'S AND SAILORS' ADMIRABLE CON- DUCT—THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN THE LONG BOAT—THE SAILORS' DEVOTION TO THEIR COMRADES—THE LONG BOAT SWALLOWED UP .	67
--	----

CHAPTER XII.

THE SHORE AND THE SHIPWRECKED PEOPLE—A DREADFUL NIGHT— THE NEXT DAY—NO SIGN OF THE SHIP—PRAYERS OF MADAME PEARSON AND THE CHILDREN—THE DESERT SHORE—ROCKS AND TALL GRASS—A SPRING OF FRESH WATER—STRAY THINGS—ENERGY OF SUZETTE—HUNTING WITH A WHIP—A MEAL.	73
---	----

CHAPTER XIII.

QUARREL AND FIGHT BETWEEN FORTUNÉ AND LANDRY—A LESSON OF EQUALITY—THE HUT—THEY ALL WORK—A NIGHT IN THE OPEN AIR —THE FIRE—NOTHING VISIBLE ON THE HORIZON—THE WILD BEAST —FORTUNÉ'S AND LANDRY'S COWARDICE	80
--	----

CHAPTER XIV.

CORDIAL RECEPTION OF THE WILD BEAST—MARIA'S DELIGHT—A SUMP- TIOUS REPAST—THE SIGNAL—PROVIDENCE—SAFETY BAY—THE FOUNTAIN OF GOOD HELP—PROJECTED EXCURSION.	87
--	----

CHAPTER XV.

TOO MUCH MELON—AN INVASION—HEROIC DEFENCE—A MALE AND FEMALE PRISONER—PREPARATIONS FOR AN EXPLORING EXPEDITION.	96
---	----

CHAPTER XVI.

JEAN AND FORTUNÉ SET OUT—THE BOWS AND ARROWS ARE TURNED TO ACCOUNT—THE CUCKOO INDICATOR—A LESSON FOR THE SELFISH .	103
---	-----

CONTENTS.

vii

CHAPTER XVII.

A NIGHT IN A TREE—THEY REACH THE PROMONTORY—MELANCHOLY DISCOVERY—THE POOR CAPTAIN—LAST DUTIES—MIRZA AND BEPPO —THE CAVERN—A DISAGREEABLE VISITOR—THE WAIFS	PAGE 112
--	-------------

CHAPTER XVIII.

DUCKS TRAVELLING—A CANINE POSTMAN—THE PACKAGES	120
--	-----

CHAPTER XIX.

ATTACHMENT BETWEEN BEPPO, MIRZA, AND THE POPINCOURT FAMILY— A DELICIOUS DINNER—THE COLONIAL ASSEMBLY'S DECREE—SECOND JOURNEY TO THE WRECK—HOW THE BEES WERE BROUGHT TO PROVIDENCE	128
--	-----

CHAPTER XX.

SECOND EXPEDITION TO CAVE BAY—FORTUNE'S COURAGE—THE PORCU- PINE—MAKING THE CART—PROJECTED HUNTING EXPEDITION . . .	134
---	-----

CHAPTER XXI.

THE HUNTERS SET OUT—MIRZA AND M. POPINCOURT—A WOUNDED BUFFALO—TRACES OF HUMAN BEINGS—JEAN'S STRUGGLE WITH A CALF—FANCHON A NURSE—DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED IN COMING BACK—BUFFALO STREAM	142
--	-----

CHAPTER XXII.

COLONIAL UNDERTAKINGS—THE HARVEST—THE BATH-ROOM AND SWIM- MING SCHOOL—THE "FANNY" AND THE BLISTERS—FIRST SEA-VOYAGE	153
--	-----

CHAPTER XXIII.

FISHING UP THE TOOLS—DIFFICULTY OF THE UNDERTAKING—SUZETTE'S IDEA	160
--	-----

CHAPTER XXIV.

BUILDING—HUNTING—VARIOUS UNDERTAKINGS—BOBÈCHE IS TURNED TO ACCOUNT—CANDLE MAKING—VIGILS—THE CHILDREN'S PROGRESS —GAMES—DRAUGHTS AND LOTO	165
--	-----

CHAPTER XXV.

THE NEW HOUSE—M. AND MME. BOBÈCHE—CHOCOLATE AND BLACK COFFEE—SERAPHIN—THE SHEET OF WATER—BEPPO'S TRIBULATIONS	171
--	-----



Frontispiece.

See page 177.

THE ARBOUR IN FANNY'S GARDEN.

THE
www.libtool.com.cn
ADVENTURES OF A LITTLE FRENCH BOY.



CHAPTER I.

THE SNOW-BALLS—PIERRE CAILLAUD—THE LITTLE VIOLIN-PLAYER—SUZETTE
VILLEMOT.

It was the middle of winter ; the ground was covered with snow, and the streets were almost impassable. The Seine was frozen over, and carts might have been driven safely across the Canal Saint-Martin.

The corner of Rue Saint-Sebastien and Rue Popincourt was the scene of a desperate battle ; for a number of street-boys, divided into two parties, were indulging in a sort of Homeric contest.

The greater number of them belonged to workshops and manufactories, and appeared to have just left off work, a clock in the neighbourhood having struck seven. The boys would have been wiser had they returned straight home, where each of them was doubtless expected; but children are thoughtless, and too often forget everything else when there is an opportunity of amusing themselves.

The evil, however, would not have been so great, if the snow-balling had only been carried on among themselves; but the game gradually degenerated, till at last the two parties united in attacking the passers-by. Women, old men, carriages, all became targets for their ready and formidable artillery. Of course such conduct could not fail to end badly.

Pierre Caillaud, an old workman, from a manufactory in the Rue Popincourt, unfortunately crossed the street within reach of the boys' missiles. Caillaud had just received his week's wages, and we must confess that the unsteadiness of his gait betrayed the numerous visits he had paid to the wine-shops on his way. Some of the snow-balls struck him; but he was a good-natured man, and at first only smiled at the pelting. A fresh shower of balls, however, obliged him to quicken his pace—his foot slipped, and he fell flat on the pavement. His hat rolled off and his stick dropped from his hand, to the great amusement of his young assailants. Fortunately, other sufferers had more spirit than Pierre Caillaud, and, when they saw the poor old man with his face bleeding, ran after the aggressors, and roughly handled all those whom they caught. The rest took to flight, so the street was soon cleared.

Caillaud's tumble had sobered him a little; but, in falling, he had struck his head against the pavement, and he still felt giddy from the blow. He was groping about for his hat and stick, when a child's voice, which, though weak, was clear and firm, said—

"Here is your stick, sir, and I will bring you your hat also."

www.libtool.com.cn



To face page 8.

JEAN BELIN AND PIERRE CAILLAUD.

www.libtool.com.cn

www.libtool.com.cn

Raising his head, Caillaud perceived at his side a little boy of between seven and eight years old. The child was poorly clad in a cotton blouse and ragged linen trousers—not very comfortable garments for the month of January.

“Thank you, my boy,” said Pierre, putting on his hat, which the little fellow had found about twenty steps from where they were standing.

“Don’t forget your purse, sir,” said the child, holding out a sort of leathern bag which looked something like a tobacco-pouch.

“That certainly is my purse,” replied Caillaud, quite touched by the child’s honesty; “where did you find it, my little friend?”

“I was under that archway when you fell down, and hearing the money clink, I picked up your purse to return it to you.”

“What could you be doing under an archway, such a cold night as this?” asked the old man.

“I was freezing,” said the child; and his poor little lips, blue with the cold, relaxed to a smile, in spite of his sufferings. “Besides,” he added, “I was playing the violin.”

“Playing the violin, poor child, such weather as this?” exclaimed Caillaud.

“Yes,” said the little musician, proudly showing a violin, which was bereft of two strings out of the four, and which he had hidden in the archway when he went to help the workman.

“If the horses which pass this way had no more legs than your violin has strings, they would not go far,” said Caillaud, looking at the pale but intelligent boy with increasing interest.

As if to assert the good character of his instrument, the poor child drew his bow across the strings, but he brought forth such sharp discordant sounds, that the neighbouring dogs howled an accompaniment.

“Bravo!” said Pierre, “how old are you, my little man?”

“Six years old, sir.”

"And what is your name?"

"Jean Belin."

"How is it your parents leave you out in the cold, in this way?"

"I have no parents, sir," said Jean, hanging down his head, lest the tears brought to his eyes by the old man's question should be seen. "My father," continued the child, "my father, who was a carpenter, perished in a fire, and my mother has been dead two months."

"Where do you live?"

"When I have money enough, I sleep in a lodging-house, but that costs me a sou a night; when I have not money to pay for my bed, I sleep under one of the bridges, or on a pile of wood. I must do so in such weather as this, for when it is so cold no one stops to hear me, and I have only had one sou given to me to-day."

"Poor little fellow," said Pierre, "perhaps you are very hungry too?"

"No," said the child, "the cold is so sharp that I feel nothing else."

Pierre was quite sober now. "Come with me," he said, "you are an honest lad, and I shall treat you to supper—let us be off."

A few minutes afterwards Caillaud stopped suddenly, saying, "Are you hurt?" for he noticed that Belin walked rather lame.

"No, sir, nothing to signify; I cut my foot a little on the ice, but it will be all right when I have walked a little way."

"Shall I carry you?"

"Oh no, indeed," quickly replied the little man, humiliated by the proposition; and he trotted on courageously by his companion's side.

With an apparent roughness, which poor people often affect to conceal their feelings, Pierre, in spite of the child's resistance, took him up in his arms, and covering him as well as he could with his own blouse, carried him to a neighbouring dairy, where he was

accustomed to take his meals in company with several of his fellow-workmen.

"But you will put me down before you open the door," supplicated Jean.

"Yes, my little man, I will ; now, then, here we are—one, two, hop ! now give me your hand, and we will go in together."

"Late as usual, Père Caillaud," said the dairy-woman, who was a young and pretty Normandy peasant, honest and cheerful-looking, named Suzette Villemot ; and seven or eight workmen, who were seated at different tables, in a room behind the shop, shouted out as Caillaud entered, "Make haste, you dawdler."

"Why, who on earth has he got with him ?" cried one of the men, perceiving the miserable-looking little Belin, who was clinging timidly to his protector.

"I suppose Pierre wants to give a dance," said another of the men, "and so he has brought his fiddler with him."

"He must have found both the fiddle and fiddler in some chiffonnier's* basket," said Bonaventure Cantinaud, a large fat-faced man.

Without appearing to heed their jokes, Pierre placed the shivering and tearful child close to the stove ; then raising his voice, he exclaimed, "My friends, this child is cold and hungry ; when he is warmed and satisfied, you may laugh at us both as much as you like. But till then be good enough to leave us alone."

"I declare, Father Caillaud is getting angry," exclaimed Cantinaud.

"Not at all," said Pierre quietly, breaking some bread into the broth which he had ordered for the poor boy, "only I think it ungenerous to laugh at those who are suffering, while there are so

* Chiffonnier, a man who walks about Paris at night and in the early morning, collecting rags and scraps of paper from the heaps of refuse before the different doors.

many fat, red-faced, and conceited simpletons, whom it would be quite a charity to ridicule a little."

A shout of laughter followed this rejoinder, for Bonaventure was not much liked by his companions, who thought him selfish and envious.

Five or six workmen stood round the little violinist, but the child's attention was quite engrossed by the sumptuous repast Suzette had placed before him. The supper consisted of a slice of boiled beef, some cabbage, a bit of cheese, and a glass of wine, and was quite a Lucullus feast to the poor little fellow.

How many dissatisfied children there are who complain of good food, without thinking of the thousands of starving little creatures there are in the world ; children who are quite as good and sometimes much better than themselves ; children who are without a morsel of bread, and would be quite delighted with the dishes which the others despise. Comforted by the warmth, Jean's face gradually resumed its usual intelligent expression. Pierre related the incident which showed the child's honesty and kind-heartedness, and the workmen began questioning the little boy with that cordial good-nature which expresses itself in the countenance and in the tone of voice, and which children are quick to feel. Encouraged by their kindness—and perhaps fortified by his good supper—Jean answered with the ready wit so common to most Parisian children. Each workman showed kindness in his own way. One of them offered him a cup of coffee, and another was foolish enough to pass him a little glass of brandy. Not liking to refuse the brandy, the child was trying to swallow it, though it burnt his throat dreadfully, when fortunately Suzette intervening took the glass from his hand.

"Are you mad, Baptiste," said she ; "why, to give brandy to such a child is the way to kill him. You had better give him money to buy a jacket to wear instead of his ragged blouse, which

is no warmth such weather as this—poor little fellow. Here my boy,” continued the worthy woman, “here is a cap which was left here by that rascal Manuel, when he went off without paying me ; I will take it in a little, and give it to you. What pretty hair the child has !” she added, throwing back the curls which fell over Jean’s forehead and eyes.

We have already stated that this was pay-day. Now work-people are generally warm-hearted when their purse is well filled ; so it came to pass that, in the course of a few minutes, Jean found himself in possession of a handful of coppers, which he contemplated with eyes moist from gratitude.

Every one had contributed something except Bonaventure Cantinaud.

“I have no change,” said he, by way of excuse.

There are many people who always say they have no money, when there is an opportunity of doing a kindness with it.

“That is of no consequence,” said another of the men, called Firmin Nivelles, “I will lend you a few pence, and when you have change you can return them to me.”

“I shall certainly not borrow halfpence from you,” rejoined Bonaventure, at whom the other workmen were already laughing.

“Very well,” said Firmin, tucking up his sleeves, and baring arms worthy of a Hercules, “you *have* money—more money than any of us ; but if I must serve the writ, as Mr. Saullard the bailiff says——”

As much a coward as a miser, Bonaventure drew some halfpence from his pocket, and in a grumbling manner handed the money over to Firmin.

The workmen went on ridiculing Bonaventure’s cowardice and meanness until, fortunately for him, a stop was put to their mirth by a quarrel springing up between Jean and another little boy.



CHAPTER II.

JEAN BELIN AND LANDRY CANTINAUD—THE BATTLE AND THE BATH OF MILK
—JEAN'S PROTECTORS—SUZETTE VILLEMOT AND FIRMIN NIVELLE—A WISE
PROJECT.

BONAVENTURE Cantinaud had a brother named Landry, who, though but a few months older than the little violinist, was much taller and stronger. Landry bore a striking family resemblance to his brother, for, like him, he had fat purple cheeks, small round eyes, and a turn-up nose. Landry worked at the same factory as his elder brother, and, as he made up by industry for his slowness and want of cleverness, already got his own living, which was a fine thing for so young a child. But, unhappily, he had many bad qualities; he was not only disobliging and selfish, but he was a tell-tale and a liar, and very fond of teasing the helpless.

Seeing a child about his own age, Jean had naturally gone up to

www.libtool.com.cn



To face page 9.

THE BATTLE AND THE MILK-PAN.

www.libtool.com.cn

www.libtool.com.cn

speaking to him, but Landry was jealous of the interest the poor boy had excited, and had taken a dislike to him from the first ; so, instead of responding to his advances, he said every thing spiteful he could think of to the little Parisian.

Jean on the other hand was naturally good-tempered and forbearing, and so at first he had turned all Landry's ill-natured remarks into fun, and answered him jokingly. Silly people often mistake forbearance for cowardice ; and Landry soon insulted Jean so grossly, that tears of indignation started to his eyes. Though he felt very angry, perhaps if Landry had not called him a "beggar" and Père Caillaud an "old drunkard," Jean might not have noticed his other irritating provocations.

But, exasperated at hearing his benefactor insulted, Jean exclaimed, "That's false."

"I say he is an old drunkard," cried Landry.

And as frequently happens with children of their age, they repeated seven or eight times, the one his assertion and the other his denial—looking at each other the while like two young fighting-cocks. A circle of men soon formed round the champions, and with a folly too common in lookers-on at a quarrel, instead of trying to appease the children, they incited them to fight.

Urged on by his brother, and besides, thinking himself the stronger, Landry gave Jean a blow which almost knocked him down ; but in spite of his injured foot, Jean cleverly passed his leg between Landry's feet, and tripped him up. Landry fell into one of those enormous pans of milk which are always to be seen in a dairy. I need not say that he did not go in head first ; on the contrary, for some time nothing could be seen of him but his scared face and his legs gesticulating in the air like an old-fashioned telegraph. He struggled, however, so successfully, that at last he broke the pan and rolled on the floor in a flood of milk, screaming violently.

When his brother picked him up, amid shouts of laughter from all the workmen, he was so daubed over with milk that even the dairy-woman could not help joining in the universal merriment. But vexation soon got the upper hand, and, addressing the combatants angrily, Suzette claimed payment for the damage they had done.

Aroused from the pleasant feeling of victory by her voice, Jean with a sigh took his treasure from his pocket, and held it out to Suzette Villemot.

"Why, what do you take me for?" said the young woman, pushing back the child's hand, "you don't surely suppose I would deprive you of the money they have just given you."

"I have nothing else to give you," said Jean, "what else can I do? I'm very sorry to have done so much harm." And as he spoke the tears came into his eyes.

"Who asked you for anything!" replied Suzette, who was very kind-hearted; "Come, come, you foolish boy, leave off crying and pick up your money; here, take this too," she added, thrusting a handful of prunes into the child's pocket; "and now give me a kiss," said she, wiping his eyes.

Poor Jean threw both his arms round her neck, and, with heartfelt gratitude, kissed her affectionately. Seeking, however, some one to vent her anger on, Suzette turned now to Landry, saying, "It is with this little wretch I have to do. With big boys he is as frightened as a hare, but with the little ones he is a perfect tyrant. I heard the dispute; it was all his fault, and either he or his brother must pay me for the pan, and the milk too."

Bonaventure vociferated in vain that he would neither pay for the pan nor the milk; but every one was against him.

"I have always heard," said Firmin, "that those who take baths should pay for them."

"It was not my fault that the pan happened to be there," said Bonaventure.

"My pan was in its proper place," said Suzette; but your brother's place was not in my pan; I hope, in future, you will teach him not to insult his elders. All this would not have happened if he had not spoken so disrespectfully of Père Caillaud. Come, pay me at once; if you don't, you must take your meals elsewhere, for I give you my word you shall never set foot here again."

Suzette's cooking was good, and Bonaventure was a bit of a glutton, so this threat undrew his purse-strings. But he was furious at having to pay about four shillings, and wiped the milk daubs off his brother so roughly, that the boy howled with the pain. Jean was so sorry for his vanquished enemy—whom Bonaventure had just released, after giving him five or six thumps by way of adieu—that the kind little fellow went up to him and offered him half his prunes; but instead of being grateful, Landry only made faces at him and ran away to hide his hatred and disgrace in a dark corner. Bonaventure paid the dairy-woman, and the misunderstanding passed off.

Jean's repartees amused the workmen, and they tried to draw him out, for he did not talk at random as children generally do, but only spoke when he was spoken to. The fact was, the little violin player could not forget Landry's epithet of beggar, and he several times asked the question—"I'm not a beggar, am I?"

"Certainly not," said Firmin, who had made the child sit beside him; "though," he added, "I hardly know how to call what you practise a trade."

"That's true," replied Père Caillaud; "I would much rather see him work in a manufactory or a workshop, as we do."

"And I should like it better too," said the child, clasping his hands, "for then I should have something to eat every day."

"But it is not so easily managed," observed Justin, looking at the child? "for you are very small and do not look strong."

"That is not my fault," said Jean, dropping his eyes sorrowfully.

"That is true," cried Firmin, kindly patting the child's head.

"We must try and get the manufacturer to take him."

"Master is sure to say no," said Bonaventure, shrugging his shoulders contemptuously; "for I had great trouble to get him to take my brother, who is a strong little fellow, and knows the business too—a different boy to that little brat."

"Ah, indeed, baths of milk ought to make people strong," whispered Jean.

The men could not help laughing.

"Very well answered, my little man," said Firmin.

"Listen," said Pierre, "I am interested in the child; and he will be ruined if he goes on wandering about the streets. Let us help him to be a good workman and an honest man."

"Agreed," said Firmin; "and this is what I propose—let him rest himself to-morrow, for it is Sunday. Meanwhile, let us buy him some warmer clothes, and on Monday we can take him to the factory, and try and get the master to give him a chance; never mind the wages at first. We can join together to keep him, till he can keep himself; what do you say to this plan, my friends?"

"All right," said Caillaud, getting up.

Each man now paid his score and prepared to leave.

"Where will you sleep to-night, my boy?" said Pierre to the child, who watched his friend's preparations for departure with sadness.

"I don't know," muttered Jean, feeling miserable at the thought of being all alone again.

"Will you go with me?" asked Firmin.

"Oh, yes;" said the child, his face lighting up.

"Then let us set off," continued Firmin; "come, wrap yourself up in my jacket; it makes my heart ache to see you so thinly clad such a cold night."

"What will you do yourself without your jacket?" said the dairy-woman, going up to Firmin.

"Oh, I am hearty enough; I shall do very well; he has hurt his foot, so I will carry him, and the exercise will keep me warm; I shall not take cold."

"No, no," said Suzette, you had better leave him here, and I will make him up a bed in the corner, and to-morrow we can see about getting him clothes; would you like to stay with me, my little friend?" she added, turning to the boy.

Jean had no wish to refuse, so he shook hands with the men, and wishing them good-bye in a thankful, gentle voice, increased the interest they already felt for him.

Firmin Nivelles and Père Caillaud were the last to leave. Firmin offered to see home the old man, who seemed very much shaken, and he feared Père Caillaud might have another fall on the hard snow.

Whilst the old man was taking leave of Jean, Firmin seized the opportunity of having a little conversation with Suzette. I ought here to mention that he was very fond of the young dairy-woman, and wanted to marry her, but for some time past she had received him very coldly. A good workman, a frank, loyal young man, he had, nevertheless, two great faults—he was excitable and violent, and easily led into quarrelling and fighting. These evil propensities alarmed Suzette, who would otherwise have liked the young man very much. This evening she wished him good night in such a friendly way, that Firmin was surprised and delighted.

"You have a kind heart, Firmin," said Suzette; "ah, why don't you correct your faults? you know what they are well enough."

"If I did, would you love me a little?" said he joyfully.

"Who can say what I might do? but there must be no more fighting."

"Well, if that is the case, I will try what I can do," said Firmin; to whom Suzette had never admitted so much before.

"Well, I must see about some clothes for the boy, and I will come and see him to-morrow. On Monday I will take him to the factory."

"Very well," said Suzette, shaking hands with him cordially

The young man went away, happy both from his own kind action, and the young milk-woman's friendly words.



CHAPTER III.

ENTRANCE TO THE MANUFACTORY—DIFFICULTIES AT THE OUTSET—MONSIEUR PEARSON—FERGAURAND THE FOREMAN—LITTLE VICTOR—FORTUNÉ, FANNY AND BEPPO - UNKIND PLAY—JEAN'S GOOD NATURE AND CLEVERNESS.

PIERRE CAILLAUD belonged to a rare type of men. He looked sixty, and everybody called him Father Caillaud, but in reality he was only just fifty. Worldly trouble and a rather irregular life had aged him before his time. When he spoke, he expressed himself with a correctness and facility very rarely found in people of his class. Though he sometimes affected rough manners, it was evident that he was not without education, and that at some time or other he must have occupied a very different position to the one he now

filled. His fellow-workmen had frequently seen gentlemen stop him in the street and speak to him, shaking hands with him, as with an equal. He did not like any one to allude to these meetings, which he avoided as much as possible, and, whenever they occurred, they left him very sad for two or three days afterwards. He was not the best workman in the manufactory, for, though he was the most intelligent, he was the least to be relied on. His kind obliging disposition made him in one sense very popular, but the men could not look up to him as they otherwise would have done, because they so frequently saw him intoxicated.

Pierre seemed to have been specially recommended by some mysterious protector to Monsieur Pearson, who was the managing director of the manufactory, and who once or twice had been on the point of making him foreman, when his own carelessness or intemperance had prevented the promotion.

When he left Suzette Villemot's dairy, Pierre formed the resolution not to enter any wine-shop on the following day, that he might keep his money for the little violin-player, but the force of habit was stronger than the old workman's will, and he was unable to resist his unfortunate propensity. When Monday arrived, he was still, with some other idlers, in a public-house, outside the barrier.

Firmin on the contrary had had courage to keep his word, and spent part of the Sunday by Suzette's fireside, talking to her and an old customer of hers. On Monday morning he came to fetch little Jean, whose impatience to get to the manufactory was so great that he had not slept since three o'clock in the morning, and he had been ready and waiting a long time when Firmin came for him. Cheerfully kissing his benefactress, he followed Firmin, who was almost as happy as the child himself, for, touched by his kindness and good conduct, Suzette had promised to marry him, if he continued steady.

As soon as they reached the manufactory, Firmin went to Monsieur Antoine Fergaurand, who was foreman of works and the manager's secretary. M. Fergaurand had been a workman himself; he was a man of average capacity, but vain and narrow-minded. He possessed many useful practical qualities, which would have been more appreciated than they were, had he not, like so many upstarts, tried to show his consequence by severity to those beneath him. The foreman preferred Bonaventure Cantinaud to all the other workmen, more from his obsequious character, than because of his assiduity at his work, though Bonaventure was an excellent workman, and justly merited approbation on that score. Firmin Nivelle and father Caillaud were, on the contrary, much disliked by the foreman; no doubt the ill-natured tales Bonaventure had told him about them had in some measure influenced the unfavourable opinion he had formed of these two men.

Firmin and little Jean met with a cold reception from Monsieur Fergaurand, for Bonaventure had only just left the foreman's office, when they went in to speak to him. Fergaurand had evidently been prejudiced against the boy, and his rough manner and harsh voice frightened Jean so much, that he was unable to answer correctly the questions put to him.

Firmin attempted to help the child, but the foreman interrupted him, saying—"Yours is certainly a fine recommendation; why, I have just received another letter from the police, complaining of the disturbance some of our men created about a week ago in a public-house at Vincennes—I know you were one of the number, and that it was you who beat the waiter."

We have already stated that a hasty temper was one of Firmin's great defects; so, though he well merited the foreman's reproaches, he answered this superior so rudely that Fergaurand forbade Jean ever to appear in the manufactory again, declaring also that he would explain Firmin's conduct to Monsieur Pearson directly he

came into the office, and that he should be dismissed from the manufactory.

Disconcerted by his defeat, and vexed with himself for having so soon broken his good resolution, and lost his temper, Firmin hung down his head and left the foreman's office, even more miserable than little Jean.

"Well, my child," said Firmin, "you had better go back to Suzette, but don't tell her I went into a passion, it would only make her unhappy, and do no one any good; come back here for me at twelve o'clock, then we can dine together and consult Father Caillaud, who always gives his friends good advice. Go along, my boy, and keep up your spirits."

"It is for you I am most sorry," said Jean. "If they send you away it will be all my fault, and then I shall be so unhappy."

"Don't let that vex you," said Firmin, assuming an air of indifference. "Be sure to be back by twelve."

Jean went back to the dairy, heavy-hearted. Luckily for him, Suzette was out marketing, so he avoided her questions, and about eleven o'clock he set out to return to the manufactory. In spite of the intense cold, he seated himself on a stone in the courtyard, to wait till the men left off work.

A large garden adjoined the manufactory, from which it was partitioned off by a sunk fence about a yard high. The large sheet of water in this garden was completely frozen over, and two children were playing on it. They were amusing themselves by rolling nuts on the ice and running after them: they often fell down, but only laughed at their mishaps, and quickly got up again. The little boy looked older than Jean, but the little girl could not have been more than four or five years old. Both the children were well dressed, especially the little boy, whose velvet blouse was trimmed with fur. They were joined in a few minutes by a third child, who walked with a crutch. To judge by this little boy's

manner, ~~he was out~~ without permission, for he kept glancing towards the house, as if fearful of being pursued. The other children received him coldly and would not play with him.

"Why did you come out, Victor?" said Fortuné Raynal to the little cripple; "we shall both be fetched in on your account. Besides, you can't run fast enough to play with us."

Fortuné pushed away his lame cousin and went on playing with Victor's sister, Fanny. The lame boy sighed heavily as he looked on at the other children's games, but a lively bark soon diverted his attention from their unkindness. A little King Charles' spaniel ran up to Victor, and began fawning on him; then the boy's face lighted up. "Good morning, Beppo; good morning, poor little Beppo!" said he, caressing the dog as if to thank him for his affection; and the dog tried to show his love by licking Victor's hands, and nibbling the ends of his shoes, jumping round the little boy and yelping all the time for joy.

"Fanny, look, there is Beppo," said Fortuné. "Beppo, Beppo, come here."

But the dog was afraid of the little boy's rough play, and evinced no inclination to obey his call.

Fanny then called the dog, showing him a bit of sugar. Beppo was very greedy—a fault which brought many misfortunes on him in the course of his career. Yielding to the temptation, Beppo escaped from Victor, who tried to hold him back, and ran to Fanny. Fortuné took advantage of the moment he was crunching the sugar to catch up the imprudent dog.

"Let us bathe him in the fountain," said Fortuné; "then his wet hair will freeze, and he'll look like a sugar-dog."

Fanny encouraged her naughty cousin, for she was too young to understand the unkindness of his suggestion.

The fountain was situated at the extremity of the pond, and the running water here was not frozen. In spite of Beppo's energetic

protestations and Victor's screams, Fortuné threw the dog into the midst of the fountain. Beppo had no inclination for a bath on such a bitter cold day, and swimming to the brink of the fountain tried to get out of the water, but the curb-stone was unfortunately so high that he could not surmount it. Poor little creature ! he howled piteously, struggling in vain in the icy water ; but he could not get a firm enough hold of the brim to jump out, and only tore his paws against the stones at the edge in his violent efforts to extricate himself.

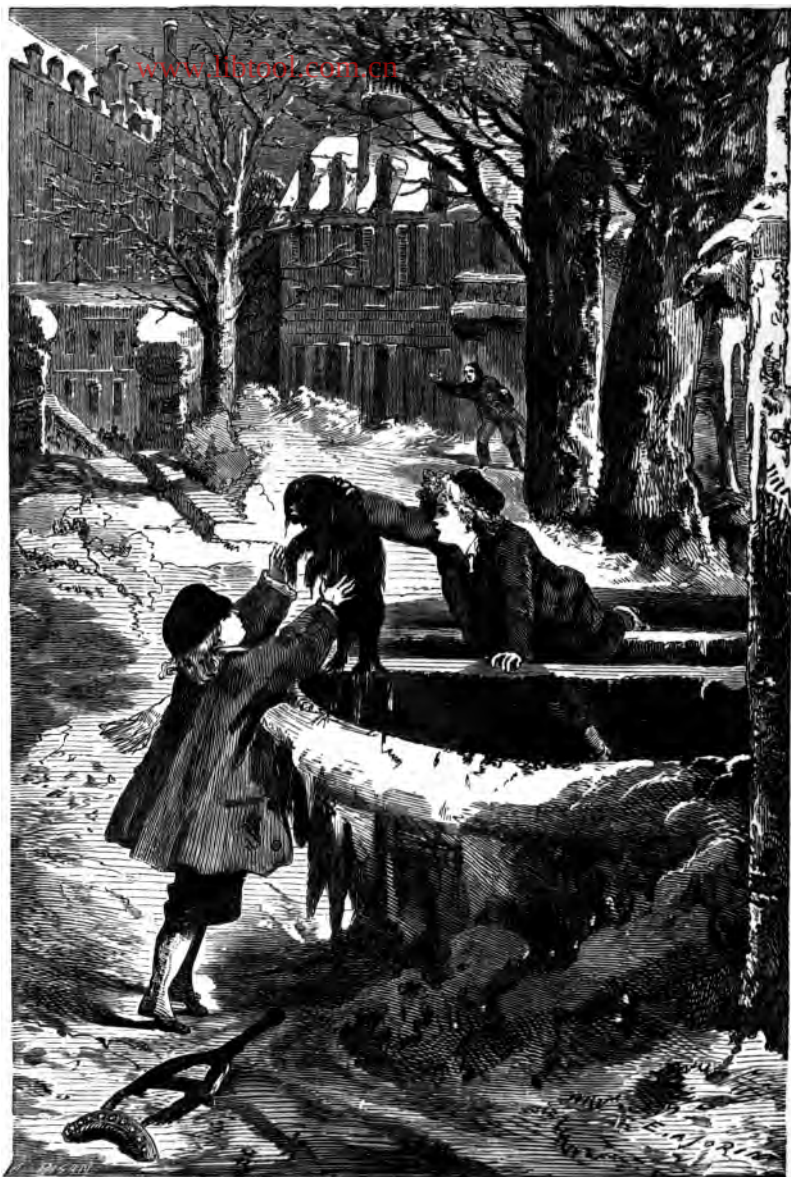
Fortuné saw that the dog was growing weaker, and in trying to pull him out of the water almost fell into the fountain himself. When he found he could not save the dog, he ran away with Fanny, as children often do when they have done wrong, both the culprits hoping to hide themselves.

Meanwhile Victor set off as fast as his lameness permitted to the assistance of his dog, but in his hurry the poor child fell on the ice, though he got up again bravely and reached the fountain. Beppo renewed his efforts when he saw the little boy coming, but his strength was quite exhausted, and he was beginning to sink.

Jean Belin had been a looker-on all the time, though he was too far off to see distinctly all that had happened, but he had not dared to interfere. Now, however, hearing Victor's piercing screams, he made up his mind to run and help him as well as he could. There was no time to lose, for with extraordinary courage, considering his lameness, Victor had climbed on two iron bars that were placed across the fountain to support some vases intended to be filled with water.

But he was not strong enough to keep a firm hold, and if Jean had not come to his assistance he must have fallen in another minute. Taking hold of his shoulders, Jean helped him out of his perilous position. As soon as Victor was safe, Jean

www.libtool.com.cn



To face page 21.

JEAN RESCUES BEPPO.

www.libtool.com.cn

www.libtool.com.cn

in his turn climbed on the iron bars, and advanced cautiously till he reached the spot immediately above Beppo ; then holding firmly on to the bars with his feet and left hand, Belin seized the dog with his right hand, and raised him to the edge of the curb-stone, whence Victor was able to take hold of the dog by his neck and drag him quite out of the water. As Jean was returning backwards, holding on firmly to the iron bars, which from the frost were more slippery than usual, a man ran up so fast from the bottom of the garden that he was quite panting when he reached the boys.

“Naughty child !” he exclaimed to Victor, “I suppose you want to be ill? You were forbidden to leave the house on account of the cold, and here you are dabbling in the icy water. Carry him in directly, François,” added he, handing over the contrite child to a servant who followed him. Victor wanted to tell his father how Jean had saved the dog, but the servant ran so fast with him and Beppo, whom the little boy held tight in his arms, that he had not time to say a word about Jean.



CHAPTER IV.

JEAN'S CRITICAL POSITION—HIS INNOCENCE IS RECOGNISED—VICTOR AND BEPPO'S GRATITUDE—PÈRE CAILLAUD AND FIRMIN NIVELLE ARE PARDONED—FIFTEEN SOUS A DAY—FORTUNE'S BAD DISPOSITION—HE IS CONDEMNED TO EAT DRY BREAD—LITTLE MARIA—THE TWO PARTIES—THE INVITATION.

WHEN Jean turned round, he found himself face to face with a gentleman, who asked him sternly, "Who is the naughty boy that threw the dog into the fountain?"

"It was not I, sir," said Belin, shaking his wet sleeves.

"It could not be Victor?"

"No, sir."

"Then who was it? for there were only you two here."

Jean was silent, for he would not denounce the other little boy.

"I'm sure it was this naughty little boy," said the foreman, coming up to them. "I refused this morning to let him work in the manufactory, and he must have thrown Master Victor's dog into the fountain out of revenge."

"How could that be," said Jean, vexed at the unjust accusation, "when it was I who took him out?"

"Then tell me who threw the dog in?" said Fergaurand.

But Jean would not say.

"I insist upon knowing all about it," said M. Pearson (for it was the manager who had been questioning Jean). "As for you, you little rascal, if you don't tell me the truth, I'll punish you in a way you won't easily forget."

M. Pearson went away to question his son, leaving poor trembling Jean in the ante-room with Fergaurand.

Victor was as disinclined to denounce his comrade as Jean had been, but when he was told that the little boy who saved Beppo was to be punished he did not like the innocent to suffer for the guilty, and was obliged to admit that Fortuné was the culprit. Fortuné boldly denied it, and accused the little stranger: he had also persuaded Fanny to tell the same tale, but she was unable to maintain the untruth when her father questioned her about it, and so Jean's innocence became evident.

M. Pearson went back to Jean with a large whip in his hand. "So, you little rogue, you refuse to tell me who threw the dog in, do you?" and M. Pearson raised the whip.

Jean said nothing.

M. Pearson now lifted the whip a second time.

"I told you I did not do it, sir," said Jean. "I never tell lies."

"I am sure he did it, sir," said Fergaurand; "you should punish him as he deserves."

M. Pearson raised the whip for the last time, but it was only to fling it away.

"You are a brave little fellow," said he, taking the astonished child in his arms. "I know the truth; Victor has told me how it all happened, and I will take you to his room to warm yourself and change your clothes. You had better go back to your office, Fergaurand," he added, in a cold tone; "and another time I hope you will not be so unjust."

The foreman went away abashed.

M. Pearson now took Jean to Victor's room, and the lame boy welcomed him with joy and gratitude. Beppo, now comforted by the warmth of the fire, jumped about Jean, as if to thank him for his timely assistance.

Meanwhile, M. Pearson ordered a cup of warm soup for Jean, and while he was being dressed in some of Victor's clothes went on questioning him.

The manager, M. Pearson, had a rough and somewhat stern manner; but he was a warm-hearted man, and could appreciate kind feeling in others. He was struck also by the frankness of Jean's answers. When the child had finished relating the events of his short life, M. Pearson said to him, "How shall I make up to you, my little fellow, for my unjust suspicions?"

"If you would forgive Firmin Nivelle," said Jean, clasping his hands entreatingly.

M. Pearson frowned, though he was touched by the little boy's kind intentions. After a moment's reflection, the manager said, "I will forgive Firmin this once, for your sake; but it was very wrong of him to answer his superior so insolently. Do you want me to do anything else?"

"There's Père Caillaud, too, sir," said Jean, timidly.

"And so you think, forsooth, that he merits a recompense, too?"

"Ah, sir, if he had not kindly taken care of me that night, I should not have been here now."

"Well, what next?"

"Well, then, Beppo would have been drowned, and perhaps Master Victor would have fallen into the fountain."

"There's no perhaps about it," said Victor, clapping his hands. "If little Jean had not come just when he did, I should certainly have fallen into the water, for I couldn't have held on to the iron bar a minute longer; and then, papa, Beppo and I should both have been drowned."

"You'd make a first-rate pleader, my little man," said M. Pearson, kindly patting Jean's head, to conceal how much the child's words affected him.

"Well, I suppose I must let your friend Caillaud have the work he has been asking me for all last week, though he scarcely deserves it. And now for yourself: you have not asked me for anything for your own advantage; but I will let you work in the factory, and give you fifteen sous a day to begin with. Work well, be industrious and steady, and I will not forget you. Where do you live?"

"Rue Saint-Sebastien, at Suzette Villemot's."

"I know her—she is a good girl; tell her to come and speak to me to-morrow before twelve o'clock. I shall try and persuade her to let you board with her. Good-bye, my child; here, take this letter to Mathurin Granger, at that door which is standing open. He will supply your wants till I can go into the workshop and speak about you myself. I will make you a present of the clothes you have on, and you can come back here to-morrow and fetch your old things to work in."

"Papa," said Victor, as Jean was going away quite happy, "you will let him come and play with me, sometimes, won't you?"

"I will see all about that," said M. Pearson; "but I can't even think of it, unless you are more obedient than you were to-day. Besides, I must wait and see whether Jean is a good boy."

"Sir," said a servant, opening the door, "Master Fortuné has

flung the dry bread and water you desired me to take him up for breakfast out of the window."

"Then, desire François to pick up the bread, and give it to Master Fortuné for his dinner this evening, and tell the young gentleman that he will have three days' punishment instead of two.

"As for you, Victor," he continued, "I bought the new children's magazine for you, which you wished so much to have ; but as you disobeyed your mamma's wishes and went out in the cold, I can't give it to you to-day. I don't punish you more severely, because you were so kind to little Jean."

M. Pearson now left the room, and Victor no doubt began thinking how he could best deserve the book, which was so full of stories and prints : he felt very glad his father had been so pleased with Jean, and happy that he had helped to reinstate him in his father's good opinion.

Meanwhile, Jean entered on his apprenticeship. He knew he was younger and less robust than the other factory children, and he determined, as far as he could, to make up for these involuntary defects by his zeal and industry. He soon became popular with the men ; and though the foreman still felt rather spitefully towards him, he could not avoid testifying to his good conduct.

Suzette was delighted with her little boarder, and took as much care of him as if he had been her own child. I think she liked him, partly for the share he had had in reforming Firmin. The young man had taken to spending his Sunday evenings at the dairy, with her and little Jean, and had also given up making Monday a holiday. Firmin's purse, health, and reputation had all gained by the change, and M. Pearson had complimented him on it. But poor Père Caillaud was still the same : it would have required more courage and perseverance than the old man possessed to conquer intemperate habits of such long standing.

After a few weeks, when M. Pearson felt he might rely on Jean's

good behaviour, he invited the little boy one afternoon to play with his children. Besides Victor and Fanny, Jean always met there Fortuné Raynal and his sister Maria. They were orphans, their parents having been dead about two years : M. Pearson had been appointed their guardian, and they lived with the Pearson family. Their father, who was Mme. Pearson's brother, had left a large fortune to be divided between the two children. Fortuné was about a year older than Jean, and Maria was a dear little girl just three years old, and the pet of all the house. M. Pearson was quite as fond of his little nephew and niece as he was of his own children. The servants, in their indiscreet gossip and flattery, had filled Fortuné's head with the idea of his expectations ; and he had, in consequence, grown up proud and insolent.

"I have no need to work," he would say, with a manner which made sensible people shrug their shoulders, and drew down his uncle's displeasure. Indeed, his uncle and aunt always reproved him when they heard him make such remarks.

M. Pearson had begun his career as a common workman, and had attained his present position by his own assiduity, intelligence, and activity ; he might, therefore, have been justly proud of owing his success to no one, but he was a most unostentatious and modest man. Wishing his children to grow up free from false pride of their position, he selected several of the factory children for their playmates. Landry Cantinaud, who was an industrious and steady boy, was one of the number, but, though he carefully concealed his evil disposition, the little Norman was never a favourite with Victor.

Jean was amiable from genuine goodness of heart, but Landry never did any one a kindness without calculating how he might be benefited in return. To those who could be useful to him, he was as submissive as he was exacting to those from whom he had

nothing to hope. Both Fortuné and Landry disliked Jean, and did all they could to make M. and Mme. Pearson think ill of him. Fanny was not really a naughty child, but she was so completely under her cousin's influence that she invariably took his part.

But Victor and little Maria always befriended Jean, when the others quarrelled with him, so the children, from the beginning of Jean's visits to the Pearsons, were divided into two parties.

At first, the other little factory boys who shared the holiday amusements followed Fortuné and Landry's banner, finding it more entertaining to run about with them than to play with poor little Victor, whose lameness deprived him of many pleasures. After a time, however, they grew tired of Fortuné's imperious temper : he was fond of ordering his playmates about, and thought nothing of striking them if they resisted his will ; though, like most tyrants, he was cowardly and would scream violently if one of his companions gave him the lightest blow in return. Jean never left Victor and Maria ; he was a very attractive companion, from his even temper and spirit of invention, and little by little the other children joined the three friends, and at last even Fortuné and Landry followed the general example. Fortuné was sometimes cross that they would not do as he wished, and he would go and sulk in a corner ; but when he saw they paid no attention to him he would rejoin his companions, grumbling all the while. Fortuné had been spoiled by an old nurse, and he could not forgive Jean for having more influence over the factory children than he had. Landry was envious of every one, and the little presents made to Jean were, in his estimation, so much taken away from himself.

www.libtool.com.cn

www.libtool.com.cn



JEAN AMUSÉS VICTOR AND MARIA

To face page 28.

www.libtool.com.cn



CHAPTER V.

JEAN'S FOLLIES—BAD INFLUENCES—VICTOR'S FRIENDSHIP—JEAN RECEIVES A LETTER—REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS—HE LEARNS TO READ—A LESSON TO VAIN PEOPLE—LANDRY THE TELL-TALE.

EIGHTEEN months passed in this way. It was Easter in the following year, and the little Pearsons and their cousins were absent on a fortnight's visit to a relation of Mme. Pearson's in the country. Jean in their absence had made the acquaintance of a bad little boy who worked in a neighbouring manufactory. This little scamp was two years older than Jean, over whom he acquired a sort of influence. Jean's new acquaintance gave him very bad advice, taught him to smoke, to wear his cap on one side, and even to swear a little. Jean was not without ambition, which is not a bad thing if properly

developed, but his very mischievous if ill directed. Suzette was also absent, having gone to her home to make the necessary preparations for her marriage with Firmin Nivelles. Firmin was not fit to guide a child, though his betrothed's salutary influence had wrought such a change in him.

When the little scapegrace smoked and swore, the workmen shouted with laughter ; and instead of seeing they were ridiculing him, Jean took their laughter for applause, and went on making himself more and more absurd. Bonaventure and Landry were delighted to see him so foolish ; they praised his new ways so much that the little simpleton was taken in by their flattery.

One day when Jean was in the courtyard, his cap on one side and his pipe in his mouth, M. Pearson passed through and frowned when he saw the boy, instead of wishing him good-morning as he always used to do. Bonaventure and Landry saw this and were delighted ; but Jean was too much elated with his imaginary success to notice his master's displeasure.

When Victor and the other children returned, their holiday amusements were resumed, but Jean was not invited to join them. The first time he thought they must have forgotten to ask him, but when another holiday passed without his being invited, he understood that M. Pearson had purposely omitted him. So, to show his pride and indifference, he spent the day running about the streets with two or three other factory children. They behaved very badly and insulted the people in the streets, getting well trounced for their rudeness. When they went home in the evening they were weary, and their clothes were torn and covered with mud. Surely this was dull work.

"You are ruining yourself, my little friend," said Father Caillaud to him the next day. "I know by experience the harm bad companions and false pride do people, for they were the ruin of me, tempting me to be more foolish even than my companions. You

are sadly in want of Suzette," he continued ; " if she doesn't come back soon you'll get sent away from the factory."

Jean hung down his head and ran away. He began to suspect he had been doing wrong, but false shame prevented him from acknowledging his errors. The following Monday, a boy who had spent Sunday afternoon at M. Pearson's brought him a letter from his friend Victor. The lame boy's letter did not rival one of Mme. de Sevigné's either in style or orthography, but it was a very nice letter for a child of his age, and the kind intention which dictated it was worthy of all praise.

It began :

"MY DEAR FRIEND JEAN,—

"PAPA is very angry with you, and mamma will not let you come here again ; they say you have a pipe ; and you were not invited here on Sunday because papa says you are a little scamp. Landry says you use bad language. I told him that could not be true. Oh, Jean, all this makes me very unhappy, and Maria too ! Fortuné has torn his Tom Thumb, where the pictures are—Fanny has a beautiful doll which my aunt gave her—and I have a rocking-horse, but Fortuné is always riding on it, though he will not lend me his gun or his bow and arrows. Beppo was ill at Moulin Joli, from eating poison balls ; but he did not go mad. Ask papa to forgive you, and let you come back here next Sunday. I wanted to send you a cake, but I let Stanislas eat it because he promised to give you my letter. It is not well-written, but I had a bad pen. and little Maria has been shaking the table all the time, trying to see what I was writing ; but still I'm very fond of her, for she always takes your part. The rose-tree we three planted in the little walk did not grow, for the ill-natured gardener cut it down for fire-wood. I send you my love, and so does Maria."

Jean could not read ; so he was obliged to get one of his com-

rades to decipher this long letter, which had cost poor Victor so much time writing. With his heart softened by this proof of his little playmate's friendship, and excessively ashamed of himself, poor Jean hid himself in a corner, and wept bitterly.

"What makes that little fellow cry so?" said M. Pearson, who happened to be passing by.

"I know all about it, sir," said Landry, eagerly. "Stanislas gave him a letter this morning from Master Victor. I wouldn't take the letter, sir, because I knew you had forbidden it; but Stanislas took it to Jean, because Master Victor gave him a cake to do so. I wouldn't have disobeyed you so, sir. I heard Jean say yesterday that he didn't care about M. Fergaurand; that it was no matter to him whether he was pleased or displeased; and that—"

"There—that's enough: I didn't ask you to tell me such a long story," said M. Pearson; for he did not like tell-tales. "Go back to your work, Landry. Jean, show me your letter," he added; and the little boy wiped his eyes and, trembling, held it up.

Landry looked rather ashamed; and Firmin, who happened to be passing by, gave him a smart blow; another workman near him gave his ears a hard pull; and the factory children, who liked Belin, jeered at him, till he ran away, crying from shame and anger.

M. Pearson left the yard, making Jean a sign to follow him; for he did not wish to punish the other children or interfere, by his presence, with the chastisement they were giving the little tell-tale. M. Pearson smiled, as he read Victor's letter: he felt very happy to see this evidence of his little boy's sense and kind-heartedness. A good impulse made Jean fling himself at M. Pearson's feet, saying:

"Oh, sir, I didn't know how wrong it was! I thought it was like a man to smoke and do ~~all~~ that, and fancied it would make me a good workman all the sooner. Suzette has gone home, and

no one told me it was wrong. But, O sir, if you will forgive me this once, I'll be a good boy, and not do those naughty things again; only do let me see Master Victor: 'tis not for the tops, or the hoops, nor the cakes either; but do let me see Victor and little Maria."

M. Pearson was touched by the child's frank, earnest petition. "Perhaps I have been too severe," thought he; "the poor child is alone in the world, and has no one to guide or direct him. Get up, Jean," said he, helping the boy to rise, "I will forgive you this once; but tell me, how did you manage to learn all those bad tricks so quickly?" Little Jean took hold of the hand M. Pearson had stretched out to help him to rise, and kissed it fervently—showing, perhaps, more gratitude by this gesture than he could have expressed by all the protestations in the world. The child then explained how he had become such a naughty boy. M. Pearson had had too varied an experience of human nature not to see that Jean spoke the truth, and he kindly explained to him how wrong he had been.

"Will you do something, Jean," he said, "to make me forget your faults?"

"O yes, sir, anything you wish."

"Can you read?"

"No, sir."

"Well, then, learn to read. When you know all your letters by heart, you shall see Victor; and when you can read, you shall come to us again on Sundays, as you used to do. Go to Monsieur Saulmier, who has an evening class for the work-people, and tell him I will pay for your lessons. There—go away now, for I have a great deal to do."

As he spoke, the worthy man gave Jean a friendly tap on the cheek, and plunged into his correspondence, leaving Jean overwhelmed with gratitude.

Jean, as we know, was intelligent and persevering, and in three days had learned all his letters by heart; but the difficulty was, to make M. Pearson aware of this. The boy walked about the court, and wandered about M. Pearson's office, with his alphabet under his arm, seeking in vain to attract attention; but the manager had so many serious things to think of, that he never saw him; and Jean was afraid to speak to him, lest he should interrupt his master's important occupations. Fortunately for Jean, his friend Victor, who was quite as impatient as he was, had seen all these manoeuvres from his room window, and suspected the cause.

"Papa," said he, as they were leaving the dinner table, "I'm sure Jean knows his letters."

"How do you know that?" said his mother, whom Fortuné and Fanny had prejudiced against Jean.

"Because he is walking about the yard, with a book under his arm, mamma; and I'm quite sure . . . there—look, papa, don't you see him going by your office window, and looking up?"

"We'll see. François, call Jean Belin, and tell him to come in."

M. Pearson always kept his word, even when his doing so seemed unimportant to people in general; for he was very anxious his children should consider a promise sacred, and never missed an opportunity of impressing this upon them: therefore, in spite of his numerous occupations, he did not delay fulfilling his promise to the young workman. As soon as Jean entered the room, Victor and Maria flung their arms round his neck; Fanny, after a momentary hesitation, did so too; and even Fortuné, though rather coldly and disdainfully, followed their example.

"Do you know your letters already, Jean?" said M. Pearson, who, without making any observation on the subject, had remarked the conduct of each of the children.

"Yes, sir."

"Well?"

"I believe so, sir."

"Then, let me hear you say them."

Though rather frightened, Jean got through the examination famously.

"Bravo!" said M. Pearson. "You may stay here till eight o'clock, and play with the children, if you like."

Fortuné looked contemptuously at Jean's working-clothes; and Fanny, who always imitated her cousin, shook her head disdainfully.

"My little lady and gentleman," said M. Pearson ironically, "your grandfather mixed mortar for masons: I beg you to remember that when he did so, he was much less well-dressed than Jean is now. I have been a workman myself; and if I had always worn new clothes and silk cravats, you could not have lived in such a nice house, or been as well clothed and fed as you are now, my dear Fanny."

Fanny hung down her head, and cried; and Fortuné felt ashamed too, and went into a corner to sulk.

"You may as well empty your pocket, Victor," said his father, smiling.

Victor became quite red, for he had secretly put all his dessert into his pocket for his friend Jean. But M. Pearson only took his little son's head affectionately between his hands, saying, "Always be kind-hearted, my dear child."

The children soon began playing. Fanny and Maria tried to persuade Fortuné to join them, but he pushed the little girls unkindly away. By-and-by, however, when he saw that no one paid any attention to his ill-humour, he gradually came nearer to his little companions, and soon took part in a merry game of nine-pins. Poor Victor was soon tired, and obliged to leave off. Jean was very fond of all games of skill, but he instantly left the nine-pins to amuse the lame boy. "Listen," said Victor; "papa won't let you

come here on Sundays, Jean, till you can read ; but, if you like, I will teach you."

Jean was delighted ; and Victor entered at once on his office of tutor. Poor Victor was not a first-rate teacher, for there is a great difference between knowing a thing and being able to impart knowledge to another ; but, as Jean was very intelligent, and teacher and learner both did their best, they got on pretty well. Victor had never been more happy, and he begged his father the next day to let him give Jean another lesson.

The ill health of the poor child deprived him of so many pleasures, that his father was glad of an opportunity of amusing him and rewarding at the same time his steadiness and application to study ; M. Pearson, therefore, readily gave his permission.

But Jean, in spite of the assiduity of both master and pupil, would not have made very rapid progress, if he had not continued M. Saulmier's lessons also. When Jean returned home, after the evening class was over, he would go on learning his lessons by Suzette's side, till she was obliged to scold him, to get him to go to bed ; and sometimes, taking the books out of his hands, she would pull his ears laughingly. Jean slept in a loft over the room behind the shop ; but, before she sent him up to bed, Suzette always heard him say his prayers, and gave him a good-night kiss. Five minutes after he was upstairs, Jean was sound asleep.



CHAPTER VI.

**PERSEVERANCE AT HIS STUDIES—VICTOR'S ILLNESS—JEAN'S DEVOTION TO HIS
FRIEND—PROGRESS—LITTLE MARIA'S TIMIDITY.**

JEAN was so persevering and intelligent that he soon learned to read. He gained in many ways by his love of study, and M. Pearson thought so well of him, that he prophesied he would some day take a higher standing than that of a mere workman.

"My boy," said he, "your future life greatly depends on yourself; God has endowed you with a good capacity and a fair share of health, for though you appear delicate, and are small and thin, I see you are active and can bear fatigue; if you try to learn all you can, and behave well, you may become a foreman, or even a manager as I am."

"What should I learn, sir?"

"First writing, then arithmetic, and afterwards, if you can manage it, drawing and perspective."

"I will try, sir," said Jean artlessly.

"When you want books, ask Victor, and he will supply you."

Stimulated by these encouraging words, Jean went to work with fresh ardour. His friend Victor, whose education was superior to that of most children of his age, directed his studies; and it was often very touching to listen to the conversation of the two children: Jean told his friend of all the difficulties he met with in his studies, and also what his next day's lessons were to be, Victor listening with all the gravity of an experienced professor. Then he would bring out his old copy-books to give Jean, repeating to him, as well as he could remember, what his master had told him when he was learning. As is so natural with children, a shout of laughter would often interrupt these serious conversations; the studies going on after the merriment even better than before.

Victor was always thinking of his friend, and never lost an opportunity of speaking kindly of him to his father and mother. It was wonderful to see the tact with which the lame boy knew how to choose a time when his father was most happy, and least preoccupied with business, to ask him to give Jean some book, or to pay for some master for him. M. Pearson could not always grant these requests, for the father of a family cannot on all occasions follow his generous impulses; but he was delighted to see these evidences of his son's kind heart. Little Maria invariably supported her cousin's petitions, though very often she did not understand what the request was about; but she would say coaxingly to her uncle, "Dear uncle, do give it to Jean, he is always so kind to us." And when M. Pearson said he had no money, she would offer him her own purse, which she knew contained a large piece of gold. Even Fanny would sometimes side with the petitioners in

favour of poor Jean ; but this depended somewhat on the caprice of the moment, and still more on Fortuné's temper, and the way in which he and Jean had parted the night before ; she never yielded to any one but Fortuné, and he never gave way to any one at all, always doing as he chose without consulting any one's wishes, excepting when necessity compelled him to bend before a command from his uncle or aunt.

A few months after this, Victor was seized with scarlet fever, and as soon as Jean heard of his friend's illness, he hastened to M. Pearson's, and entreated to be allowed to see him. His request, however, was refused, for this malady is contagious, and it was feared he might take it. Though M. Pearson knew how much his son longed to see him, he would not expose poor Jean to the infection.

"I am not afraid of the fever," said Jean, crying bitterly, "besides, it wouldn't matter if I were to take it, for I am alone in the world, and my being ill would not make any one unhappy."

"Why, my little fellow," said M. Pearson, patting his head affectionately, "don't we all love you !"

"Well then, sir, if you do care for me, let me see Victor ; it makes me ill to think he is suffering, and that I cannot be with him ; I do believe even that he asks for me—I am sure he does, sir ; I would be so quiet in the room, and I could amuse him and read to him, and I would work at night to make up for lost time."

M. Pearson would not consent, but he took the child's hand kindly in his, and told him to go back to his work.

Jean, however, was not to be baffled. I am sure I don't know how he managed it, but he did contrive to get into the sick-room, for M. Pearson found him there one night, when Victor was getting a little better, sitting at the head of the bed, and amusing the little invalid by telling him stories, though he took care to speak in a low voice.

www.libtool.com.cn

time in a large room with Jean : at last poor Jean also fell ill. He wished to go home to be nursed ; but M. Pearson insisted on his keeping his room near Victor's. It was now Victor's turn to tend his little companion, who was taken quite as much care of as if he had been one of M. Pearson's family.

Mme. Pearson was vexed at Victor's being allowed to nurse his little friend, but M. Pearson was too just a man not to approve his son's conduct.

"My dear," said he to his wife, "if we wish to have friends, we must prove ourselves worthy of their friendship ; you know how dearly I love Victor, but I would rather lose him, than see him selfish and ungrateful."

Jean's illness did not last long, the child's hardy constitution soon got the upper hand. The fever proved a salutary crisis both to him and Victor, for Jean grew a good deal, and when the fever spots left his face, his complexion became bright and clear, quite different from his former pale and sallow face. Victor was weak for a long time after his illness, though much less lame than before, and the doctors even told his father that they hoped some day he would walk as well as any one. Jean took advantage of his absence from the factory to pursue his education assiduously. M. Pearson hoped, both for his son's sake and for Jean's, that the little workman might, in time, become a sort of secretary, and he made him go through all the workshops, that he might understand the various departments in the factory. At first he did not appear to have much inclination for calculation of any kind, but when M. Pearson explained to him that it was the foundation of all practical education, he surmounted his dislike to figures, and soon found out that in all branches of study, it is only the beginning which is tiresome. He soon mastered arithmetic, and pleased with his success, went on to algebra and geometry.

When Jean was quite recovered and able to return to the factory,

M. Pearson promoted him to the task of copying letters and keeping accounts, and taught him by degrees some of the rules of book-keeping. Victor, though perhaps more talented than Jean, did not get on so fast; there may have been a reason for this. It is true he was not conceited like Fortuné, but still, as he knew he should be rich some day, he did not apply himself with the energy of a boy who feels he has to make his own fortune.

Jean knew that his success must depend on his own exertions, and a praiseworthy desire to raise himself by his education to the level of his friends, spurred him on to surmount difficulties.

At twelve years old Jean was an advanced apprentice, making up by his handiness and intelligence for the physical strength in which he was still deficient. His moral education kept pace with his intellectual, and he possessed all the qualities necessary for becoming a distinguished man.

M. Pearson was desirous that Fortuné should take an interest in the manufactory, for he thought it would give him the habit of application, but he was too idle to succeed in anything. He did not lack capacity, but everything requires cultivation to bring it to perfection. Study would have developed his intellect, but the indolence in which he persisted, decreased rather than increased his powers of attainment. Fanny had plenty of perseverance, but unfortunately, she took advantage of her mother's fondness, and applied herself only to just what she liked.

Maria was not so pretty as her cousin, but her grace and gentleness made her more than Fanny's equal. She was good and obedient, but her great faults were over credulousness and excessive timidity; she was so easily alarmed, that no one could help laughing at her. When she was about six years old, she once spent a whole night crying, because her brother had told her that a cat belonging to the house had given her favourite goat a pair of wings for a Christmas-box, and that he would fly away with the great

turkey from the farm-yard. Another time she stayed awake a whole night, because she feared that a king of savages, of whom they had told her, would roast her and eat her.

Her cousin Victor was very fond of her, and did all he could to cure her of this foolish weakness. When her uncle laughed at her groundless fears, she would climb on his knee, and say in a determined tone, "I will never be afraid again, I will be brave from to-day, uncle;" but if five minutes afterwards she heard a dog bark, she would run and hide herself in her aunt's dress, without heeding her uncle's observations or the promises she had just made. Like most busy people, M. Pearson was very fond of his home, and spent almost every evening in his family circle. He talked to his wife, played with his children, and evinced a gaiety and an animation one would never have expected from a man outwardly so stern.



CHAPTER VII.

SERIOUS EVENTS—MONSIEUR PEARSON LEAVES THE MANUFACTORY—PROJECTED EMIGRATION TO CEYLON—DEPARTURE—"JULIE," THE THREE-MAST SAILING VESSEL, AND HER FOURTEEN PASSENGERS.

THE day came, however, when a series of untoward events put a stop to all this enjoyment. Some differences, relative to the manufactory, sprang up between the manager and the shareholders, and Fergaurand the foreman, who was sly and envious, took advantage of these misunderstandings to repay all M. Pearson's kindness with the basest ingratitude. He ingratiated

himself with some of the principal shareholders, and succeeded in supplanting his benefactor.

A discussion arose; M. Pearson naturally felt indignant at the unjust distrust of people who owed part of their fortune to his energy and capacity, and giving way to excusable irritation, he sent in his resignation, which was accepted. This ingratitude came unexpectedly on the worthy man—he sent in all the account-books and papers relating to the business to the sleeping partners, and withdrew, broken-hearted. Before a week had elapsed, the management of the factory was entrusted to the perfidious Fergaurand.

The new manager made many changes, partly to show his economy and give himself importance, but also to gratify his dislike to some of the workmen. Of course, Père Caillaud, Firmin Nivelle, and Jean Belin were among the workmen who were dismissed. M. Pearson felt that these poor people were deprived of their work because of their attachment to him, and this thought added to his sorrow. He was pondering how he could help his old workmen, when one of his relations, who was a sailor, returned from a voyage round the world, and told him there was a most promising opening for him on the coast of Ceylon. By cutting down the forests of valuable wood which grew quite close to the coast, and shipping the timber to Europe, a fortune might be made. For he said these forests were near the mouth of a river and a small sea-port where ships often came.

Many people are only our friends as long as we are prosperous, and misfortunes are a severe test of friendship; poor M. Pearson had met with so much ingratitude, and was so deeply hurt at the behaviour of so many whom he had considered his friends, that he felt disgusted with the world, and, in his present frame of mind, listened eagerly to his cousin's proposal, and to the praises of Ceylon. Ascertaining that it undoubtedly would be a capital

speculation for an active, intelligent man, if he had sufficient ready money at his disposal, and could take out with him five or six experienced workmen to superintend the native work-people, he determined to go; and about three months after his resignation, M. Pearson began his preparations for the voyage. He had thought, at first, of leaving his wife and children in Europe, but Mme. Pearson had insisted on accompanying her husband, and, I must admit, that he was delighted she should do so.

The climate of the part of Ceylon to which they were going is very salubrious, and no part of the world is better adapted for delicate chests. M. and Mme. Pearson therefore decided to take Victor and Fanny with them, and all the children begged that the little Raynals might go also. Maria's mother had died of consumption, and the Paris winters were always too cold for the little girl; consequently, the doctors thought that the sea-voyage and warm climate of Ceylon might be of great benefit to her. Fortuné enjoyed excellent health, but his indolence and faulty disposition grieved his uncle and aunt, and made them very anxious about him. He had been turned out of two schools, and would often spend a whole day without coming home. His uncle was therefore glad of an opportunity of removing the boy from the temptations of a Paris life.

M. Pearson, though a strict master, was a just one, and he easily found men willing to join his expedition. First, he selected those who, from their attachment to him, had been turned out of the manufactory—Père Caillaud, Firmin, and Jean. M. Pearson had hesitated whether he could take Caillaud, on account of his intemperate habits, which made it difficult to rely on him; but, instigated by Jean, Victor had persuaded his father to take him, and it was agreed that the old man should go.

Firmin's comrades had taken advantage of his easy generosity

to get things from the dairy on credit, so that he and Suzette, long since married, had not been in a flourishing state for some time past; and Firmin himself, no longer under M. Pearson's firm but kind rule, was less steady than when he first married; therefore his wife was delighted at the idea of going to Ceylon with the Pearsons, and she sold her interest in the dairy to a neighbour.

As Suzette was to direct the cows and dairy in Ceylon, M. Pearson commissioned her to procure the necessary utensils for that part of their future establishment.

Besides Père Caillaud, Firmin, and Jean, M. Pearson engaged a blacksmith, a locksmith, and a mason, for he wished to establish a saw-mill in Ceylon. The machinery was taken out ready to put together, and each piece was numbered, so that the mill might be the more readily set up when they got out there. Lest I should tire my readers, I will pass over all the other details connected with the preparations for leaving France.

In spite of M. Pearson's efforts to quit Paris as speedily as possible, six months elapsed before they were able to set out; for feeling that all the responsibility of the expedition rested on himself, he was anxious not to neglect anything likely to contribute to the success of the undertaking or the well-being of those who were trusting in him. Tools of all sorts, utensils, clothes, wraps, beds, fire-arms, ammunition, drugs, books, paper, and other writing materials, &c. &c. filled enormous chests, and were shipped on board a large vessel at Havre. Just as M. Pearson and all his people were on the point of leaving Paris, Landry came and begged Fortuné to get his uncle to take him out with the other workmen; as Landry was a good workman for his age, and the children retained a sort of friendship for him, M. Pearson willingly consented that the boy should join the expedition.

The little band which left Paris for Havre in May, 1840, consisted of fourteen people, M. and Mme. Pearson, Victor, Fanny, Fortuné, and Maria; Firmin and Suzette, Jean, Caillaud, Landry, Benoît Ricquet the mason, Christophe Lanterac the engineer, and Thomas Vergnié the carpenter. Jean and Victor were rather more than twelve years old, and Fortuné and Landry were about a year older. Fanny was nine, and Maria seven.

M. Pearson defrayed every one's passage, and it cost him a large sum of money. They embarked on the three-masted ship, the *Julie*, Captain Porzie, and sailed out of the port of Havre, 18th May, 1840.



CHAPTER VIII.

COMMENCEMENT OF THE VOYAGE—THE SEA AND THE LAKE OF ENGHEN—
LANDRY'S LEMONADE—FORTUNÉ AND LANDRY'S MISHAP—THE SEA-SICKNESS
AND THE TAR—THE STUFFED CUSHIONS IN THE CUDDY.

THE preparations for a long sea-voyage and the novelty of embarking on board a ship always delight children. Jean had an adventurous spirit, but had never yet been out of Paris ; he could not contain his joy, and Victor was scarcely less enchanted. The sight of the sea made a great impression on them, and they never tired of watching the waves as they rolled against the sides of

the vessel, and lashed it with their fringe of froth. Fortuné laughed at their enthusiasm, for he thought it manly not to admire anything.

"Have you ever seen the sea before, young master?" asked a sailor, when they were weighing anchor.

"I've seen the lake of Enghien, and that is much the same thing," said Fortuné, shrugging his shoulders contemptuously.

"It is just the same," said Landry, who, though he had never even seen the lake of Enghien, was always of the same opinion as Fortuné.

"Pshaw," said a sailor, sily, "I suspect you will find a pretty considerable difference before many days are passed. To begin with, the water at Enghien, has no taste, whereas here it is very sweet."

"Is it?" said Landry, opening his eyes very wide.

Fortuné knew this was not true, but he was too fond of amusing himself at other people's expense to undeceive his companion.

"It is not to be wondered at," added the sailor, quite gravely, "for three ships laden with sugar went down near here only last week, besides a vessel full of oranges."

"I should not be astonished if the sea had a taste like lemonade," said the man at the helm, entering into the joke.

The first sailor drawing up some water in a bucket, pretended to taste it. "There is not quite enough orange," said he, "but still it is very good—would you like to taste it, little boy?"

Landry was delighted; they filled a cup for him, and he swallowed more than half of it at a draught. I will leave my readers to imagine the sort of face he made, and the "pouah, pouahs," he went on uttering for more than an hour afterwards. Little Maria had also held out her hand for the cup, but she asked for it in such a nice modest way, that the sailor had no wish to play her the trick he had played Landry.

Of course, after Landry's experience, she did not renew her request. The sea became very rough next day, and the ship danced on it with a movement like that of a rocking-horse. It is this pitching kind of motion at sea which makes people more ill than any other. Jean, as usual, was always trying to learn something, and he made himself useful in helping the sailors whenever he possibly could. At first they ridiculed him for his awkwardness, for Jean could with difficulty stand upright; but when they saw that he laughed too, and persisted in trying again, they began to like him, and gave him a little advice as to what he should do.

Jean soon learned to walk steadily on deck, and he made himself very useful, in helping the sailors with the ropes, or in trimming the cargo, and his constant activity prevented his being half as ill as any of the other passengers. Fanny and Mme. Pearson had lain down as soon as the sea became rough, though this is the most certain way of being sea-sick, and they were very ill; Maria was the only one of the Pearson family who kept well, and she spent her time in nursing her aunt and cousin. As for Landry and Fortuné, who could neither of them endure the least suffering without complaining, they had fallen down on a heap of ropes, and lay there groaning dreadfully.

"You children are in the way there," said a sailor, "go along, you can sit on the hencoops if you like."

The poop, or raised back part of a ship is devoted to the cabins of the Captain and first-class passengers, and in many vessels hencoops are placed round the poop—leaving the centre of this part of the ship free to move about on. These hencoops are boarded over with painted wooden planks, and serve as benches for the passengers—as for the poor hens it is their fate to be killed and eaten.

Fortuné paid no attention to the sailor's injunction to move away from that part of the vessel, but went on rolling about on

the ropes, and Landry of course imitated him. The Captain now came to that part of the vessel, having just given a command.

"Get up," said he imperiously to the naughty boys.

Fortuné and Landry were frightened at the movement the sailors made to seize the ropes and made a violent effort to rise, but they could not move, for the heat of the sun and the warmth of their bodies had fixed them firmly to the tarry ropes. They could not conceive what had happened to them.

"Let me go," said Fortuné who fancied Landry was keeping him back.

"Why, I'm not touching you," said Landry, making another vain attempt to rise. Then Fortuné tried again to get up, but the only result was a blow he gave Landry in falling back again. Frightened at being held prisoners by an invisible power, the boys screamed lustily. The manœuvre the sailors were at that moment executing necessitated the unrolling of the coil of ropes to which the boys were attached, so, as the sailors pulled the ropes, they dragged the two boys along also.

"Help, help," shrieked Landry, rolling about the deck like a barrel. A wave now completely drenching them, they thought they were going to be drowned, and in the energy of despair, struggled so vigorously, that they freed themselves, getting each of them a violent tumble on the deck, to the intense amusement of all on board.

A few days after this happened, Fortuné's obstinacy brought another misfortune on him, which again set people laughing. The vessel had now ceased to pitch, but that movement was succeeded by one scarcely more pleasant, the ship began to roll from right to left and *vice versa*. This motion is occasioned by the wind being astern. To make the difference between pitching and tossing clear, we will compare the first as we did just now to the movement of a rocking horse, and the second to that of a

cradle. When the rolling of the vessel is very violent, not only people, but things also are overbalanced. Therefore in most vessels, rolls of cotton, filled with bran or sand, are fixed round the edge of the dinner-table. These long, round, cushions look very much like the pipes of a fire-engine, and are laced on to the table, by means of holes in it, through which cords are passed. About a foot above these first cushions a second row is adjusted, and the plates being placed between the two sets of cushions cannot fall down. This plan was adopted on board the *Julie*, and the chairs also were fastened to the floor. Fortuné, who was as cowardly as a hare, would hold on to these cushions, even though his parents assured him that there was not the slightest danger and desired him not to do so. It was of no use to forbid him to do this, for he would persist in holding on by these cushions; and one day when no one was watching him he pulled them so hard that the string by which they were attached to the table snapped. The cushions followed Fortuné's hands, his hands followed his body, and finally he slipped under the table, dragging down with him a plateful of hot soup. He was severely scalded, and got up at last daubed all over with vegetables out of the soup.

Fortuné, in his pain and anger, wished to visit his own fault on some one else, and accused the steward of having pushed his chair. But the Captain, who had seen how it all occurred, was tired of Fortuné's constant mischievousness, and he resolved to punish the boy for his disobedience and falsehood. "You know perfectly well that you are telling an untruth, and, Master Fortuné, I do not like story-tellers, so, first I desire you to beg the steward's pardon, and secondly to retire to your cabin and go to bed; here, take this bit of bread, for that is all the dinner you will get to-day."

There was no gainsaying the Captain, so Fortuné was obliged to go to his cabin, and to ruminate there on his disgrace while he ate his dry bread.

This lesson proved a salutary one, for from that day Fortuné behaved properly at table and in the saloon. It is true that he often made up for this restraint by teasing his poor cousin Victor, instead of being sorry for his infirmity and trying to be kind and help him ; he was also very fond of playing tricks on Jean, who, from the respect and gratitude he felt towards the Pearson family, did not resent this tiresome treatment as he would otherwise have felt himself justified in doing.



CHAPTER IX.

THE CHILDREN ON BOARD SHIP—JEAN'S PROMOTION.

AT VICTOR's instigation, M. Pearson would have entered Jean as a first-class passenger, but the sensible boy had himself objected, saying it would be more expensive, and also that it might excite jealousy among the other workmen. Victor yielded, but not without regret, to his young friend's arguments, and Jean went as a forecastle passenger. His amiable disposition and shrewd remarks made him popular among the sailors : at first the cabin

boys played him tricks as they do every one, but he entered into their fun, and did not lose his temper, though their jokes were sometimes too practical to be pleasant; and above all he never told tales of them to the boatswain, only revenging himself by a few good-natured pranks in return, or an act of kindness to one of his tormentors, as the case might be. So he soon became as popular with the boys as with the rest of the crew.

Landry on the contrary was a tease and a tell-tale, and got nothing but cuffs and hard words. He could read, but as he never opened a book, or used his two hands in any useful way, the voyage became very irksome to him. He generally spent his time with the sailor boys, who laughed at him and gave him very bad advice.

He would have done far better had he followed Jean's example, and sought the society of the old sailors. Jean was a handy boy, and liked to learn all he could, so he helped to spin yarn, and splice the cordage, to mend the sails, and even to mend his own clothes; for a sailor must be able to do a little of everything. Those brave men, whose lives are so constantly in danger, are not ashamed of using needle and scissors, and indeed they are quite in the right.

Delighted with the little Parisian's good nature and patient intelligence, the men kindly taught him all they could, and Jean soon knew the names of the principal ropes, and often went aloft. He had made the lieutenant a box for a case of mathematical instruments, and cut out the hull of a ship for him, so one day this officer asked the boy how he should reward him.

"There is one thing I should like to ask you, if I thought you would not be angry, sir," said Jean, blushing up to his ears.

"Do you want money or sweets?"

"No, sir."

"A better hammock, or some sugar?"

"Not things of that sort, sir."

"Tell me what you do want."

"Well, sir, I should like to learn how to find the latitude and longitude."

This is the term given to a series of astronomical observations, by means of which sailors can determine a ship's position on the globe.

The lieutenant put to him some mathematical questions, and was astonished to find how far advanced he was in that kind of knowledge.

"You would not be able at present to work out this problem without assistance, my boy," said he; "but I will give you some calculations to verify. I have no doubt your friend the boatswain will help you, and in a week or so I will myself show you how to use the sextant and the chronometer."

Before three days were over Jean had mastered all the calculations.

"How could you have done it all in the time?" said the astonished lieutenant.

"Well, sir, Guéven has been very kind to me, and I worked at them from morning till night."

A few days after this the captain noticed Jean pointing a sextant sky-ward.

"What are you about, little monkey?" said the captain, for he was fond of the boy.

"I am taking the height of the sun, captain," replied Jean, rather frightened.

"What for?"

"To find the latitude, sir."

The captain shrugged his shoulders and laughed.

"It is quite true," said Victor, ever ready to stand up for his friend. "Mr. Chandy has taught him the way, and I am beginning to learn too."

"Well done, little fellows," said the captain, kindly patting their heads. "Persevere, little Parisian, and if you succeed I invite you to dine to-day at my table."

Never was a calculation on board a ship so verified and re-verified before — every one, from the boatswain to the lieutenant, was anxious to see for himself whether Jean had succeeded. There was only one trifling error, which the lieutenant wanted to correct, but Jean said he would rather show it to the captain as it was.

"It is quite right," said the captain, "with the exception of one figure, and that is not an important one. Why did you not correct it ? for I see it is underlined."

"Because," said Jean, "Mr. Chandy pointed out the fault to me, and as I promised to make the calculation all alone I did not like to deceive you, sir."

"You are a sharp boy," returned the captain, "but truthfulness is the best quality of all. I have some books in my cabin, which I will lend you whenever you like. Good-bye now, little astronomer, I shall expect you to dine with us."

Jean behaved so well at table that every one was pleased with him ; he was not greedy and he answered those who spoke to him sensibly and properly. The result was that the captain gave him permission to come to the stern of the vessel whenever he liked ; this was a great privilege, for even the sailors were not allowed to pass the mainmast except on duty, and the fore-castle passengers were strictly forbidden to do so.

Like most officers of merchant vessels, the captain had small consignments of different kinds of goods. Consignment is the term used to denote any kind of merchandize, confided by one person to another, to be sold on the owner's account. Every consignment required a separate invoice ; and these bills had to be copied several times, as many duplicates were needed of each invoice, and calculations of many sorts had to be made. Sailors are not often fond

of writing, and all these additions and accounts wearied the captain excessively. Seeing how distasteful this sort of occupation was to him, Jean and Victor offered to help him. Both the boys knew something about commerce, and Victor had really a very fair insight into book-keeping. Delighted to see them so well employed, M. Pearson superintended what they did, and the boys were really very useful to the kind captain. Fortuné offered his assistance also, but he was tired of the occupation in a day or two, and gave it up.

When Jean and Victor had finished all the invoices, the only reward they asked for was that all the crew might have double rations of wine. Besides granting the boys' request, the captain made Jean his secretary, and the little workman by this promotion became a first-class passenger. But Jean took advantage of his new position to be useful in many ways to the crew and fore-castle passengers. Often he kept his dessert to give it to the workmen, and he was especially mindful of his old comrade Landry. But all his kindness did not lessen Landry's jealousy of him; this ill-natured boy could not forgive Jean for having got on so much better than he had. As for Suzette, Firmin, and Père Caillaud, they were delighted at Jean's promotion, for he never evinced the slightest pride towards his old companions and was always showing them those little thoughtful attentions the secret of which is only known to kind hearts.



CHAPTER X.

**FORTUNE'S WHALE—THE SHARK AND ITS PILOT-FISH—CURIOUS FISHING—
JEAN'S PRESENCE OF MIND—MARIA'S FORK.**

ONE day when the ship was becalmed, and therefore compelled to remain stationary, Victor noticed that an enormous fish, two or three times as long as the longest salmon he had ever seen, was following the vessel. Three other fish, about the size of whittings and their backs striped with black, were swimming round this monster.

"What kind of fish is that?" said Victor, addressing the helmsman.

It is generally forbidden to speak to the helmsman, for fear of

distracting his attention; but when the ship is becalmed he has nothing to do.

"Why, it's a whale," exclaimed Fortuné, looking very wise.

"Of course it is," said Fanny, who had the highest opinion of her cousin's judgment.

"A whale is a dozen times as large as that fellow, my little gentleman," cried the sailor. "That fish is a shark, and the small ones following him are his pilots."

"Pilots!" exclaimed Fortuné, in a scornful tone. "Nonsense; you don't suppose I believe that."

"A shark is always followed by its pilots, is it not?" said Victor, who had studied natural history in "Franklin's Animal Life."

"Always," replied the man. "Ask the captain to let us catch the shark, and then you will see the pilots cling to him and come up with him."

After a little persuasion the Captain granted their request.

"I consent," said he, "if the children will promise not to leave the poop when the shark is brought on board."

Fortuné, Victor, Jean, and the two little girls, promised faithfully to do as they were desired.

Then one of the sailors fastened a strong rope to an enormous fish-hook with two barbs, which is called a whirl, and is like the hooks from which meat is suspended in butcher's shops. After baiting the whirl with a large piece of bacon, the sailor flung it into the water, keeping the other end of the rope firmly in his hand. The shark came near enough to touch the ship, and sniffed at the bacon two or three times. I leave you to imagine what an exciting moment it was. At last the shark, turning over almost completely, showed his white stomach and his enormous mouth, which was large enough to admit the whole of a man's head at once. Then the bacon disappeared between three rows of teeth,

longer and sharper than those of a saw. The sailor drew back the rope with a jerk, but the hook could not have taken a firm hold, for this sudden pull brought it out of the shark's mouth, bacon and all, leaving the monster still in the sea. The shark, still followed by his pilots, was doubtless surprised and disappointed to see his breakfast vanish in this way, for when the whirl was flung a second time into the water he returned eagerly to the bacon. This time the hook took effect, and, feeling his hand violently pulled, the sailor exclaimed, delighted at his success—

“He is caught!”

A pulley was now fixed to a yard of the mainmast, and a large rope being thrown over the pulley, one end of this cord was given to the sailor who held the shark. The man now tying this rope to the line which held the monster, gently drew him along to the centre of the ship, opposite the mainmast. He was now immediately under the yard to which the pulley was attached, and was gradually hoisted up like a sack of flour. As soon as the shark felt himself fairly out of the water he began struggling furiously; and, lest he should still escape, a running knot was passed round his great tail. Then both the cords were drawn up till the creature was a little above the level of the ship's deck; then with a boat-hook (a long pole with a hook at the end) they pulled him inwards till, on a given signal, the ropes were slackened, and he fell on the deck with great violence, but all the while continuing his desperate efforts to be free.

In the ardour of their curiosity the children forgot their promise, and even Victor and Jean left the poop. Seeing the sailors group themselves round the shark they did so likewise, taking great care to keep clear of his gigantic mouth. At this moment a sailor with a large knife in his hand approached the tail of the monster, but with a degree of precaution which surprised the children. They did not understand the reason for this extreme caution, not being

aware that a shark has such immense strength in his tail that a man's leg has frequently been broken by a blow from it. As the attention of the sailors was wholly devoted to their natural enemy, as they considered the shark, Victor and Fortuné had come quite near the man with the knife in his hand, without any one having noticed them. Aware of his danger the sailor was on his guard, and, on a movement of the shark's tail, drew back suddenly, and, unconscious that Victor and Fortuné were behind him, threw them both down.

The writhing shark struck with his tail a barrel which was resting only a few inches distant from the children, and shattered it to atoms at a single blow. There was a shriek of terror, but Jean's first impulse was to throw himself before Victor and push him back, away from the monster ; then seizing a rope, by the aid of his hands he drew himself up out of the creature's reach just in time to escape the next blow. As for Fortuné, who had lost all presence of mind, the boatswain drew him along by the heels till he was out of danger, and then helped him up. We are obliged to admit that, under the influence of a feeling easy to understand, the sailor accompanied his timely assistance with a smart blow.

M. Pearson, who had been seeking his children in another part of the vessel, now, at the risk of his life, sprang over the shark, in his eagerness to come to the help of his son. When his father, taking him in his arms, kissed him affectionately, Victor bitterly repented of his disobedience, for he felt how much anxiety his father must have suffered on his account. M. Pearson, however, was so thankful to find his son unhurt, and the boy had behaved so bravely, that he could not make up his mind to scold him severely.

Victor's first words were—"It was my friend Jean who saved me ; forgive me, father, for having made you so anxious."

Fortuné, on the contrary, though not in the least hurt, screamed and yelled violently. At first, both the captain and Mme. Pearson, who had taken him in her arms, feared he was injured; but the shouts of laughter from the sailors revealed the truth. Just as Fortuné was growing quieter, M. Pearson's little dog came and licked his hand, and the boy, thinking in his foolish fright that it was the shark, screamed anew, making such grimaces of terror that now everybody burst out laughing.

"What is the matter, my little man," said the captain; "are you afraid that the shark is going to gobble you up?"

His fright over, though he was enraged at seeing that every one was laughing at his cowardice, Fortuné, as usual, sought some one on whom to visit his misfortune.

"I am not crying from fear, captain," said Fortuné, "but Guéven struck me such a hard blow that he hurt me very much—did he not, Landry?"

Landry had seen nothing, but as he was in the habit of confirming Fortuné's assertions, he grumbled an assent.

In a few words the boatswain explained the whole circumstance to the captain.

"How could you do so, Guéven," said the captain, pretending to be angry—"how could you dare to strike Master Fortuné? I must punish you, Guéven. Come with me, my young master," he continued, addressing Fortuné, who now thought himself triumphant—"come with me and I will put you back myself exactly where you were when Guéven snatched you up, and I will answer for it that this time no one shall dare to touch you."

With these words he seized Fortuné in his arms, and the boy, thinking he was serious, struggled till he freed himself from the Captain's grasp, and then ran off to his cabin, followed by the hooting of the sailors.

Meanwhile the sailors had been pulling in opposite directions the two ropes which held the shark, so that the creature was now at their mercy ; and the sailor with the knife succeeded, after seven or eight slashes, in cutting off the tail.

Once disabled, the shark was easily killed by a few blows on the head with the iron bars of the capstan. This is the name given to the machine by which the anchor is raised and some other manœuvres executed. The shark was now flayed by the sailors, and its skin divided amongst them ; for shark skin is employed by sailors to polish wood, and for many other purposes.

The jaw, when carefully cleaned, was presented to Victor, who from his amiable disposition was very popular amongst the sailors. Fortuné seemed very anxious to have this jaw, and Victor would willingly have given it to him, but the Captain said that the sailors would be hurt if he gave away their present. The backbone, which looks like a long fluted candle encircled with numerous rings, was given to Jean.

While the cruel operation of killing was taking place, Madame Pearson and the little girls remained in their cabin ; Fanny rather wished to see the shark caught, but her mother explained to her that it is better for women and girls not to be present at such scenes ; as for the little timid Maria, her only anxiety was lest the shark should come into the cabin and devour her, and she kept asking her aunt every five minutes if they were still quite safe.

The conversation at dinner and in the evening naturally turned on the day's fishing—Jean had shown so much courage and devotion in rushing to his friend's assistance, that his disobedience was half forgotten ; but again they all laughed at Fortuné, who made himself disagreeable to everybody. Even Fanny, who was so fond of her cousin, felt ashamed of him, and little Maria boasted she would have been braver—

"If I had been there," said she, "I would have stuck this fork into the shark."

And, waving her little fork in the air, she dug it into a piece of chicken, which act at all events was a much less dangerous proceeding.

"But," cried Fanny, "if you had been as frightened as you were this afternoon, you would have wanted a fork at least a hundred feet long."



CHAPTER XI.

THE CAPE SHEEP—BIRD-FISHING—FORTUNÉ OVERBOARD—THE LIEUTENANT'S DEATH—AWFUL STORM—THE REEFS—THEY SPRING A LEAK—THE SHIPWRECK—THE CAPTAIN'S AND SAILORS' ADMIRABLE CONDUCT—THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN THE LONG BOAT—THE SAILORS' DEVOTION TO THEIR COMRADES—THE LONG BOAT SWALLOWED UP.

Nothing can be more wearisome to idle people than a long voyage. Out of the ninety or hundred and twenty days' sail to India, twenty days are generally the outside of those which are varied by any incident.

Jean was so constantly occupied that the voyage did not seem long to him. Under the direction of the Lieutenant, he studied mathematics with great perseverance, and both he and Victor took advantage of a passenger's kindness to learn English.

M. Pearson made useless attempts to induce Fortuné to settle to some steady occupation; the boy was idleness personified, and

his uncle quite despaired of ever making anything of him. Like most idle people, he spent his time prattling with one and another, and, as he never reflected on what he was going to say, he often repeated very inopportunistly what he had been told or what he had seen. His folly occasioned many disagreements and quarrels, and, when the explanations took place, his slanderous tongue was found to be at the root of all the mischief.

The second officer in command (that is to say the first officer after the Captain) said one day when he came down to dinner, "I have seen some Cape sheep."

This was several days before they expected to reach the Cape of Good Hope, so Fortuné rejoined, shrugging his shoulders,

"Why, we are not within sight even of land yet."

"Never mind that, my little friends," said the officer, "I advise you all to get your fishing-tackle in order for to-morrow."

"Why?" said Jean.

"To fish for the sheep," said the Captain, laughing.

"I am not so foolish as to believe that, at all events," said Fortuné, rudely.

"Are not what you call Cape sheep only large birds, Captain," said Victor, "birds which are called sheep, because they are always met with near the Cape?"

"Quite right, my little scholar," replied the Captain. "How did you come to know that?"

"I read it in Franklin," said Jean.

The next day a flock of birds surrounded the ship; they were of all sizes, from the albatross, which is as large as a swan, to the satanicle, a small bird about the size of a swallow. This feathery tribe flew round the ship, pouncing on whatever food was flung out for them.

Advantage was taken of their greediness to catch them with fish-hooks baited with bacon. But to succeed in catching these birds, the ship must be sailing slowly. Sometimes the birds fly away

with the bait. ~~A petrel will often do this~~—at other times they stay in the water to eat it ; in either case the fisherman gives a jerk and the hook gets fixed in the bird's throat, or turned-up bill. If the bird has flown into the air, it is brought on deck like a kite ; if it has remained in the water, it is landed like a buoy.

The children were intensely amused—they were forbidden to fish for the albatross, because these birds sometimes make great resistance, by flapping their wings in the water, and then it requires strong arms to bring them on board ; but there is no danger in fishing for the petrel, which is not much larger than a pigeon.

"You know, Fortuné," said Victor, as he saw his cousin preparing a long line ; "you know we were forbidden to fish for the albatross."

"Nonsense," replied Fortuné, "they only said so because they like to contradict us, and because you are as weak as a girl ; but I am strong and not afraid of anything."

So saying, he threw the line into the sea, and the bait was soon swallowed by an albatross. Fortuné uttered a cry of joy and began pulling at the line ; but the bird feeling itself caught, struggled, and flapped its long wings vigorously. For a minute Fortuné held on tightly, but the ship happened to give a lurch, and, as the bird remained stationary, and Fortuné would not let go his hold on the line, he was dragged along to the iron rail which surrounds the poop, and from this place fell instantly into the sea.

"A man overboard !" shouted the helmsman.

Jean's first impulse was to jump into the sea to assist Fortuné if possible ; but the lieutenant, who was standing near, fortunately saw his intention, and gave him in charge to a sailor.

Then seeing that the Captain was near, the brave lieutenant and two sailors jumped overboard.

The Captain immediately gave the necessary orders to put about the ship to where Fortuné had fallen in. They had already thrown

out some buoys (large pieces of floating wood) and a hencoop, in the hope that the child would succeed in taking hold of one of these objects, but Fortuné as usual, lost his presence of mind, and did nothing but dabble about in the same place. At last the lieutenant succeeded in fastening him to a buoy, but unfortunately he could not manage to cling on to it himself. The brave officer must have been caught by a shark, or else he must suddenly have been attacked by cramp, for uttering a piercing shriek he disappeared under the water.

In vain the sailors dived at the spot where they had seen him sink, they could not recover him. As frequently happens in these parts of the world, a storm suddenly succeeded the calm, and it became dangerous for the ship to remain any longer stationary. The cutter, which had been let down, very nearly capsized, and at the end of half an hour's vain efforts, the almost heart-broken Captain was obliged to recall the sailors and proceed on his way.

Fortuné had been fished up on the buoy and taken on board, but every one felt that this wilful boy had caused the death of the brave lieutenant. No one would speak to him, and he was condemned to dine alone in his cabin till they anchored at the Cape.

Three days after this occurrence, they again set sail. But soon the second officer was taken ill, and so, besides the grief every one felt at the lieutenant's untimely end, his loss was still now more to be regretted, for the Captain was left by himself not only to command the ship, but to see that his orders were executed. He was a man of most energetic character, but, as it was impossible for him to do entirely without sleep, the boatswain was obliged sometimes to take his place. Though the boatswain was a very intelligent man, of course he could not acquire at a moment's notice all the knowledge requisite to command a ship.

A fortnight after they left the Cape, a frightful tempest came on; the sails were obliged to be furled, and the ship scudded before the wind, that is to say in the same direction as the wind. The night

being very dark, increased the terror of the scene ; and it is most probable that the ship was drifted towards the coast by a strong unexpected current, which it was impossible to contend against. About three o'clock in the morning, a sailor, in a voice which sounded like a knell, exclaimed "*Breakers ahead!*"

The Captain instantly ordered a sail to be hoisted, to get the ship clear of the reefs, but it was not more than half spread before it was torn by the wind into a thousand ribbons. Seeing all was lost, the Captain, with admirable presence of mind, resolutely took measures to save the passengers. He ordered the cutter and long boat to be got ready, desiring that arms, provisions, hatchets, a compass, clothes and many other things should be put into them. To such of the passengers as he thought capable of bearing the announcement with fortitude, he said, "Take the most valuable things you possess with you ; probably the ship will strike in a few minutes."

The women suspected the truth, anxious as the Captain had been not to frighten them. Then commenced a scene which was truly heart-rending. Some of the men even were not ashamed to scream and weep, instead of imitating M. Pearson who evinced the utmost courage and presence of mind.

Fortuné and Landry screamed so violently and were so much in the way that the Captain was obliged to order them below. After a quarter of an hour's agonizing suspense, a frightful shock made every timber in the vessel tremble.

"She has struck!" exclaimed the Captain. Alas! this was too true, for the ship had come in contact with the rocks and stood perfectly still ; enormous waves washed over the deck, threatening destruction to all on board. To complete the horror of their situation, a sailor announced that the ship had sprung a leak and was fast filling with water. Above the shrieks of the passengers and noise of the elements, the Captain's voice was audible, giving brief but imperative orders, for this noble-hearted man was perfectly self-possessed in this hour of danger.

A flash of lightning now gave them a glimpse of the coast, from which they were but a few musket-shots distant. The Captain ordered the long boat to be let down, and as it was impossible to take all the passengers at once, the women and children were first got into the boat. Some men, unworthy the name, insisted on entering it also, so taking up a pistol, the Captain coolly threatened to shoot the most obstinate of them, and the others, seeing they had no choice but to obey the Captain's orders, relinquished their project and returned on deck.

Suzette and Mme. Pearson declared they would not go without their husbands, and were forcibly carried into the boat; Victor and Jean too, who persisted in giving up their place to M. Pearson, had to be treated in the same way and were passed by two strong sailors to the rowers.

The boat set out, rowed by eight sailors. We shall not attempt to describe the despair of the poor women; for there are sorrows which no pen can express.

After twenty narrow escapes of being swamped, the boat reached the shore. Hastily every person and thing were landed, and then, without a moment's rest, the brave seamen set out to return to the ship. There was not a moment of hesitation, though these noble hearts knew that they were returning to almost certain death. Ah, if we knew the courage and devotion which common sailors display every day of their lives!

The women and children followed the frail craft with anxious eyes; as they gazed, it looked like a nutshell on the sea, and was revealed to them by the flashes of lightning, which for some time succeeded each other at short intervals, and showed the boat on the crest of a wave.

Suddenly, at the moment when a flash of lightning seemed tearing the horizon, they saw an immense wave break over the boat which sank at once never again to rise.

www.libtool.com.cn

www.libtool.com.cn



To face page 12.

THE LONGBOAT CARRYING SOME PASSENGERS ASHORE.

www.libtool.com.cn



CHAPTER XII.

THE SHORE AND THE SHIPWRECKED PEOPLE—A DREADFUL NIGHT—THE NEXT DAY—NO SIGN OF THE SHIP—PRAYERS OF MADAME PEARSON AND THE CHILDREN—THE DESERT SHORE—ROCKS AND TALL GRASS—A SPRING OF FRESH WATER—STRAY THINGS—ENERGY OF SUZETTE—HUNTING WITH A WHIP—A MEAL.

FORGETFUL of the cold, and of the wind blowing on their wet clothes, the poor shipwrecked people stood about on the shore, their eyes fixed on the spot where they had left the vessel. Their listening ears sought in vain for a sound which could indicate the approach of a boat. There was no doubt that the long boat was lost ; but they said to themselves there was still the cutter. Three

hours passed away in this indescribable anguish ; and when daylight dawned, the only trace of the once noble ship was a mast tossed about on the frothy waves, and some spars which had been washed on shore. Two bodies, which they recognised as those of rowers in the long boat, were found partially imbedded in the sand, and left no doubt that the boat had sunk with all its brave hands.

Notwithstanding their weariness and distress, the boys dug a grave on the beach and buried the poor sailors. One circumstance, however, there was which gave Mme. Pearson and Suzette a ray of hope, namely, that they did not find any remains of those who were left on board the ship.

"Oh, that Almighty God would graciously work a second miracle," exclaimed Mme. Pearson, devoutly raising her hands towards heaven, "and restore the father of my dear children, and save the brave workmen and the bold seamen who sacrificed themselves for us !" The children joined their little hands, and their fervent prayers mounted to heaven with those of Mme. Pearson and Suzette. At last the two women, who had been kneeling on the sand, rose up, wiping their eyes, which were bathed in tears.

"They had still the cutter," said Suzette, "and perhaps some ship has picked them up, or the sea may have drifted them to some other part of the coast. Let us trust in God, and not sadden by our sorrow the poor children, who have already so much to endure."

Mme. Pearson silently pressed her hand, and stifling their sobs, they strove to comfort the children, though, indeed, their own hopes were but faint. With courage beyond his years, Jean tried to second their efforts to console the others, and dried the tears which flowed down his cheeks at the thought of M. Pearson, and Firmin, and old Caillaud.

"Don't cry," said he to Victor, who was sobbing on Mme. Pearson's shoulder ; "God will take care of your father as He did of us, and we shall see him again ; think of your poor mother, and

don't add to her grief. The greater a misfortune, the greater should a man's courage be to bear it."

Understanding Jean's noble purpose, Mme. Pearson clasped him to her heart. "Oh madam," said he, carried away by his feelings, "would that I had been taken, for I am not necessary to any one; and that Monsieur Pearson had been spared, and your husband also, poor Suzette," he added, turning to her and kissing her affectionately.

Some hours passed away in the first agony of grief, but at last they were roused by the necessity of exerting themselves.

The bay at which they had landed was of a horse-shoe shape, and one of the sides was longer than the other, and its cliffs more steep. This long side jutted out into the sea, until it terminated in a reef of rocks about two leagues distant from the place where the little party had landed.

From what the sailors had told them, it was very probable that they were on the coast of Africa; but this was all they knew, and there was not a trace of a human being, or the slightest indication of a human habitation. As far as the eye could reach, a gigantic forest extended along the coast; and between the enormous trunks of the trees there grew a quantity of prickly shrubs and climbing plants. To the left a verdant valley opened up between the trees, where in some places the grass was more than six feet high; our Europeans had never beheld such vegetation.

The first thing to be done was to find a spring of fresh water, for thirst had already made itself painfully felt under this tropical sun. Suzette and Jean set off in quest of this first necessary of life; and coasting along the forest and prairie they advanced boldly up the valley.

After a weary walk of about an hour and a half through the long tangled grass and prickly shrubs, they came on a little brook of fresh water: following this stream for a short distance they reached its

source, where in the midst of a forest glade the water formed a kind of fountain. Near this spring was an isolated group of five or six large trees, and the shortness of the grass here was probably caused by the vicinity of the trees. This spot seemed well suited for a temporary resting-place.

Rejoining their friends, the explorers related their discovery ; and the project was soon formed of taking up their abode at the foot of the great trees, whose shade, in this hot climate, would be so desirable. But food was now indispensable, for the children already complained of hunger.

Unluckily, in their hurry the night before, the sailors had placed most of the provisions and other things so near the landing-place that at the flow of the tide all the lighter articles had been carried out to sea. The provisions and clothes had apparently entirely disappeared ; all that remained of their little store being the tools and other heavy substances. Fortunately shell-fish proved to be plentiful on the coast, and the children managed to appease their hunger by means of this food. Victor also found a box of preserved meat jammed in between two rocks ; and a little farther off Jean discovered a barrel of flour. The flour was indeed a treasure, but it was necessary to carry it at once to some safe place. Three of the children were strong for their age, but the barrel was so heavy that they could neither lift it, nor even roll it over the shingly beach.

"We must knock off the head," said Fortuné.

"Yes," replied Jean, "but what can we put the flour into?"

"I think I see some bamboos out yonder," said Victor, who had been trying to find some way of making himself useful. "With a saw—"

Jean did not give him time to finish the sentence ; seizing a saw he rushed up to the bamboos, calling Fortuné and Landry to come and help him. First he sawed off near the roots some large bamboos, of at least eight inches diameter, and then he divided the

bamboos at each knot. In this way he cut up each bamboo into what looked like so many long German beer-glasses. The next difficulty which presented itself was that the freshly-cut bamboos were damp inside ; but a bright idea now occurred to Jean's inventive mind. "Suppose," said he, "we heat some small pebbles, and shake them about in the bamboos?"

But nobody seemed to know how they should kindle a fire.

"Savages strike a light by rubbing two pieces of wood together," said Victor.

So with a knife they scooped a hole in a dry piece of wood, and setting a stick in this hollow, turned it round as rapidly as possible. This is certainly the method among savages ; but the children had neither the right kind of wood, nor the necessary strength and experience. Victor had now another idea which proved more practicable. Unscrewing the lens of the little telescope he always wore slung round his neck, and collecting a handful of dry grass, he used the lens as a burning glass, and concentrated the sun's rays on the grass, which by this means was soon ignited. Then picking up some small round pebbles, they heated them, and with a pair of pincers, put them into the bamboos, and by a little vigorous shaking, soon got rid of all the moist spongy particles. Landry now opened the barrel, and Mme. Pearson helped by Fanny and Maria, filled the bamboo tubes full of flour, which they then handed to Jean and Suzette, who fastened some rough wooden covers over them with flexible rushes.

The empty barrel was light enough to be easily carried to the spot they had fixed on near the spring, and was very useful as a general store cupboard.

Suzette was always helpful, so she made a thin cake which she contrived to cook in the ashes, between two large stones. She and each of the little boys had a pocket-knife, and these were made to

serve for all the party. They had neither milk, salt, nor sugar to put into the cake, and if they had not been very hungry, they might have had difficulty in swallowing this unsavoury production ; but their good appetites made them enjoy it very much indeed. A long fast makes the cook seem excellent.

Looking about in hopes of finding some means of adding to the general fare, Jean noticed a flight of birds which settled in the foliage near them. The presence of human beings caused no alarm to this feathery tribe, some of which looked very like black-birds ; but their bluish black plumage took the most lovely shades of purple and violet in the bright sunshine. Though at this moment, I fancy, Jean thought less of their beauty than of their edible qualities.

Leaving his companions to carry the things found on the shore to the side of the fountain, Jean cut a bamboo of about an inch diameter, and six or seven feet long, and then tied a sort of thong made of bits of plaited cord to the smaller end of it.

"Look how Jean is amusing himself, instead of helping us," said Fortuné, who was ever ready to find fault ; "is it not ridiculous to see a boy of his age playing with a whip ?"

"I should like to know what he is doing," replied Suzette, who had also remarked Jean lashing the whip. "What pleasure can he possibly find in beating about the trees to knock the leaves off ?"

Victor recollected a passage in "Levaillant's Travels," a book which he and Jean had read together, and guessed what his friend wanted to do.

"Mind your own business," said he, smiling, "and you will see by and by that Jean has not been losing his time ;" and Victor puzzled curious little Maria excessively by making a whip like Jean's for himself.

As soon as Jean by a little practice had obtained command over

his whip, he crawled along the ground till he came close to a flock of two or three hundred birds, who were merrily hopping about a mimosa bush. He then rose up displaying his long whip; the birds now spread their wings for flight, but as they were taking wing, the whip's thong came down with such force amongst them, that several were struck to the ground. Jean hastily picked them up, and after a few more essays with his whip, he found that he had caught about twenty birds, which he triumphantly presented as his contribution to the dinner. Enticed by this apparently amusing occupation, Fortuné snatched Victor's whip away from him, and began the sport: but he did not practise the use of the whip as Jean had done, before he went after the birds, so that instead of obtaining twenty birds, he did not kill more than five or six. Dinner, however, being thus provided, they turned their thoughts to finding a shelter for the night.



CHAPTER XIII.

QUARREL AND FIGHT BETWEEN FORTUNÉ AND LANDRY—A LESSON OF EQUALITY
—THE HUT—THEY ALL WORK—A NIGHT IN THE OPEN AIR—THE FIRE—
NOTHING VISIBLE ON THE HORIZON—THE WILD BEAST—FORTUNÉ'S AND
LANDRY'S COWARDICE.

THE children, at first, hoped they might find a cave, but habitable caves are not to be met with everywhere; and when Victor remarked to Fortuné and Landry that there was a great chance of a cave being already occupied by wild beasts, their wish to live in a cave cooled immensely. It was decided at last to adopt Jean's proposal, and make a hut of wood and dead leaves; taking the trunks of three large trees which grew close together, for the back of it.

"We can fill up between the trunks with branches, and then, at all events, one side of the hut will be strong," said Victor.

"Here Landry," cried Fortuné, pointing to a bamboo which he had just cut, "carry that to the fountain for me."

"Carry it yourself," replied Landry, without stirring.

Accustomed to ready obedience from Landry, Fortuné was quite astonished, and thought at first that he must have been misunderstood.

"Don't you hear?" he exclaimed; "I desired you to take that bamboo at once to the fountain."

Landry shrugged his shoulders, without showing any inclination to comply. Upon which, reddening with pride and anger, Fortuné struck him a smart blow. Formerly Landry used to put up uncomplainingly with anything, even blows, from him, but he appeared to take a different view of things since the shipwreck, for he returned the blow so vigorously, that Fortuné was thrown to the ground. Fortuné, who had never had any proof of the strength of Landry's fists, was surprised to find him such an accomplished pugilist: they had a regular fight, in which Fortuné, to his utter astonishment, was beaten. Luckily for him, Jean came up at this moment and released him from Landry, who knowing that Jean was able and willing to defend himself, did not wish to have a second encounter with him for an opponent, and so Landry yielded to Jean's wish, and let Fortuné off.

"What right had he to strike me?" said Landry, in reply to Jean's reproof.

"He used to let me hit him without saying anything," exclaimed Fortuné.

"Yes, certainly," said Landry, "because then you were my master's nephew, and you could be useful to me; but now that we are left to ourselves, I am quite as good as you, if not better; for I can work, but you are good for nothing. Therefore you had better give up striking me; if you don't, I will find a way to cure you."

Hanging down his head, Fortuné went and related his misfortune to his aunt, but she told him that no one could oblige Landry to be domineered over and beaten by him, and that, if he struck him again, Landry would have a perfect right to return the blow.

The construction of the hut advanced rapidly; Jean and Landry were accustomed to work, and got through their task with a dexterity which made up for their want of strength. Suzette did all she could to help them, Mme. Pearson and Victor stripped off the bark which was to form the roof, and Fanny and Maria collected dried grass to supply the place of mattresses.

As is generally the case, the work took much longer time than they had imagined, and they were only able the first day to roof in sufficient of the hut for the women and little girls to sleep under shelter. As for the boys, they were obliged to pass the night in the open air, and for a long time this prevented their closing their eyes. At last fatigue overcame fright, and they slept soundly.

Victor had read somewhere that the best way of keeping off wild animals is to make a large fire near the encampment; his advice was followed, a great fire lighted, and each agreed to watch while the others slept. Landry, who relieved Jean, soon fell asleep, and Fortuné did not choose to awaken him and take his turn. The night, however, passed uneventfully, and with the first rays of sunlight Mme. Pearson, Suzette and Jean set out for the shore. In vain they gazed on the sea, for no sail was visible on the horizon; then they turned their anxious eyes to the strand, apprehensive that they might find more dead bodies there, but none were to be seen. Then, silently clasping each other's hands, they knelt down and raised their mute prayers to heaven.

When they returned to the hut, Jean awoke the other children, who were still sleeping.

"To work," said he, "we must make haste and finish our house."

Fortuné was unwilling to help, but Landry, who had no idea of working when other people were idle, declared that if Fortuné would not work he should not reap the advantage of other people's labour. Victor was brave and willing, and even he, notwithstanding his infirmity, was more useful than his indolent cousin. The back of the hut, formed by the three trees, being completed, they set to work to make the other three sides of bamboos, firmly fixed in the ground and united together by reeds, forming thus a kind of hurdle. Strips of bark, nailed inside, kept out the wind, and two bamboo partitions separated the interior of the hut into three compartments, one of which was for the women and children, the centre being destined for the kitchen, and the outer apportioned to the boys. The construction of this dwelling, imperfect though it was, occupied nearly four days. It is true that during this time they did not allow a day to pass without making more than one excursion to the shore, and the children always brought back something belonging to the poor ship.

As they found no more dead bodies, they clung to the faint hope that M. Pearson, Firmin, and the others might be safe. Mine. Pearson and Suzette tried to repress their sorrow, that the children might not be disheartened; but when the poor women were alone they wept bitterly.

One day Jean and Landry climbed up to the top of a rock rather higher than the surrounding ones, and from this spot they spied out some things which a bank of sand and shingles seemed to have prevented from being carried out to sea. They fancied they might be the chests they had brought in the long boat the night of the wreck, and wanted to get close to them. But the bank formed a

sort of island, and a little arm of the sea must be crossed to reach it.

This was rather a dangerous undertaking, but Jean, who could swim a little, had a rope fastened round his body, and bravely ventured into the water; poor boy, his courage was greater than his ability, and he was obliged to give up the attempt.

"Never mind," said he, "I will practise swimming every day, and by and by I shall be able to get as far as the bank."

He returned next day with Fortuné, Landry, and Victor; this last, seated on a rock, held the rope, whilst his friend practised swimming. Suddenly uttering a shriek, Jean made the best of his way towards the shore.

"It is a shark!" said he.

Instead of coming to his assistance, Fortune and Landry were cowardly enough to run away, though, as they were on land, the shark could do them no harm. Victor, on the contrary, held on firmly, pulling with all his might; Jean fortunately soon found a footing, and his frightful enemy lost his prey.

Victor was delighted to see his friend safe, and as he was helping Jean to dress himself, Fortuné came up to them, his teeth chattering with fear, and as pale as death.

"Why, what's the matter with you?" said Jean.

"I've seen a wild beast," stammered Fortuné.

"It is an enormous creature," added Landry, joining them.

"I am sure it is as big as an elephant," resumed Fortuné.

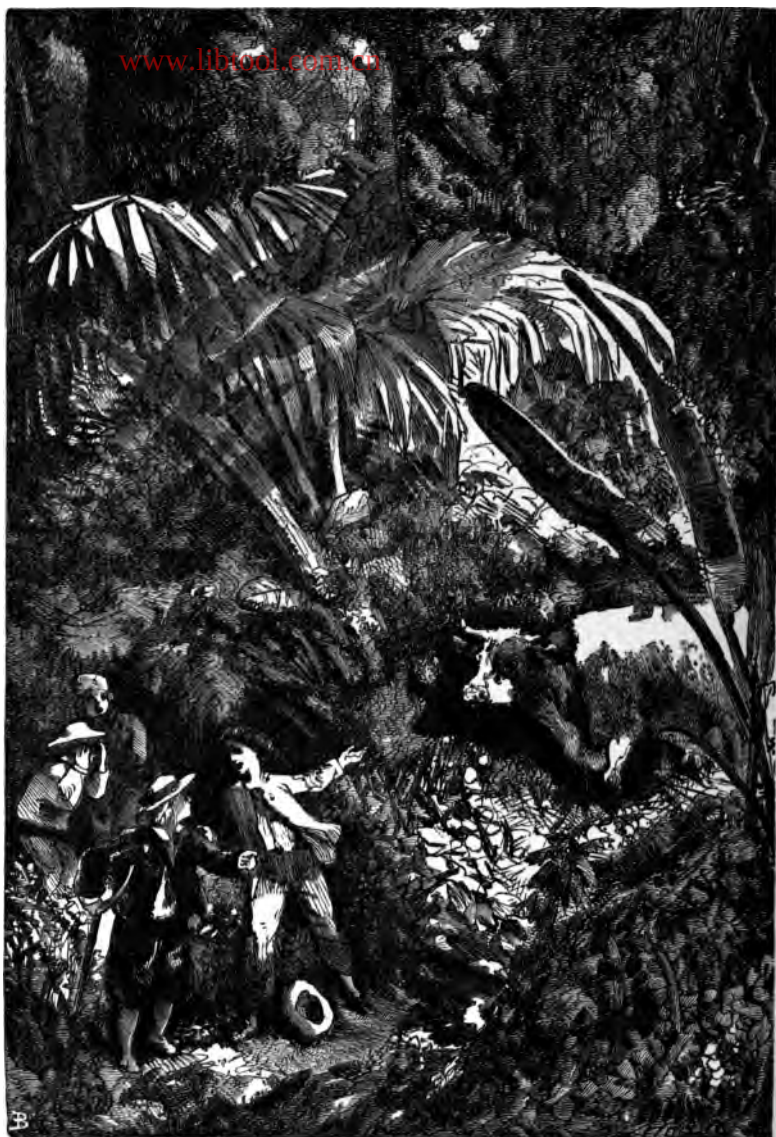
"Or a rhinoceros," continued Landry.

"Where is the monster?" exclaimed Victor and Jean simultaneously, somewhat alarmed.

"On the other side of the great trees," said Fortuné; "you may be sure it is all over with us, for he will eat us all—there, don't you see the leaves moving?"

"He is coming this way," said Landry, "we had better be off;"

www.libtool.com.cn



THE BOYS FIND FANCHON.

To face page 88.

www.libtool.com.cn

www.libtool.com.cn

•

•

so saying, Landry and his valorous companion, Fortuné, scampered away as fast as their legs could carry them. Jean would have followed their example, had he not been deterred by the thought of leaving his poor lame friend behind.

"Run away with the others, Jean," said the generous boy, "you shall not stay with me, and be eaten."

Jean's only answer was to take Victor's arm, and help him on as well as he could; brave as they were, the boys felt considerably alarmed, for the wild beast was evidently getting nearer to them—every moment the noise grew louder and more distinct.

"Fly, while you have time, dear Jean," said Victor.

"I shall not," replied Jean.

The bushes were now quite shaken, as if the creature were preparing to make a spring; quick as lightning, Jean sprang in front of his friend. A leap, and the animal emerged from the under-wood. It was a quadruped, which resembled a lion only in colour, and with two large horns surmounting its flat head. Perceiving the boys, it trotted along gently, lowing as it approached them.

"Why, it is a cow!" cried Jean, "and it looks very like poor Fanchon."

"It certainly is Fanchon," said Victor, "and she seems to know us, I declare."

Fanchon was one of the two cows they had had on board the vessel, and she, with about a dozen sheep, had been kept in the long boat. Victor, Jean, and Maria used to feed them with vegetables and bits of sugar, and the animals were in consequence much attached to the children, particularly to little Maria, who used to spend whole days playing with the sheep. Fanchon must either have swam to the shore, or else floated to land on some part of the wreck. At all events, there she was, and she seemed delighted to meet her old friends.

"How glad Maria will be to see her once more," said Victor.

"And how pleased Mademoiselle Fanny will be to have some milk this evening," added Jean, who cared infinitely more for Victor's proud little sister, than her treatment of him seemed to deserve. Victor and Jean made a sort of triumphant procession to the hut, followed by Fanchon, who seemed ready to go wherever they liked to lead her.



CHAPTER XIV.

CORDIAL RECEPTION OF THE WILD BEAST—MARIA'S DELIGHT—A SUMPTUOUS
REPAST—THE SIGNAL—PROVIDENCE—SAFETY BAY—THE FOUNTAIN OF GOOD
HELP—PROJECTED EXCURSION,

THE account brought by Fortuné and Landry had so terrified their friends, that every one was in a state of anxiety and alarm. Even poor Mme. Pearson was on the point of setting out in quest of Victor and Jean, almost fearing that the wild beast had already attacked them, when Victor was seen quietly approaching, apparently unhurt.

"The lion will be here in a minute," exclaimed the cowardly Fortuné rushing into the hut, followed by Landry and the two little girls.

Though greatly frightened, a mother's love gave courage to Mme. Pearson, and she remained where she was, with Suzette standing beside her.

"Why, wonder upon wonder!" exclaimed Suzette, "if it is not Fanchon they are bringing back with them."

"God be praised!" ejaculated Mme. Pearson, "no accident has happened to them."

I leave you to guess how delighted they all were to see Fanchon. Maria was called out, and she took the creature's great head between her two little hands, hugging and kissing it. Seeming to remember her, the cow licked her hands, and poked its wet snout into the child's apron-pocket, to look for the dainties which had so often been found there.

"Come along, my young huntsmen," cried Suzette, to the two cowards who were still huddled together in the hut; "come along, we must make a shed for the wild beast which has just arrived."

This joke was followed by shouts of laughter, which rather reassured the boys; and making a small hole in the door, they ventured to peep through it. Recognising Fanchon, the boys looked at each other thoroughly ashamed.

"Why did you tell me it was a wild beast?" said Fortuné; "it was you who frightened me."

"You said so before I did," cried Landry, rudely.

From words they would have come to blows, if Mme. Pearson had not interfered. Of course every one laughed at them; and from that day forward, whenever Fortuné boasted of his courage, as he was very apt to do, he was told to go after the wild beasts; a recommendation which always silenced him.

Even Fanny, though very fond of her cousin, had often reason to blush for him. She did not lack sense, and she began at last to suspect that she had misplaced her affections in liking him so extremely. She was now more indifferent when he spoke to her, and she seemed to prefer the company of Victor and Jean. Mme. Pearson thanked Jean warmly for his devotion in remaining with Victor when he thought there was peril, and

added, that she should always feel towards him as if he were one of her own children.

"I think we ought to have a feast," said Suzette, "to celebrate Fanchon's arrival."

"Oh yes," cried Maria, "what can we have, Suzette?"

"First, some milk porridge."

"How nice," said Maria, clapping her hands.

"Then some roast birds," suggested Mme. Pearson.

"And some cakes," cried Jean.

"And a dessert," said Victor, who had noticed some fruit near the spring, not unlike European fruit.

They were stopped at the outset of their preparations, by an unforeseen difficulty; how should they warm the milk? Each proposed a plan, but unfortunately not one would do.

"We must wait till Master Victor and Jean are here," said Suzette; "they will think of something for us."

"Oh," said Fortuné, shrugging his shoulders contemptuously; "as if they were wiser than other people."

"Well," said Maria, who always took her cousin Victor's part, "at least they know the difference between a cow and a lion."

No one could help laughing. Fortuné held his fist up at his sister, who ran to hide herself behind Suzette.

"I think," said Mme. Pearson, "we might use one of the bamboo tubes, and fill it with milk; then we could heat some pebbles, and shake them about in it."

"A good idea, ma'am," said Suzette; "Maria, will you come and help me to milk Fanchon; you can hold the bamboo."

Whilst Fanchon was being milked, Fanny plucked the birds, and then Suzette got them ready for roasting.

The birds were fastened on a string, and the children kept turning them round at a little distance above the fire.

"Won't you help us a little, Fortuné?" said Fanny; "at least, you could get us some wood, and turn the birds round."

Sulkily throwing a few branches on the fire, Fortuné walked off, for he was cross.

Victor came back a few minutes afterwards; he seemed very merry, for he had found some water-melons and wild watercresses.

Fortuné followed him, his eyes fixed longingly on the melons.

"You seem fonder of melons than of lions, Fortuné," said Suzette, provoked at his selfishness.

Fortuné was furious at this remark, and turned to go away; but his greediness got the better of him.

"What shall we do for spoons?" cried Fanny.

"And for plates?" said Fortuné.

"And for forks, glasses, and dinner-napkins!" exclaimed Mme. Pearson. "Why, children, you are growing quite luxurious."

"We might easily make some plates," said Victor, "by sawing some reeds off at the knots; and we could line them with bark to make them stronger. And though forks and spoons are not absolutely necessary, there would be no difficulty in cutting them out of bits of reed."

"I have brought you something to make soup plates of," said Jean, coming in with Landry.

The boys were loaded with cocoa-nuts and large gourds.

"Why, you have not brought any wood," said Fortuné, ever ready to depreciate other people's actions.

"We couldn't carry all at once, and were obliged to leave the wood near where we found the cocoa-nuts," replied Landry. "You have done nothing to-day, so you had better go and fetch it."

Fortuné did not like this proposal, but they all declared he should have no dinner if he did not go. For some time he refused to fetch the wood, but at last hunger prevailed, and he resigned himself to his fate. Little Maria thought her brother

was hardly treated, and to please her, though he was very tired, Jean goodnaturedly went back with him after the wood, and helped him to carry it. Victor and Landry set to work to cut the cocoanuts in two, and then they polished the inside of them as well as they could. Landry, who was very handy, shaped some spoons out of split reeds.

All these preparations made the dinner rather late, and besides, the cooking was obliged to be done out of doors, for their kitchen lacked one of the first requisites, a chimney; and till this could be constructed, Suzette the cook, and Maria the kitchen-maid, had to exercise their talents in the open air. Yet the little Pearsons had never in the days of prosperity enjoyed a dinner so much as they did this one. Milk porridge, roasted birds, watercresses, melons, and cocoa-nut milk—was not this a splendid bill of fare for those who had been near starvation but a short time before! As Maria was going to taste her porridge, Victor threw two or three little bits of reed into her cocoa-nut soup plate.

"Don't do that," said little Maria, smiling, for she never spoke crossly even when they teased her; and quietly picking the pieces of reed out of her plate, she was going to throw them away, when Victor caught her hand, saying—

"Suck them, you dear little goose."

Maria did as her cousin told her.

"Why, it is sweet!" she cried delightedly.

"Is it sugar-cane?" asked Mme. Pearson, looking at her son.

Making a sign of assent, he gave the rest of the party some little pieces.

This meal, which they had earned by so much labour, would have been very joyous if M. Pearson and Firmin had been there to share it with them.

"If my uncle were but here!" exclaimed Maria, "he is so clever, he would show us how to make real sugar, I know."

"He and Firmin must have landed at some other part of the coast, or else they may have been taken on board a vessel," said Mme. Pearson, restraining the tears which involuntarily rushed to her eyes, "we must do the best we can till they come and fetch us."

"Don't you think it would be well to go farther into the interior of the country?" said Jean, who had a good deal of the spirit of adventure about him.

"I think we had better stay where we are," observed Victor.

"It won't do to go too far away from the coast," said Fanny, "in case my father comes in a ship to fetch us."

"Besides," said Mme. Pearson, "we don't know what we might meet in our way—wild beasts perhaps, or dreadful savages."

"At all events, Maria and you could not go far on foot," observed Suzette.

"Above all things," said Victor, "I think we ought to hoist a signal at the highest point of the coast, so that if ships pass they may know some one is here."

"And at night we might light a bonfire," said Suzette.

"What with?" asked Fortuné, who always saw difficulties in every proposal of others. He generally spoke himself without reflection, frequently offering the most absurd advice, though he was very angry when no one would follow it.

"We could make the fire with resinous wood," said Suzette.

"I am afraid the wind would blow it out," cried Victor.

"Couldn't you watch it by turns?"

"I'd rather not, at all events," said Fortuné, who trembled at the idea of spending a night alone on the sea-shore.

"Nonsense," cried Suzette, "horned lions don't run about at night."

After a short deliberation, however, it was decided not to establish the nightly fire at present, as the little colony had so many

more necessary things to do just now ; but it was agreed that a flag-staff should be formed of a long pole, with a plaid handkerchief of Landry's joined to a neck-handkerchief belonging to Fanny at the top ; on Mme. Pearson's recommendation, they added a third flag, made of part of a sailor's blue cloth jacket, so the flags were tricolour ; and it was determined to set up the flag-staff the following day, driving it as firmly as they could into a crevice between the rocks.

I am obliged to confess that this patch-work flag was not strong enough to resist the wind, and a few days after it was put up, they were compelled to replace it by one made of sail-cloth, which Victor dyed red by means of a plant he had found.

"What shall we call our house?" said Fanny.

Each proposed a name, but it was difficult to decide which was the most suitable.

At last Mme. Pearson said, "I think we ought to call it 'Providence,' in grateful remembrance of the goodness of God, who has preserved us, and provided us with so many of the necessaries of life."

This name was instantly adopted, and the spring was called the fountain of Good Help, the bay where they had landed they named Safety Bay, and the reef of rocks was known as the Bank of Trial.

Jean had been very quiet for some time, and seemed buried in thought.

"Look," whispered Landry, "Jean is asleep."

"He has worked so hard to-day, that it would be no wonder if he were," said Victor, "but I fancy he is only planning something or other."

"I think so too," said Mme. Pearson, who thoroughly appreciated Jean's good qualities ; "it was a happy day for us, my son," continued she, "when that dear boy became your friend."

Poor Jean was very grateful for kindness, and blushing with pleasure, he looked his thanks to Mme. Pearson, and also to Suzette and the little girls, who seemed to second all that was said in his praise. Fortuné took advantage of the general attention being directed to Jean to disobey his aunt's instructions, and cram himself with *pastiques*, or water-melons.

"I was thinking," said Jean, "that as the spars of the wreck have not been drifted to this bay, either the current must have taken them out to sea, or else they must have come on shore at some other part of the coast. Now don't you think it would be worth while to go along the sea-coast as far as the high rock out yonder. If that rock is as high as I suppose it must be, we should be able to see a long way by climbing to the top of it."

"It is a long journey you are planning," sighed Mme. Pearson, "many of us would not be able to go so far."

"One of us would be sufficient," said Jean, "and I think I shall set out to-morrow."

"Brave boy!" exclaimed Suzette, "ah, if my poor Firmin were here, how proud he would be of you."

"I will go with you," said Victor, whose natural courage, together with his friendship for Jean, made him forget how feeble he was.

"No, my boy," said Mme. Pearson, "it would be better for Fortuné or Landry to be his companion."

"I will stay here and protect you," said Fortuné, who had no fancy for this perilous expedition.

"Yes," said Suzette, "you would protect us from wild beasts as the sheep protect the shepherd—by running away."

"My dear Jean," said Mme. Pearson, "your scheme requires reflection; we must talk of it again to-morrow, for it is late now, and as we have no candles, I think we had better go to bed."

Before doing so, however, they carefully put away their newly-made plates and spoons and other little articles. Then Mme. Pearson said prayers, and they separated into the two little compartments of their hut. As for Fanchon, she had already a temporary cow-shed on the other side of the three trees.



CHAPTER XV.

TOO MUCH MELON—AN INVASION—HEROIC DEFENCE—A MALE AND FEMALE PRISONER—PREPARATIONS FOR AN EXPLORING EXPEDITION.

FORTUNÉ awoke about one o'clock in the morning, with a dreadful sick-headache ; he now bitterly regretted having eaten so much melon in opposition to his aunt's advice ; but he did not know that there was another sufferer near.

Hearing some one sigh heavily near him, he exclaimed, "What is the matter ?"

Landry replied in a pitiful voice, "I have eaten too much melon."

"So have I," said Fortuné, "I know it is that which has made me ill."

The hut door was made of an old chest cover, and was attached to the hut by means of two strips of leather which formed the hinges. Feeling faint, the boys pushed the door open to get a little air; scarcely had they done so, when Landry, who was foremost, was assailed by several violent blows from without. Excessively alarmed, he uttered a piercing shriek, and tried to go back; but this was impossible, for five or six funny little hands seized him by the arms and the hair, and held him fast. If he had not been frightened out of his wits, he would have perceived that the hands were armed with sharp claws. In vain he tried to free himself from his persecutors; and Fortuné soon shared the same fate, and added his screams to those of Landry.

The uproar awoke every one, and, armed with his trusty stick, which he kept by him night and day, Jean came to the rescue, intending to make good use of his weapon—but he was prevented doing so, for before he got fairly outside the door, it was wrenched out of his hand. Stretching out his arms to ward off the blows, which were falling thick in all directions, Jean caught hold of something which he thought felt very like an animal's tail; holding this suspicious substance firmly in his left hand, he passed his right hand slowly up till he came to a round hairy body, which gave tokens of extreme dissatisfaction at the examination to which it was subjected.

"I fancy they are monkeys," said Jean, keeping firm hold of his prisoner, though the animal, whatever it was, bit his hand savagely. "Victor, will you try to get a light?" continued he. A tinder box had been found on one of the drowned sailors, and with this Victor soon lighted a handful of dry grass.

It was a terrible scene which presented itself. About twenty monkeys were swarming about the boys; and they had barely time to make this discovery, before some of the monkeys, who had climbed

on to the roof of the hut, finding an aperture, leaped into the hut itself.

Maria thought it was an army of demons, and screamed so violently that even the monkeys themselves were frightened. The mischievous little creatures were not long in finding the provision store, and began devouring the bits of cake and melon. The monkeys which had attacked the boys, now left them to run after the food.

As for the women and little girls, they rushed out of the hut, trembling with fear.

"Don't be frightened," cried Jean ; "I'll find a way of getting rid of them."

The monkeys had begun quarrelling over their supper ; and, taking advantage of the hubbub, Jean collected together all the dry grass, which the colonists had used for beds, and piled it up in the middle of the hut ; then, lighting some reeds, which, being very dry, blazed up like old wood rubbed with oil, he flung them on the heap of dry grass.

The monkeys were soon enveloped in smoke, and their mischievous proceedings bitterly expiated ; to complete his triumph, Jean took the whip he used for catching birds and struck about vigorously amongst the monkeys, till, what with the fire and the whip, both novel enemies, they were glad to beat a retreat. Two or three old monkeys seemed to give a signal, and the whole tribe quickly vanished amongst the trees. Three others were so badly burned that they could not run away, and Victor found a female and her little one jammed in between two bamboos in the kitchen. Evidently she had gone there to steal a bit of cake and had been caught as if in a trap. The little monkey clung on tightly to the old one, and mother and son must both have been burned to death, if Victor had not rescued them from the flames. Besides being burned himself, the boy's kindness was of course only rewarded by bites and scratches.

"See here, I have found a cage for them," said Suzette, taking up

the flour barrel, which the greedy little animals had entirely emptied. The next moment she popped the barrel over them, and, placing some heavy stones on the top of it, the mother and little one were made prisoners in spite of their struggles. Though the other monkeys had vanished, there was some fear that they might return, so a fire was kept burning all the night. Though the monkeys remained such a short time in the hut, the mischief they caused was very great. The roof was torn off, plates and dishes were scattered about everywhere, and some of the bamboos filled with flour had been emptied or burned. Even the walls had taken fire ; but the fountain being so near, the flames had been easily extinguished. The flour was the greatest loss, for everything else could be replaced ; out of eighteen bamboos full of flour only six remained.

Fortuné and Landry, furious at this loss, which was sure to limit their supply of cakes, wanted to revenge themselves on the two poor monkeys who were their prisoners ; but Jean would willingly have set them free, for he feared the other monkeys might return after them. Victor, however, was so anxious to keep them for pets that he was allowed to do so.

"If I had asked such a thing," grumbled Fortuné, who was always jealous of his cousin, "I should have been refused, but . . ."

"Very likely you would," replied Mme. Pearson ; "but Victor has so often been useful to us by his sense and presence of mind, that he has earned the right to ask something from us in return ; but you have no such claim for any indulgence."

The monkeys never returned to Providence ; either they were scared by their warm reception, or, as is more probable, they belonged to a wandering tribe who, according to the season, migrate from one province to another.

Victor's female monkey was about two feet high ; she was much more taken up with her little one than with her own hurt, and her

little black face had an expression rather of archness than wickedness. They were obliged to let her hold the little one in her arms whilst they dressed her burns, and at first, fancying they were going to hurt her offspring, she struggled violently, trying to bite every one who touched her ; but, by-and-by, seeming to understand they were doing her good, she became more manageable.

Suzette was head nurse, and in the course of five or six days, the old monkey began stroking her hand, and the little one, also growing tamer, took a great fancy to Maria, who constantly fed him with fruit and milk.

The little party soon set to work. At sunrise they began to repair the roof and partition, and as soon as the hut was once more in order, Jean renewed the subject of his projected excursion. But the women had been too much frightened during the night to hear of their best protector's leaving them at present. They promised, however, that if a week passed over without a return of the monkeys, they would then let him go as far as the second bay.

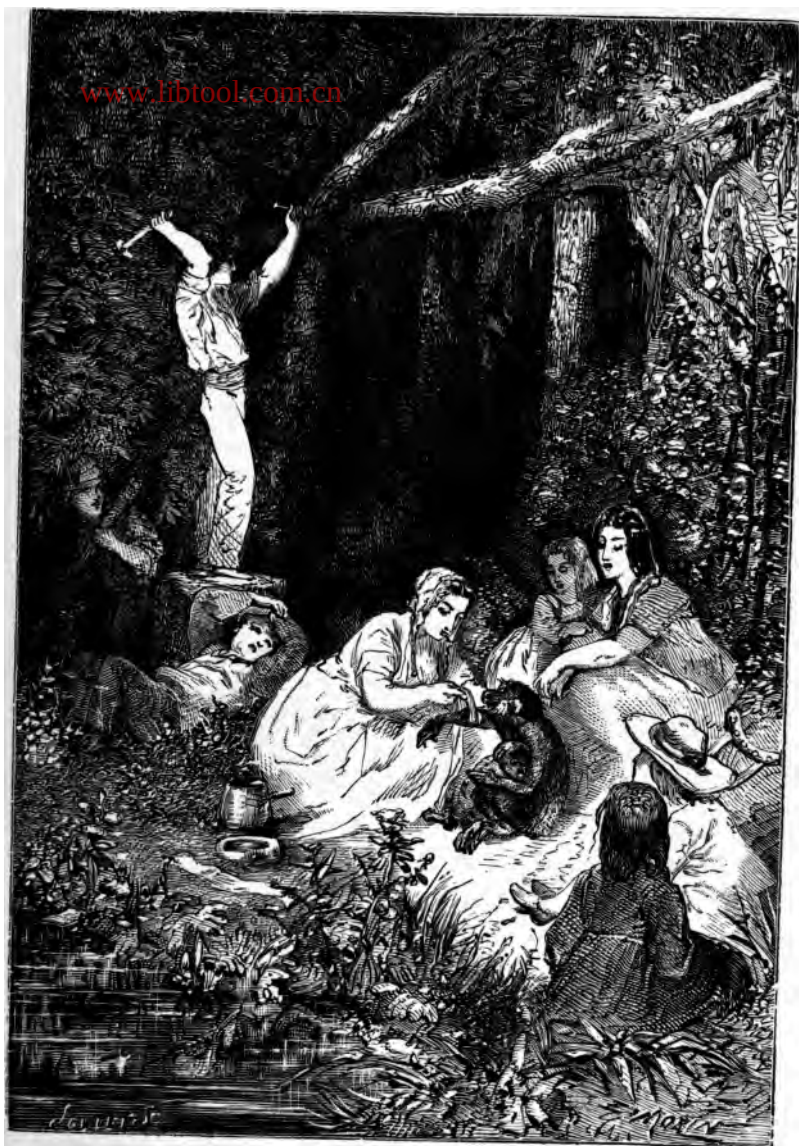
Jean set himself now to make a bow and arrows ; there was no difficulty about the bow, but the arrows took more time. Arrows have generally a steel or iron point fixed at one end, and, as a substitute for such points, Jean hardened some thorns in the fire and fitted them to the slight reeds of which the shafts were made. The most difficult part of the business lay in affixing the thorns ; but Jean succeeded by means of a gum which exuded from some resinous trees and became hard by exposure to the air.

Landry was not inventive or particularly clever, but he was a very handy boy, and attained great proficiency as an arrow-maker ; but after a time Fanny almost rivalled him in skill : under her aunt's direction, Maria fixed little strips of bark, stuck over with feathers, on the other end of the arrows.

All the boys wished to have a bow and arrows, and fancied they should accomplish the most wonderful feats with them. But it is

www.libtool.com.cn

www.libtool.com.cn



To face page 100

SUZETTE DRESSING THE MONKEY'S WOUNDS.

www.libtool.com.cn

not sufficient to possess weapons unless we can use them, and a skilful marksman cannot be made in a day.

Fortuné set out on a shooting expedition as soon as his bow and arrows were in order, but he returned in a few hours dreadfully tired, suffering from something like a sun-stroke, and with plenty of scratches on his arms and legs. Landry, who had left the hut with him, quickly beat a retreat and went fishing on the shore, his fishing tackle being composed of a bamboo rod, a piece of string, and a bent pin. The fish here are so abundant, that even with such rude angling as this, and though his experience as a fisherman was but slight, he soon caught five or six large fish.

Meanwhile Victor and Jean had contrived a target, by fixing a cocoa-nut against a tree, and anxiously striving to become good marksmen, they practised constantly, and in a few days made considerable progress, particularly Jean, who was more accustomed to manual exercises than his friend. The sea air and constant exercise had, however, done Victor so much good, that he was beginning to lose the appearance of extreme delicacy which he had when he left France.

As soon as Jean felt himself able to procure food and defend himself, if need be, with his bow and arrows, he announced his intention of setting out on his expedition the following day. They however persuaded him to remain a day longer at Providence, that they might provide some food for him to start with. Fortuné was to go with him, so that if any accident happened to one of the boys the other could return to the hut for assistance. It was only now that they were to be deprived of him, that Jean's worth was fully appreciated. "Who will do *this* when Jean is gone?" said Suzette. "And who will do *that*?" said Mme. Pearson. "And who will take care of us?" said the little girls.

The tract to be explored was so limited that it was not expected the boys would be absent more than two or three days; but, as they

could not foresee what might happen, so much food had been provided for the travellers, that Jean laughingly asked whether they might not have a horse to carry it.

As Jean was setting out, Mme. Pearson and Fanny presented him with a new hat made of bark and lined with cambric, Fanny having given one of her pocket handkerchiefs to make the lining. This present was very acceptable, for Jean's old cap was completely torn to pieces by the thorns and bushes through which he had scrambled; and the poor boy was quite touched by Fanny's kind thoughtfulness in making it for him. Jean had always been very fond of her, even when she treated him so scornfully.

"Is there not anything for me?" asked Fortuné, peevishly.

"Your hat is still whole, my dear," replied his aunt; "but Jean's cap was dropping to pieces."

"Every one likes that little beggar better than me," said Fortuné angrily, taking care however that Jean did not overhear him.

"Fortuné!" cried his aunt reproachfully.

"Jean is not a beggar," said Maria gravely, "for every-day he gives me some plaything or other."

"What has that to do with it? you silly child," cried Fortuné sturdily.

"Why, that it is you, on the contrary, who are always begging something from me," said Maria.

Fortuné was furious, and would have struck his sister, if Suzette had not seized his arm. He threatened to shoot Suzette, and got his bow and arrows ready, but taking his weapons from him, she gave him two or three smart blows and turned the angry, but humbled archer, out of the hut. Fanny followed him, and after a while succeeded in pacifying him; but she saw his faults now, and wondered how she ever could have thought him a superior boy.



CHAPTER XVI.

JEAN AND FORTUNÉ SET OUT — THE BOWS AND ARROWS ARE TURNED TO ACCOUNT—THE CUCKOO INDICATOR—A LESSON FOR THE SELFISH.

THE two boys set out about seven o'clock in the morning, after a breakfast of hot milk with sugar in it, followed by the tender adieux of their friends. Except Landry, Fortuné was the tallest and strongest of the boys, and he began walking at a quick pace, grumbling at his companion's comparative slowness; but Jean had already had some experience in long walks, and he knew that, if you have to go a long way, you must not spend all your breath at starting. So he tried good-humouredly to keep their pace moderate.

The first part of the journey was very pleasant; the weather was beautiful, the heat was tempered by a gentle breeze, which gently swayed the forest trees.

About half a league from Providence they met with a large bird about the size of a hen, which let them come very near. Fortuné and Jean shot off two arrows, which grazed the bird (at least so they thought) but did not prevent its flying away. A little farther on, the boys saw a sort of curlew, and sent after it two feathered messages, but the bird did not acknowledge their receipt. They had but a poor prospect, as sportsmen, of procuring their next meal, for though Jean was a more practised marksman than Fortuné, like most nervous people, he shot without taking a sufficiently deliberate aim, and it was only after seven or eight trials that he succeeded in killing a bird, something like a stork. Meantime Fortuné's attention was engrossed by a singular bird about the size of a cuckoo, of a greyish plumage, and which seemed to be inclined for a game of play with him. When Fortuné walked towards the bird it flew away, coming back to him when he stopped, as if trying to allure the boy on, and chirping, "chir—chir—chir," as much as to say "why don't you follow me." Fortuné did follow for a time, but gave up the chase, and returned to Jean, after letting fly five or six arrows without hitting the bird.

But the little creature again came back and perched, ruffling its feathers in the most comic fashion, at a distance of about five and twenty feet from the boys.

"You tiresome little thing," said Fortuné, angrily, "so you are playing tricks with me, are you? just wait a bit."

He was going to shoot off another arrow, but Jean held his hand back, saying, "Don't shoot, for I think it is a cuckoo indicator."

"And suppose it is, what of that?" said Fortuné, in his rude way.

"If it be, he may lead us to a honeycomb."

"What nonsense!"

"But, indeed, I read of such birds in one of the Captain's books."

"Well, honey is a capital thing," said Fortuné; "but I don't know that I should like going into the wood after it."

"Very well, then I will go by myself," said Jean; for Fanny and Maria will be delighted to have honey with their bread and butter."

Fortuné did not like being left alone, so he made up his mind to accompany Jean, who immediately set off following the bird, which continued its old manoeuvres, flying about fifty paces and perching till the boys came near, then off it went again. The cuckoo kept flying and perching, until at last it would go no farther; and even when it was chased from a tree would only fly to another close by, keeping always in about the same spot, and chirping merrily all the while.

"Well Jean, where is the honey?" asked Fortuné, in a mocking tone.

"Have a little patience."

"Oh, it is very fine to say that, but the bird has led us a wild goose chase, and I'm very glad of it, you conceited wiseacre; you are always fancying, with your stupid books, that you know better than any one else. Now we have lost two hours with your folly; if you had listened to me, we should have been a long way on our journey by this time."

"Be quiet," said Jean, authoritatively.

"Why should I be quiet?"

"To let me listen."

"Listen, to what?"

"Don't you hear a humming?"

"Why, that's nothing but the wind in the trees."

"No, no, now do listen."

"Well, there certainly is a sort of humming noise."

"Yes, I think it is in this direction," said Jean.

It appeared that the children were on the right track now, for the bird flapped its wings joyfully.

•

After about five minutes' search—"Look there," exclaimed Jean, and indeed the bees now began flying all round the boys, who very soon found out the swarm. The bees had taken up their abode in a hole in a tree where a branch had been broken off.

"How shall we get at the honey?" asked Fortuné.

"We must come back for it," said Jean.

"But I want some now."

"Very well, then get it the best way you can." Fortuné knew what the sting of a bee was by experience, so he made a wry face.

"Why should we wait till we come back?" said he.

"In the first place, we have something more important to do now than to get honey; in the second, we have nothing to put it in; and thirdly, we could not carry it with us to the top of the high rock."

"Then what shall we do about it?" said Fortuné.

"Cut off some branches of the tree where the bees are, and mark some of the other trees, so that we can find this place again."

The cuckoo (which is also called the honey-bird) seemed to despair at the boys, whom it had so successfully guided to the bees, going away without giving it a share of the honey. As they were leaving the wood, Jean felt something rub against his leg.

"It is a snake," said Fortuné, running away as fast as he could. But the snake had already sped away into the wood, for the first instinct of these creatures is to make off, and they only attack when they fancy they have not time to get away. In his hurry the little coward brushed against a serpent which was coiled round a tree, and this time Master Fortuné got bitten, but, fortunately for him, his trousers were so thick that his skin was not broken.

This incident, which was really alarming, frightened Fortuné so much that nothing would have tempted him to re-enter the wood, and even Jean had no desire to become better acquainted with African

serpents, for he knew that there are several kinds of them whose bite is fatal.

Towards noon the heat, in spite of the pleasant sea-breeze, became so great that our travellers were compelled to make a halt. They were both very hungry, and Fortuné began to be tired, and lagged behind. "It is because of the serpent that I want to rest," said he; for he was too proud to own that he could not walk as far as Jean.

"If we halt, will you light the fire?" asked Jean.

"If I do, what will you do meanwhile?" said Fortuné exactly.

"I will try to catch some fish."

"Did you bring your fishing tackle then?"

"Yes, I have Victor's line, and here is a bamboo which will do very well for the rod."

"I would rather fish," said Fortuné, "so give me the rod and you make the fire."

"Don't you think it would be more civil if you were to ask me first whether I would as soon make the fire?" said Jean. He was always willing to yield when asked kindly to do so, but Mme. Pearson had particularly asked him not to give way to Fortuné's selfishness.

"I insist on your doing as I wish," said Fortuné.

"What right have you to insist?"

"Because I choose."

"Then I refuse," said Jean firmly.

"If you don't give me the line," said Fortuné threateningly, "I will . . ."

"Well, what will you do?" said Jean coolly.

Fortuné considered a moment, for he knew that if they came to fighting, Jean, though he was smaller and looked less strong, would give him a good thrashing.

"You take pleasure in contradicting me," said Fortuné; "but you are ready enough to give way to Victor, and the little girls."

"There are many reasons for that," said Jean; "Victor and Fanny are Mme. Pearson's children, and neither they nor Maria are so strong as I am; it is, therefore, my duty to take care of them. Besides which, when they want me to do anything, they always ask me kindly, and do what they can for me in return. Now you, on the contrary, try to force everybody to obey your will, and, at the same time, you will never do anything for anybody. Why should people put themselves out of the way for you, who never even say thank you?"

"You would not have dared to say that before my uncle," cried Fortuné, who would never admit he was wrong.

"On the contrary; you know very well that he desired me never to give way to you when you spoke rudely; and that he added, that I had no orders to take from any one but himself. Every one should give way in his turn; I often give up to you for the sake of your relations, but you must ask me to do so in a different way, and your aunt desired me to tell you so. You are quite as strong and hearty as I am, and there is no reason why I should wait on you."

This was Fortuné's second lesson of equality, and, though he was too proud to say so, he knew that Jean was right.

Jean then taking up his line, went away to fish, but he soon came back; he had taken off his jacket, and was carrying very carefully something which he had wrapped up in it.

"Where is the fire?" asked he.

"What have you got there?" was the rejoinder.

"You shall see; but you have not lighted the fire."

"Certainly not!"

"Then take the consequences;" and spreading his jacket on the ground, Jean took out of it about twenty tortoise-eggs, which he had found in the sand. Then lighting a fire, he put some stones to warm, and went in quest of some water. Fortuné looked on

silently all this time. When the eggs were cooked, Jean buttered a piece of cake, and began eating. Jean felt that this was the right moment to punish his companion's selfishness; it cost him a great deal to keep all the eggs to himself, for he was naturally so generous that he would far rather have given them all to Fortuné than keep them away from him. But kindness towards some characters is only considered by them a proof of weakness.

Fortuné could not imagine why Jean did not offer him any of the eggs, and stretching out his hand he helped himself to one; but Jean quietly took it away from him.

"So you refuse to give me one of your eggs?" said Fortuné, angrily.

"Why should I give you one?"

"We ought to share with our friends!"

"Have you ever shared anything with me?"

"I have never found anything."

"How is it that you can't find anything, when other people find plenty of things close to you?"

"I don't know."

"Then I can tell you; other people work and seek, but you never do anything you can help."

"You are a miser, Jean."

Jean laughed, and dipped his bread in his egg.

"You are selfish!"

"Then, you think it is a fault to be selfish?" said Jean. "You are of that opinion to-day, at any rate." .

Fortuné was fairly ashamed of himself.

"It was by chance you found the tortoise-eggs," he exclaimed.

"True; but you could have lighted the fire whilst I was away."

Fortuné nibbled his cake, thinking the eggs looked very nice.

"Well," said he, at last, "I will roast the birds."

But the birds had first to be plucked and cleaned, and, as Fortuné had never helped his aunt and Fanny to do such things, he did not know how to set about it. Yet, he did not like to ask Jean.

He began to cry from pure vexation.

"Listen to me," said Jean, who was really sorry for him; "we have no more wood for the fire—now, if you will get up and fetch some, I'll give you some eggs."

"No!"

"Oh! just as you like."

Making the remaining eggs quite hard, Jean tied them up in some leaves, as if they were in a bag. "Now, shall we set off?" said he, to Fortuné.

"No!"

"Why not?"

"I won't go a step farther."

"You've quite made up your mind?"

"Yes!"

"Good-bye, then," cried Jean.

"But I can't stay here alone," said Fortuné, frightened at the thought of being left by himself.

"You can go home, if you prefer it."

"It's too far, and I'm afraid of the serpents."

"Then, come with me."

"No; I tell you I won't."

"Good-bye, then," said Jean; and he set off.

Fortuné let him go, pretending to laugh in a "don't-care" sort of way, and then began rolling on the grass in a fit of passion. But frightened, by-and-by, at the rustling of a lizard near him, he got up and ran after Jean, and they journeyed on together, as before.

"I am very tired," said Fortuné, after walking for some hours.

"We'll rest, if you like," said Jean.

"I'm hungry, too."

"Well, you've your cake and butter."

"Shall we halt, then, and eat?"

"I have no objection."

"Shall I make the fire?" muttered Fortuné.

"If you like; and, indeed, it is your turn to do so."

Now that Fortuné was inclined to give way, Jean willingly helped him by fetching some of the wood; then he put the eggs before Fortuné, as if to say, "they are for both of us."

Though Fortuné remained a selfish boy, and often took advantage of the kindness of those who were willing to give way, he never quite forgot the lesson of that day.



CHAPTER XVII.

A NIGHT IN A TREE—THEY REACH THE PROMONTORY—MELANCHOLY DISCOVERY
—THE POOR CAPTAIN—LAST DUTIES—MIRZA AND BEPPO—THE CAVERN—
A DISAGREEABLE VISITOR—THE WAIFS.

TOWARDS five o'clock Fortuné was quite exhausted, and Jean was very tired.

"I really can't go any farther," cried Fortuné; "do let us sleep here."

"Agreed," said Jean.

"Jean," asked Fortuné, "will you be kind enough to fetch the wood for the fire?—only just for this evening; I really cannot walk, and I will go twice to-morrow."

"Willingly," said Jean, setting out immediately.

As soon as he was a little rested, Fortuné roused himself to do

what was right, and went and filled the bamboos with water; he brought back with him two water-melons, and some water-cresses, and began plucking the birds he had killed.

"Look what I have done," said he, when Jean returned loaded with wood.

"Bravo!" cried Jean, giving Fortuné a friendly shake of the hand.

Joyfully returning the shake, he saw how much pleasanter it was to be on good terms with his companion.

What a feast they had! eggs, cake, watercresses, a roast bird, some melon, and, added to all these delicacies, an excellent appetite, earned by a four leagues' walk.

"Where shall we sleep?" asked Fortuné, whose eyes closed even while his teeth were still busy.

"There, on the moss," said Jean.

"And what of the wild beasts?"

"We will make up a good fire."

"And what shall we do about the serpents?"

"But, what can we do? where would you propose sleeping?"

"I'm afraid," said he, almost crying.

"It is of no use crying; that won't help us," returned Jean.

"True; but I can't help it; wait, I have an idea."

"What is it?"

"Do you see that large tree?"

"Yes; what of that?"

"Don't you see that where those huge branches divide there's a flat space?"

"Yes; I see it."

"Suppose we spend the night there?"

"All right; but how shall we climb up?"

"Couldn't we make some steps in the tree with our hatchets?"

"And, how about the serpents?"

"We could take some lighted brands and look over the platform before we lay down to sleep there."

Fear made Fortuné inventive.

"I think you're right," said Jean, "we will try."

Cutting some notches in the tree, and then driving in firmly some bits of wood, they got gradually up to the platform.

Fortuné stayed below, and passed the pieces of wood up to Jean on a long pole; then Jean placing one foot on the last made step, drew himself up by taking firm hold of a creeping-plant, which encircled the tree, with his left hand, and with his right hand he hammered in the bits of wood, which formed the steps, with the back of his hatchet. As soon as Jean reached the platform, Fortuné fixed a lighted brand on the pole, and passed it up to him, so that Jean might inspect their resting-place. Finding nothing objectionable there, he told Fortuné to come up. Though their bed was not soft, and was much less pleasant than on the moss, near a warm fire, the boys slept on till morning without accident.

They set out next day with limbs aching from yesterday's fatigue and their hard uneven couch. Finding it very difficult to walk at all, Fortuné said—

"Though I look so much stronger than you, Jean, I'm a good deal more tired to-day than you are."

"Yes; but I am accustomed to walking, and, besides, I went through so many hardships in my early childhood, that I'm used to roughing it; if you choose to exercise yourself, you will soon become as good, and very likely a better walker than I am."

In the course of the day they fell in with a troop of antelopes, the Dutch call these animals *Springbokken*, but they were too far off to attempt a shot at them, and the boys were too tired to pursue them.

About ten o'clock they breakfasted close to the sea, on the

tortoise eggs and some shell-fish, which are very abundant on this coast, then they slept under the shade of a rock till the heat abated. Towards five o'clock they reached a sort of promontory, whence they could see a small bay, where the waves seemed always rough, as if from a rapid current.

A melancholy spectacle now presented itself. Amidst spars, and part of a ship's cargo, they beheld three dead bodies. The state of these sad remains was too awful for me to attempt a description of it, partly devoured, as they were, by the fish. Had it not been for some scraps of clothing which still remained on them, the boys could not have recognised them to be sailors.

Two dogs now ran joyfully up to the travellers.

"Is not that Beppo?" cried Fortuné.

"Yes; and here is the captain's dog, Mirza," said Jean.

The dogs, especially Mirza, were miserably thin, and covered with dirt, but they bounded round the boys, barking with delight, though, from time to time, Mirza howled strangely, as if she had some sad tidings she would fain have imparted to her newly-found friends. By-and-bye, she ran a few paces away from the boys, looking back eagerly, as if to induce them to follow her.

"What can she want?" exclaimed Jean, who, when they were on board the ship, used to pet and feed the faithful creature, and, therefore, understood her ways better than Fortuné, who had never paid much attention to her.

"Let us follow her," continued Jean.

About two hundred yards from where they had stood, on the other side of the rock, the dog stopped at another corpse. Mirza looked wistfully at the boys and uttering a long plaintive howl, the poor dog lay down at the dead man's feet.

"It is our good, noble, Captain," said Jean recognizing the sailor's dress.

"Here is the ring he always wore on his finger," added Fortuné.

"How sad," exclaimed Jean, his eyes filling with tears, "how kind and brave he was," and kneeling by the corpse the boy sobbed convulsively, for he was much attached to the Captain. Seeming to understand the reason of his grief, Mirza leaning her head against Jean's hands, began licking them as if in gratitude. Then the dog set up another long wail, and pulling his master's clothes, barked, as if to awake him.

Alas! it was the sleep of death, and no one could wake him. Trembling from the violence of his sorrow, Jean took a box containing important papers, from his kind friend's pocket, that with the ring, he might return them to Captain Pozic's family, if he ever returned to France.

At the foot of this rock, in a spot sheltered from the highest tide, Fortuné dug a grave in the sand; and here the boys buried the remains of the sailors and the Captain, covering their modest resting place with a heap of stones, surmounted with a wooden cross. Mirza did not approve of her master being buried, and attacked Jean, who had great difficulty in pacifying the poor animal, and also to prevent Fortuné's hurting her, for he was so much afraid of being bitten that he even proposed killing the faithful dog. Jean however was so angry when Fortuné said this, that he did not venture to repeat such a wish.

The only alleviation of the boys' sorrow, was, that they had found no other bodies. Perhaps God in his mercy, had permitted the other passengers to escape death. It was almost night before the last services had been rendered to their lost friends, and as there is no twilight in this part of the world it was necessary to find a shelter for the night without delay. Jean discovered a cavern in a rock close by, and proposed to take up their quarters there for the night.

First they burned some wood and dried grass in the cave to destroy any noxious vapours which it might contain, and then they

www.libtool.com.cn





To face page 117.

THE BOYS ARE DISTURBED IN THE CAVE

www.libtool.com.cn

www.libtool.com.cn

improvised a tolerably comfortable bed, by spreading a layer of dry sea weed on a layer of warm sand. They barricaded themselves in, with some large branches made firm, with the heaviest stones they could carry. Beppo gladly went in with them, and after a short time Mirza allowed Jean to carry her also into the cave.

The night was somewhat advanced, when the dogs set up a loud bark, their hair bristling as they jumped against the barricaded entrance, as if to attack an invisible enemy.

"We must stir up the fire," said Jean.

"What shall we do?" cried Fortuné, trembling like a leaf, "suppose it should turn out that we have taken refuge in a wild beast's den."

"Oh I don't think that is the case," said Jean, but he did not speak very confidently; "If we were in a wild beast's den," continued he "we must have found bones, or some other trace of his presence."

"The barrier is giving way," screamed Fortuné.

"Be quiet."

An unknown visitor, was certainly trying to shake the boys' strong barricade; for some time it resisted the efforts of the invader, but at last the branches gave way a little. The boys guessed that the animal must be pulling them away with his mouth; soon, nothing remained but the stones, and through the interstices between them, Jean saw two bright spots glisten, which he felt sure must be the eyes of some wild beast.

"Help, help," screamed Fortuné. Had there been any one near Jean would gladly have called for help likewise, but who would answer the call in this solitude?

After a momentary hesitation, seizing a burning brand, Jean advanced boldly to the entrance, and just as the heap of stones was on the point of yielding to the animal's efforts, Jean flung the fire-brand at its head.

The ~~terrible invader~~ retreated, either burned by the brand, or else, scared by the sight of the fire. But he must have gone on wandering about the vicinity, for from time to time the dogs set up their bark and howl, all through the night, only at longer and longer intervals.

Jean availed himself of one of these intervals to re-build the stone barricade, for he could not venture out to seek branches. Then changing the place of the fire, he put it almost close to the barricade, therefore, if the animal returned he could not reach the boys without passing through the flames ; the sight of which sufficed to keep the animal off, for it never did more than stop sometimes, for a minute or so, at a short distance from the barricade. The boys could easily tell what the wild beast was about from the way the dogs barked. Though the rest of the night passed without farther alarm, I don't think our young friends slept again before morning, for besides their fears, they were much inconvenienced by the smoke, which made them cough dreadfully.

At sunrise the dogs became quite quiet and the boys falling asleep did not wake till the morning was far advanced. Fortuné did not like leaving the cave, lest they should encounter the fierce enemy of the night, so it was decided to send Mirza out to reconnoitre ; as soon as a few of the stones were removed she took advantage of the opening to rush to her master's grave and lie down there. Hearing nothing alarming, Beppo was next let out, the little dog frisked about so gaily that they were quite re-assured. Jean now went out himself, and when quite certain that not a vestige of danger existed, Fortuné emerged from the cave.

The first object now was to find traces of the animal ; and its foot-prints were so distinctly marked in the sand that this was easily done. They found that the same animal must have wandered round the graves, and that he had scratched away the sand as if to dig up the dead bodies ; fortunately the heavy heap of stones had prevented

his succeeding ; but the attempt clearly proved that the animal was carnivorous.

"It must be a Hyena," observed Jean.

"Suppose it were to return," said Fortuné, trembling at the slightest noise.

"We have our sticks," said Jean.

"They would not be of much use."

"And our hatchets."

"I'd rather go away."

"We must first see if anything has been washed ashore here, and take back what may be useful."

It proved indeed that a great part of the cargo had been drifted, by the strong current which set into the bay, to this part of the coast, but most of the things were so much injured by sea-water as to be almost useless. There were two large chests of silk and other merchandise ; the outside pieces of silk were quite spoiled but some pieces in the middle were in tolerable preservation ; they also found some of the passengers' and sailors' boxes, containing clothes and money, etc. The money of course was of no use to them, but the clothes might be very serviceable, for their own were much worn. A little farther on Fortuné found a box of books ; and he gave it a contemptuous kick, betraying his old dislike of study, as he called the contents "rubbish."

"How delighted Victor would be to have some of these," said Jean.

"I'm thankful to say the water has quite ruined them, or I dare say my Aunt would be boring me to read them," said idle Master Fortuné with selfish glee.



CHAPTER XVIII.

DUCKS TRAVELLING—A CANINE POSTMAN—THE PACKAGES.

As they were making these observations they were greeted by a sonorous quack—quack—quack, which they quickly perceived proceeded from half a dozen ducks, that were advancing towards them with a majestic waddle.

“Oh, there are some ducks,” said Fortuné.

“And just like French ducks,” replied Jean.

“They don’t seem at all like wild ducks.”

“One would really think why yes look, that is the brown duck which eat your biscuit one day on board the ‘Julie.’”

“Yes, they certainly are some of the ducks we had on board.”

"I wonder whether they swam, or flew, to the shore. Would not Mme. Pearson and Suzette be delighted to see them! Most likely they spend their nights in the long grass, in the forest, and come down to the shore to breakfast and dine on the shell fish."

Most animals brought up domestically, like to be with human beings, and the ducks seemed quite pleased to see the two boys who renewed their acquaintance by throwing them some grains of corn which they had found in some otherwise empty barrels.

"I think we ought not to throw these seeds away," said Jean suddenly "for I remember that the seeds Monsieur Pearson brought out with him to sow in Ceylon were put in barrels exactly like these."

"But what use can we make of them?"

"We will sow them."

"That is a capital idea! would it not be nice, Jean, if we could find some coffee seeds? Coffee and milk make such a delicious breakfast."

"Coffee does not grow in France," said Jean, "but perhaps we may find some wild in Africa, Victor will be able to find out all about it in some of the books."

"What can be the use of these pieces of wood?" said Fortuné who had just demolished a chest, which the sea had tossed about and broken considerably, before Fortuné lent his assistance to complete its destruction.

"They are the models of the sawing mill and wind mill, which Monsieur Pearson meant to erect at Ceylon," said Jean, after spending a few minutes in their examination. "Poor Monsieur Pearson!"

"What is Beppo about yonder?" cried Fortuné, for the little dog was licking the cracks of a barrel with evident satisfaction.

"It is the barrel of eggs," said Jean, who was well acquainted with the cargo of the ship, because he had helped to stow it away in the hold and on deck.

Alas! the eggs were all broken, and formed a huge omelette, for

which they had never been intended ; the bran in which they had been packed being mixed up with them. The compound smelt so villanously, that Fortuné was glad to get away from it.

"How delighted they will be at Providence when we take them some of the silks and some clothes," said Jean who began a chorus of rejoicing.

"And the cask of hams," replied Fortuné.

"And the books."

"And the seeds."

"And the ducks."

"And the chest of linen."

"And the sailors' bags with the needles and thread, and this looking glass for Fanny."

"And the pistols we found in the Second Officer's box."

"And the models of the mills."

"But how can we take all this back ? I'm sure I don't know."

"We want a cart."

"And a horse too."

"Let us breakfast, and then we shall be better able to think of some way to manage."

After a deliberation, too long to give here in detail, it was decided that a cart was indispensable ; as for the horse they would try to make Fanchon serve instead, if they could induce her to lend her assistance, which, to be sure was rather doubtful.

"Meanwhile," said Jean, "let us take what we can with us, and we can choose what we think will be most useful."

"What shall we do with the rest ?"

"Take it into the cave and barricade the entrance with stones."

"Then when we have made a cart, we will come back for what we cannot take with us now."

"I tell you what we could do ; if we can't manage the cart, we could make up some parcels, and Fanchon would be sure to let us tie them on her back."

"If we had but a horse what delightful rides I would take," said Fortuné, thinking as usual of his own pleasure first.

Jean shrugged his shoulders. "We had better set to work at once," said he, "for we have been absent two days, and they must be getting anxious about us at Providence. First, let us pack up what we can take with us, and then let us put the rest in the cave."

It took the whole day to accomplish all this, for the boys were obliged to empty the chests and carry the contents in small quantities into the cave, for the chests, when full, were so heavy that they had not strength to lift them.

When they had finished stowing away the things, both the boys were so tired, that in spite of their dread of the Hyena, they were compelled to pass a second night in the cave. With the help of the boxes, however, they were able to make their barricade much stronger than on the previous night, and they armed themselves with some long bamboo canes, having fixed a sharp fid to the end of each bamboo : a fid is a strong pointed instrument, and they had found several in the boxes of the sailors.

Though the dogs barked as on the previous night, and the boys were not without alarm, they were so worn out by their labours that they slept till morning.

After breakfasting on some ham and sea biscuit, which they had found in the barrels they set out homeward.

"What shall we do about the ducks?" said Jean.

"They will never follow us."

"No, besides they waddle so slowly, that they would delay us."

"We had better leave them here."

"Perhaps we might never find any of them again if we did so."

"What does it signify?"

"Madame Pearson would not ask such a question. I tell you we must manage to take them."

"But how can we take them?"

"In a bag."

"They would be stifled."

"We can make some holes to let their heads through."

"They will be very heavy, and we are overloaded already."

"Never mind that, if you will carry two of them I will carry the other four."

"Well if it must be so."

By means of a few grains of corn the ducks were caught, and in spite of their resistance put into the two bags made of sailcloth.

This operation—which puzzled Mirza and Beppo exceedingly—being finished, the boys piled up a quantity of stones before the entrance to the cave; then tying some branches together with ropes, they fastened them in front of the cavern by means of pegs driven into the fissures of the rocks. This done, they raised a last prayer to heaven by the side of the poor Captain's grave, and set off on their homeward journey.

It was very difficult to induce Mirza to leave her master's grave, so Jean was obliged to tie a rope round her neck, and drag her along for some distance.

"Let us leave the nasty creature behind," said Fortuné, who did not like dogs, "she keeps us back."

"No," said Jean, "if I left her here she would either die of hunger, or be devoured by the Hyena, and I love her more than ever for her fidelity."

After a time, Mirza followed Jean more contentedly, only stopping occasionally to look back and utter a plaintive howl; and when Jean called her kindly, she would come up and lick his hand and walk by his side of her own accord.

The boys were so heavily laden that they could not go far that day; and they halted long enough before sunset to prepare their supper and collect a large provision of wood for the night. Then

they made up an enormous fire, by which they intended to watch by turn through the darkness ; but it is almost impossible to resist slumber at their age, and in spite of their fear of wild beasts, they soon both slept soundly. The barking of the dogs it is true, awoke them several times, and they could hear the noise of animals in the wood, not far off ; but either the fire kept the creatures away or, as is more probable, they were only Antelopes, or some other kind of inoffensive animals, who had trotted through the wood.

The next day, our travellers saw some Zebras and other animals, whose names they did not know, and whom Mirza seemed inclined to chase. Perhaps if Jean had not been so very tired, he might have encouraged her to pursue them, and followed her with his bow and arrows ; but as it was he did not wish to walk an unnecessary yard. Towards five o'clock, he noticed that Beppo began smelling the ground and joyfully wagging his tail.

"What can the dog be after ?" said Fortuné.

"I can't think," said Jean ; but presently an idea occurred to him, "Perhaps Victor has come to meet us, and that he is not far off, and Beppo scents him. Stop a minute, Beppo," continued Jean, catching him and holding him back, for the dog had just set off as fast as his legs would carry him.

"Oh dear !" said Fortuné, "I am quite knocked up, I really can't go another step to-night."

"Oh, do cheer up for a little while, and we shall soon be at home."

"You have kept telling me that for more than two hours, and now I'm dead tired," said Fortuné, suddenly throwing down his load, to the great dissatisfaction of the ducks who were a part of it, and down he sank on the grass.

"There's only one way I can think of," said Jean ; "stay here and rest yourself, and I will go on and send Landry to take your load."

"No ; I won't stay here alone."

"Then, if you like it better, I will remain here with all the things, and when you have got rid of your load you will be able to walk more easily."

"But my legs ache so."

"And so do mine. Here, Beppo ! Beppo ! come back," for the dog was trying again to escape, and the little animal came back hanging down his head disappointedly.

"Look," said Jean, "here is the proof that Victor has been as far as this ; for our initials and his are cut on this tree. See how Beppo frisks about. I have an idea, Fortuné, lend me your little pocket-book."

"What for ?"

"You shall see."

Fortuné, who did not like lending anything, handed Jean the pocket-book very unwillingly.

Tearing out a leaf, Jean wrote something on it, and rolling the paper round a piece of wood, he fastened it to Beppo's collar. Then taking the dog to the spot where Victor must have stood to carve the letters on the tree, he made him smell the trace. "Run away, now, Beppo," said he, and there was no necessity to repeat the injunction, for the dog set off as fast as he could scamper.

"Did you write to Victor?" said Fortuné, who understood Jean's intention now.

"Of course, I have told him we are still a league from Providence, and that as our loads are so heavy we cannot get on, we want him to send Landry to help us."

"I hope Beppo will find his way to Providence."

"I feel sure he will, but even if he does not we shall only have to spend the night here."

"I'd much rather spend it in my bed at home. Besides Suzette would make us some nice milk-porridge."

"I'm quite of your opinion," replied Jean, "but as you cannot walk——"

If children are soon tired, they are just as quickly rested; and after an hour's rest Fortuné's fatigue diminished, and his hunger increased. The idea of the milk-porridge gave him courage, so he said to Jean, "If you will stay here and take care of the things, I will go on to Providence."

"Just as you like," replied Jean, good-naturedly.

"Will you let me take Mirza?" asked Fortuné, for he felt he should like a companion and protector.

"If she will follow you I have no objection."

But Mirza would not go with him, for Fortuné had never petted her, and dogs have an excellent memory for kindness or neglect. The little creature sheltered herself behind Jean who had so often brushed, and patted, and fed her; and when Fortuné attempted to take her away by force she showed her teeth. This demonstration was quite enough for Fortuné, who relinquished all idea of her company, and set off, rather uneasily, alone.



CHAPTER XIX.

ATTACHMENT BETWEEN BEPPO, MIRZA, AND THE POPINCOURT FAMILY—A DELICIOUS DINNER—THE COLONIAL ASSEMBLY'S DECREE—SECOND JOURNEY TO THE WRECK—HOW THE BEES WERE BROUGHT TO PROVIDENCE.

MEANWHILE Beppo followed the scent of his dear master till he arrived at Providence, and it was Maria who found the little note, which Victor immediately opened and read. Then Suzette and Landry set out without a moment's delay.

Beppo made a capital supper ; but he kept looking very suspiciously at the little monkey all the while, because Master Popincourt thought proper to walk round him all the time he was eating, though at a respectful distance. Beppo had a very jealous disposition, and the familiarity between his master and the Popincourts made him very angry. The children had christened

the monkeys Popincourt, in remembrance of their old home in Paris. After barking and complaining, in dog fashion, Beppo sprang at the little monkey, and Mme. Popincourt, the mother, who was quietly nibbling a bit of cocoa-nut in a corner, rushed to the rescue of her son, boxing Peppo's ears smartly, and giving him a bite or two into the bargain.

It was in vain the little King Charles howled in agony, he could not extricate himself from the monkey's claws, as she tore off his long silky hair with wonderful dexterity. Victor was obliged to show Mme. Popincourt the whip, and then she ran away making grimaces.

Fortuné arrived about an hour and a-half after this scene, and was welcomed with delight ; for they had all been very anxious about the boys. Proud of his present importance, Fortuné gave a long account of the expedition ; he told them of the sad certainty of the poor Captain's death, and made a great deal of his own exploits. To hear him, one would have fancied that everything had depended on him.

"Jean is worn out with fatigue," said he, "though he has not worked half so hard as I have ; so for his sake I pushed forward."

Though Mme. Pearson fancied he must be praising himself at Jean's expense, she was so glad to see him that she had not the heart just now to reprove his vanity. But Victor, shaking his head, whispered, "I'm sure my friend Jean has done at least three parts of the work." Though the lame boy had already had what, for him, was a long walk, he set out to meet Jean. The boys soon met and greeted each other so affectionately, that tears rose to kind Suzette's eyes. Fanny, Maria, Landry, and even Suzette herself, were delighted when the things were unpacked.

"Oh, Master Fortuné," said she, "we forgot to bring away two of the parcels from the place where you and Jean stopped ; as

you say you are not tired, perhaps you would not mind going back for them?"

"Oh," said Fortuné, blushing, "don't ask me to do that."

"If you will go, I will go back also to help you," said Jean.

"No, no," said Fortuné, utterly ashamed of himself, for he saw his falsehoods would be found out, and that he should be laughed at.

"I hope this will cure you of boasting," said Mme. Pearson; "there is no shame in being tired, and it is foolish to try to do more than we possibly can; but we should never let vanity and conceit induce us to tell falsehoods, which are always found out sooner or later."

"We won't say any more about it," cried Suzette, for though she liked to defend her son, as she called Jean, she did not wish to hurt any one's feelings. "Come to table, the soup is ready," added she.

Never was an invitation more welcome. Mme. Pearson, who tried, for the children's sake, to be cheerful, took Jean's arm with a smile, and Fortuné followed leading Fanny. Maria, finding Victor slow in offering her his arm, claimed it eagerly. Blushing up to his ears, Landry was obliged to offer his to Suzette, who called him Monsieur Cantinaud, and made him a profound curtsy before she sat down.

What a splendid dinner it was! In the first place Landry had made a real table; though, as he had no tools but his hatchet and saw, the top was rather uneven. The legs were only of bamboo; but then all these imperfections were hidden, for Fanny had made a beautiful table-cloth of the large leaves of some aquatic plants, by fastening them together with rushes. Victor had arranged a gourd to hold spring water.

Jean and Fortuné enjoyed the milk-porridge excessively, besides this there was a dish of delicious birds which Victor had

caught in snares, some ham which Fortuné had brought with him ; and for dessert they had some melons, and a pot of peach jam.

"Now we will drink Monsieur Pearson's health," and saying this, Jean produced a bottle of excellent Cape wine, which he had found in one of the boxes on the shore.

When Victor and Fortuné held out their glasses for a second bumper Mme. Pearson refused, saying—"My dear children, we must keep the rest of the wine in case of illness, and besides you are all so merry to-night, that I fear another glass would make you tipsy."

They were indeed merry, but not from the wine ; their mirth was occasioned by their animated recitals of past adventures, and the consideration of new projects.

Jean was the first to leave the dinner table, that he might feed Mirza, but she would not eat anything, and leaned her head against his knee, looking up into his face with her large soft sad eyes.

"Poor Captain," said Jean, "he was so kind and generous, I had hoped to prove my gratitude to him some day for his—" here tears choked his utterance, and putting his handkerchief to his eyes, he wept silently, and indeed every one was moved.

"My children," said Mme. Pearson, "let us never forget that the captain and his brave sailors died to save our lives."

After consecrating a few minutes to these sad thoughts, Mme. Pearson strove to dissipate the children's grief by turning the conversation into another channel ; and, with the elasticity of youth, they soon began talking again of the expedition, which seemed an inexhaustible subject.

Maria jumped with joy at the thought of having some honey, but her movement disturbed Master Popincourt, who was seated on her shoulder, dipping his paws into the peach jam, and then sucking them with great satisfaction. Not understanding that he might have some reason to share in her joy, he grew angry at being disturbed, and gave her a little blow ; but Maria only laughed, and

let him go on gormandizing. Beppo liked notice from everybody, though he preferred Victor to any one else ; but Mirza was more sparing of her affection, and only liked Jean to touch her, and sometimes Fanny, who undertook to feed her.

After looking at each other a long time with much apparent curiosity, Mme. Popincourt and Mirza made up their minds to be friendly ; little Master Popincourt took advantage of this treaty of peace to make Mirza's acquaintance, and in a few days he became bold enough to pull the dog by her ears and tail. When he teased her more than she approved of, Mirza contented herself with pushing him gently away.

Mirza soon became so fond of the little monkey, that she would sometimes invite the young tyrant to a game of play, which it was very amusing to see. Popincourt, who knew very well how to hold on, would often gallop about on the dog's back.

Jean and Fortuné found their beds of dried grass so comfortable, that they slept very late the morning after their return to Providence. I don't think they awoke till breakfast-time.

It was decided during this repast, by the Colonial Assembly, which was presided over by Mme. Pearson :—

First, That they must fetch the honey, and, if possible, establish the bees at Providence.

Secondly, That a cart must be made.

Thirdly, That the seeds must be sown before they were spoiled.

It was now September, which is the beginning of the South African spring, just the right time for sowing seeds. This turning up-side down of the season sorely puzzled poor Suzette. Victor remembered having read an explanation of it in a book, and when they were on board the *Julie*, M. Pearson had often talked about it with the Captain.

"But how can January and February possibly be summer, and July and August winter ?" asked Suzette.

"It ~~most undoubtedly is so,~~" said Victor ; but it was in vain he tried to explain to the kind-hearted but uneducated dairy-woman the reason why it must be so. Though Suzette could not understand theories, she was the most practical person of the party, particularly in agricultural knowledge. She showed them how to take the honey and prepare large gourds to hive the bees in. A whole day was spent in getting the hives ready, and the second day after the return of the boys, some of the colonists set out in search of the bees. Mme. Pearson, Victor, and Maria remained at Providence, and Jean relinquished the pleasure of going after the honey, to stay and take care of his friends.

Jean and Victor took advantage of this day's rest to draw a plan of the cart, to select the best kind of wood for making it, and to invent a way of making the wheels. Then, in return for the hat she had given him, Jean made Fanny a sort of parasol, with a piece of the silk found in one of the chests.

Towards six o'clock, becoming uneasy at the prolonged absence of his friends, Jean took his bow and arrows, and set out with faithful Mirza to go and meet them. He came upon them after about an hour's walk, and found them extremely merry, though very tired. They had met with the little bird who led them successively to three swarms of bees.

"When he saw us taking the honey," said Fanny, "the good little bird sat by, as if waiting for his share, and when we gave him some, he flew away chirping, chir—chir—chir, and took us to another hive."

"Yes," said Suzette, "and we were very near losing ourselves, for we forgot to mark our route."

The three hives of bees which they had secured were placed near the house for the present, but it was decided that an enclosure should be made for them as soon as possible.



CHAPTER XX.

**SECOND EXPEDITION TO CAVE BAY—FORTUNE'S COURAGE—THE PORCUPINE
—MAKING THE CART—PROJECTED HUNTING EXPEDITIONS.**

THERE were many things to execute, but the colonists could count but few strong hands. As they had not the necessary tools for making a cart, they decided on taking a second journey at once, to Cave Bay, to bring back the seeds, wine, linen, and some instructive books, which Victor knew would be very useful to them. He was to be one of the party, for though Mme. Pearson felt very uneasy at the thought of his going, he was so much stronger than formerly, that she did not like to prevent his taking the journey—as he was very anxious to go with the other boys—Victor was so brave that nothing daunted him, and even when he was very tired

he would never give up if he could help it, so Mme. Pearson gave him specially into Jean's charge before they started ; for she knew Jean's prudence and fondness for her little son.

Landry was going also, and Susette, who wished to select various things for her kitchen. Fortuné did not like being left behind, but some one was obliged to stay to take care of Mme. Pearson and the little girls. Each party wished to have Jean with them : the little girls wanted him to stay at Providence, because he was so clever and kind ; and he would willingly have done so, had not Mme. Pearson been very anxious he should go with Victor. Fortuné sulked all the morning, for he was cross at being obliged to stay behind with his aunt ; but when he saw that no one paid any attention to his sulkiness, he became more amiable and helped Fanny, who was making baskets.

"You are very unkind, Fanny," said he after a short silence, "you don't care about me now."

"Unkind ?"

"Yes, you are ; you used to give up to me, and always did as I told you, but now you contradict me whenever you can."

"I don't contradict you on purpose, but it is true that I don't give up to you as I used to do."

"Well ; why don't you ?"

"Because you have not treated me well, and don't deserve that I should give way to you."

"No, that is not the reason ; it is because you like Jean better than you do me, though he is not a relation, and nothing but a common workman."

"Jean has been so kind and good to us," said Fanny, "that we cannot treat him like a stranger."

"He has never done more for you all than I have ; to hear you talk, one would really fancy he was quite my superior," returned Fortuné.

"He is always so clever, and good-natured, and courageous."

"You don't think I am a coward, do you?" interrupted the other, "if there were any real danger, you'd soon see . . . for instance, if there were . . ."

"A lion?" said Fanny, smiling.

"Ah!—well—yes; a real lion, you would see how I should pursue him with my bow and arrows."

Now, at this moment, Beppo, who was near to Fortuné, began barking violently. The dog seemed to have got scent of some animal hidden in a thick bush, close by them.

"Oh, dear, what can it be?" exclaimed Fortuné, almost rolling off the log, on which he was sitting, from sudden fright.

"Mamma!" screamed Fanny, "oh, do come here, mamma!"

Mme. Pearson came as quickly as she could, and Fanny showed her the animal which Beppo had ferreted out of the bush.

"It is a porcupine," said Mme. Pearson, keeping Fanny back; "you had better not go too near it."

For, when the first momentary alarm was passed, Fanny was even rather over bold for a little girl; the porcupine had rolled himself up into a ball, and she tried to touch him with a stick, which made him turn all his quills outwards. This proceeding of Fanny encouraged Beppo, who made a rush at the porcupine.

By-and-by, taking up his bow and arrows, and keeping a respectful distance away from the creature, Fortuné shot about a dozen arrows at him. But the porcupine was too well protected by his natural armour to be injured by the arrows, which rebounded from his quills. Poor Beppo had felt the sharpness of these quills when he charged the enemy, and the dog was still howling in pain.

Mme. Pearson wished at first to let the porcupine go, but the colony was in want of needles, and it was thought that his quills would answer this purpose, for rough work, very

well; so it was decided that he must be put to death for the public good.

Mme. Pearson, Fortuné, and Fanny, spent the two next days in digging the inclosure, and getting it ready to sow the seeds saved from the wreck.

The exploring party all came back in good health, and loaded with provisions. Victor had borne the journey very well, for he had ridden on Fanchon whenever he felt at all tired. It was Suzette's bright idea to take the cow, who had proved very useful, having consented to carry home several heavy bags.

Mme. Pearson had never seen her son looking so well as he now did, though he was burned quite red with the sun. When she saw her boy coming towards her, at a steady pace, and with no other support than a stout stick, she felt so thankful, that could she only have known that her husband was safe, she would have considered the shipwreck to have been the greatest of blessings, so evidently had the life they were leading promoted the boy's health. Next day, under Suzette's directions, they began sowing the seeds.

Victor read aloud the chapter on "sowing seeds," out of an agricultural manual, and Suzette gave a practical demonstration of what he read.

In these countries, where cultivation was as yet unknown, there was no need of plough, or manure, for the land was so fertile, that a few strokes with a hatchet, and a bough or two dragged over the ground, were sufficient to produce a splendid harvest.

As soon as the seed was sown, they set to work on the cart; it was comparatively easy for people like Jean and Landry, who had been used to carpentering, to make the body of the cart, in spite of their tools being few and bad. The most difficult parts were the wheels and iron-work. However, Jean remembered having read in a book of travels to the Cape of Good Hope, that the

Dutch waggons were made of wood and leather only, on account of the impossibility of repairing iron-work in the midst of the forest, whilst leather and wooden pegs could always be renewed.

The first step towards the cart-making, was to saw four large wooden disks, of about four feet in diameter, by five or six inches in thickness. For this purpose, Jean selected a very hard kind of wood, called by the Dutch *Yserhout*; but the only saws which the boys had, were too small and weak for the present work, and were nearly broken by it. With much difficulty, however, they succeeded in sawing out the disks, and, afterwards, they sharpened some fids, and fixing them in wooden handles, they heated these fids red hot, and then burned a hole with them in each disk. Into these holes were inserted the axle-trees, which were chopped into shape with a hatchet.

The bottom of the cart was formed of two large planks, united together by cross pieces of wood, which were fastened on with pegs; two large hurdles, such as in France are used for gates of fields, were easily constructed, to form the sides.

What should they do about the leather straps? the only things they had were a few ropes, and these were neither strong enough, nor flexible enough, for their purpose.

"How shall we do without leather straps?" said Landry.

"We must have some," replied Jean, "and there is only one way I can think of, of getting them; we must contrive to kill some of the antelopes we see from time to time."

"But you cannot get near enough to them," said Mme. Pearson.

"I have an idea," cried Jean.

"What is it?" said Fanny.

Victor put his finger to his lips, as a hint to his friend to be silent; but Jean could never refuse Fanny anything, and only turned his head away, laughing.

"And the flesh would be very acceptable," said Fortuné, "for we have had no fresh meat, except birds, since my porcupine."

"I should like a beefsteak, like those we used to have in Paris," said Maria.

"If you like, we can kill Fanchon," said Mme. Pearson.

But this suggestion did not fall in at all with Maria's ideas, for she would rather have fasted for two days than seen her favourite ill-treated.

"Or Popincourt," said Fortuné, giving the monkey's tail a sly pull.

The monkey looked round everywhere to see who had played him the trick, and seeing Beppo near him, he fancied the little dog had pulled his tail, so he gave the astonished King Charles two or three smart blows. After having administered this chastisement, Popincourt took refuge with Maria, the protectress of all the menagerie. Without paying any attention to Master Popincourt's wry faces, his mother picked up, and gravely began to suck the bit of sugar-cane he had let drop in the scramble.

"But we are forgetting all about the cart," said Fanny, "and I want to know, I *will* know, what Jean's plan is."

"I *will*!" repeated Mme. Pearson, in a tone of reproach, and preventing Jean's reply; "take care you don't wear out Jean's patience, as Fortuné wore out yours."

"Jean is so kind," said Fanny, archly, "that I may *insist* with him, may I not Jean?"

"Jean's good-nature does not excuse your rudeness," exclaimed her mother.

"Oh, Madame!" said Jean; "don't scold Miss Fanny, for she is always so kind and good now."

"Come, come," cried Fortuné (who did not like this conversation between Jean and his pretty cousin), "tell us what your plan is."

"Well, when we were following the honey-bird, I saw the

tracks of several kinds of animals near a spring about a league from here."

"What then?"

"In Franklin's book, Victor has found a description of the way they catch antelopes in snares, and I mean to try it."

"Nonsense," said Fortuné, who as usual thought the suggestions of other people absurd. "You will not catch any; will he, Landry?"

Landry, who was eating his fourteenth fig, and had his mouth full, only replied by a grunt; which might be taken either for negative or affirmative.

"I may not succeed," said Jean, modestly; "but I intend to try."

"What kind of snare will you set?" asked Fanny.

"I will try some wire snares first, like those Suzette says the poachers use in her part of France to catch roebucks."

"I fear your snares would soon be broken," said Mme. Pearson; "for the animals Victor was reading about the other day, must be much larger and stronger than European deer."

"Yes," said Victor; "but if the snares don't answer, we can dig some pits near the spring and cover them over with branches and earth."

"Well, what do you expect to happen then?" said Fortuné.

"That the Antelopes, Quaggas, and Zebras, and Gnoos will tumble into the pits."

"How absurd you are," said Fortuné, rocking his chair backwards and forwards. "You won't take any animals that way."

"We shall see," said Victor, vexed at his cousin's silly objections.

"If anything should fall in," began Fortuné,—but here his sentence was interrupted, for, to the great amusement of every one present, his chair completely overbalanced, and he fell flat on his back.

"May the antelopes fall into our pits just in that way!" exclaimed Victor.

"Could you not catch them with a rod and line, like Cape birds?" asked Maria seriously.

"Yes, by baiting the hook with a field," said Fortuné, laughing at her.

"You could hold the rod," said Victor, sorry to see his good little cousin look ashamed; "but if a lion should come to eat the antelope, Maria must be sure to tell you."

At daybreak next day, Victor, Jean, and Landry, set off for the spring. Mme. Pearson had advised them to give up the snares; besides, they had no wire strong enough for the purpose. Fortuné would have liked to go with them, but pride kept him at Providence; for he hoped on their return to prove how right he was in saying they would take nothing.

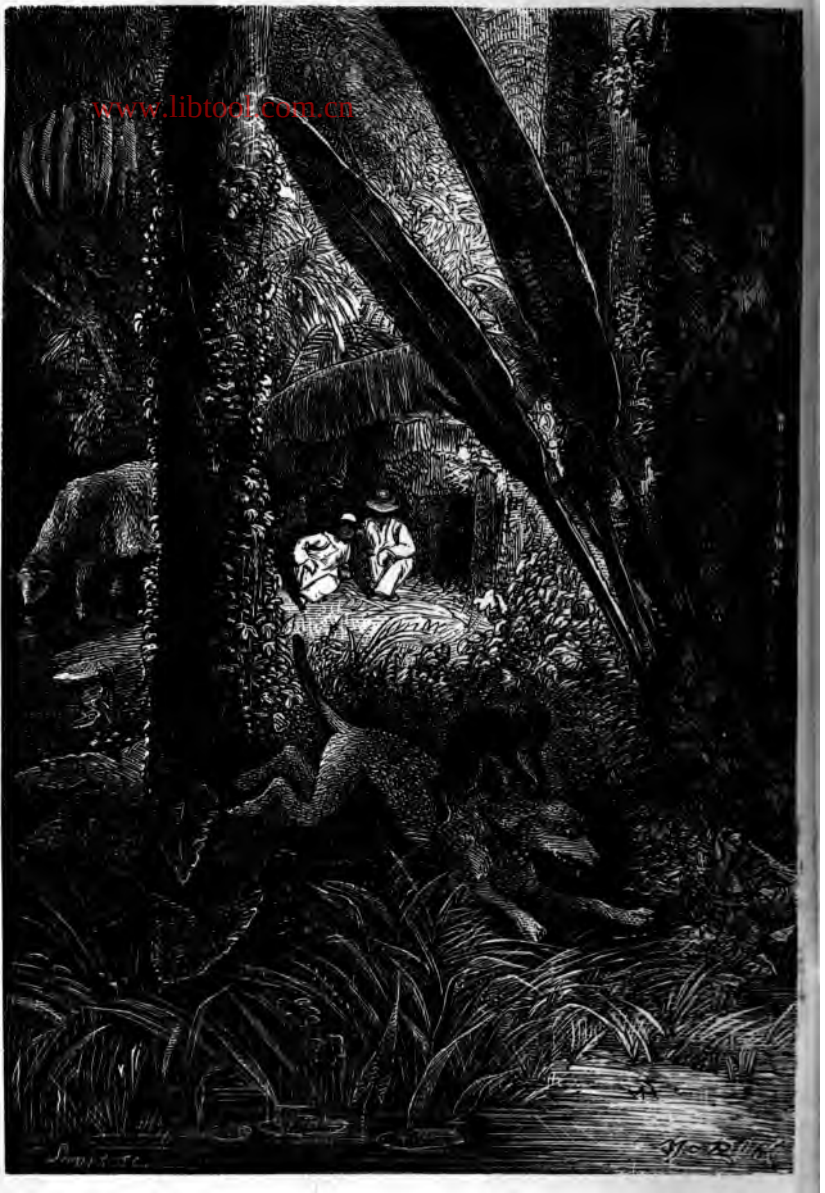


CHAPTER XXI.

THE HUNTERS SET OUT—MIRZA AND M. POPINCOURT—A WOUNDED BUFFALO—
TRACES OF HUMAN BEINGS—JEAN'S STRUGGLE WITH A CALF—FANCHON A
NURSE—DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED IN COMING BACK—BUFFALO STREAM.

By dint of constant practice, the boys had become tolerably expert marksmen. They were well armed; for besides their bows and arrows, they had a hatchet, a knife, and a well-sharpened fid stuck in their belts. The fid only required to be fixed in a bamboo, to be a capital lance. On their heads they wore large straw hats, which were made by Mme. Pearson, Suzette, and Fanny. Their clothes (made entirely of sail-cloth) were a little protection against the thorns. Their shoes were sadly worn; but they had re-soled them as well as they could

www.libtool.com.cn



To face page 143

POPINCOURT RIDING ON MIRZA.

www.libtool.com.cn

with the soles of some of the boots found in the sailors' boxes. A green silk sash held their weapons, and lastly they carried a sailor's jacket rolled up tight to protect them in case of rain, or against cold, if they were compelled to pass a night in the open air. Jean was always thoughtful for his less robust friend, Victor; so besides the things I have enumerated, he carried a covering for him, though much against Victor's wish.

All the boys, even the timid Landry, looked so important when they set off, that Fortuné cried a long time from vexation, at not being of the party. M. Popincourt went with Victor, and from his discriminating greediness (for though eagerly examining most things presented to him, he instinctively avoided what was poisonous) was appointed taster-in-chief, and was a most useful auxiliary.

Sometimes the little monkey would gambol about in front of the hunters, and then for a change perch awhile on Victor's shoulders, or if the boy was tired, on Jean's or Landry's, though Popincourt did not always get on as well with Landry as with the other two. Sometimes too, he would ride astride on his friend Mirza, who was now well accustomed to carry him. But if Mirza scented game, she would run so fast and spring about so briskly, that baffled in his efforts to keep his seat, M. Popincourt would return to Victor and by a series of grimaces, strive to explain the reason of his discomfiture. When the dog came back from her chase, M. Popincourt looked furiously at her, but she paid no attention to his sulkiness, walking along quietly by Jean's side. Now Popincourt would play a thousand tricks, holding on to Victor's jacket, with one foot and one hand, he would bend down towards Mirza and pull her by the ears and tail, and when the dog turned round he was up again in a moment on his master's shoulder, making gestures of comic defiance at Mirza, who deserves a brief description.

Mirza was a large white pointer, of about two years old. Her hair was short; she had liver-coloured ears and a liver-coloured spot in the middle of her forehead. Mirza was a capital sporting dog, and if, instead of bows and arrows, our young friends had had guns, she would have been of the greatest use to them. She was very docile, and when Jean desired her to keep back, she would walk behind him, sometimes rubbing her large head against his hands, as if to remind him of her presence and affection. A little while before they reached the spring, Mirza became very restless, and raising her head in the air, pushed on before the boys; but after going a short distance, she suddenly stopped, uttering a low, half-suppressed growl.

Jean instantly called the dog, saying: "there must be danger; stay here, whilst I go forward and see what it is."

Victor wished to prevent his advancing alone; but Jean insisted on reconnoitering.

"Let him go forward, it is the best way of finding out what is the matter," said Landry, who was frightened.

"You may as well go yourself, as you seem to think it quite proper for Jean to do so," said Victor.

Landry took a few steps forward bravely, but then his courage failed him.

"We had better go back to Providence," said he.

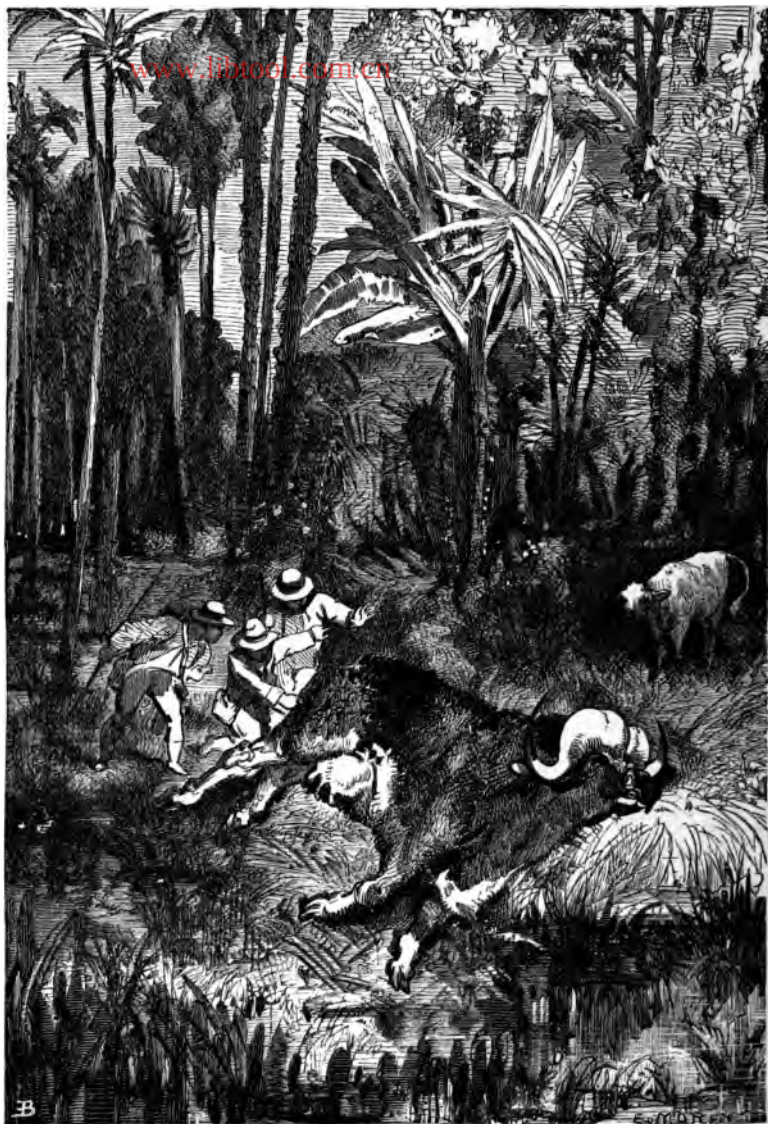
"No," said Jean; "you need not fear anything on my account; I shall not proceed except with the greatest caution."

"Then I will go with you," said Victor.

"No; what's the use of two going? if I am obliged to run away it would delay me to have you there, and if I want your help, I will call you."

But it was no use for Jean to object, Victor persisted in going with him, though at last he consented to let Jean go a step or so in advance of him. Landry's fears were divided between

www.libtool.com.cn



To face page 146.

THE BUFFALO AND HER CALF.

www.libtool.com.cn

www.libtool.com.cn

staying alone where he was, and following his companions; at last he decided to follow them.

The children soon heard a noise, as if a struggle were going on between several animals. The ground trembled from the heavy tread, and from time to time there was a loud crash, like the falling of a small tree or bush, crushed by some violent shock. The boys had crept quietly into a dense thicket. "Look," said Jean, suddenly, as he succeeded in making an aperture in the underwood. They could now see an enormous animal resembling an ox, but much larger, and which was rolling on the ground and bellowing fiercely. It was scratching up the soil with its feet in a furious manner, and butting at the trees with its head, which was well protected by enormous horns. A smaller animal of the same kind was standing near it, gazing, with stupid fright, at its unruly movements.

"It must be a buffalo," said Victor.

"Perhaps it is a female with her calf," said Jean.

"What is the matter with her?" Landry strove to say, but he was so frightened that he could not speak clearly.

The children were fortunately to leeward, so that the buffalo did not scent them. The poor creature seemed to grow feebler every moment; she could hardly have taken two steps now without falling on her knees, and before many minutes more had elapsed, it became impossible for her to rise at all. Her huge legs, quivering in her death agony, tore up the ground which had been shaken when her head fell. But now her limbs gradually relaxed: a few seconds, and she lay motionless.

Then the poor calf crept towards his dead mother, sniffing at the huge body in an uneasy manner.

The calf was as large as a good-sized donkey, but, from his unsteady movements he did not appear to be more than a few days old.

"I think the buffalo is quite dead," said Jean.

"Go and see, then," said Landry.

"I will go," said Victor. And he would have emerged from the thicket forthwith, in spite of his friend's efforts to detain him, if Jean had not whispered to him—

"Wait a minute, let's send a few arrows at her before we show ourselves, and if she does not move we shall be sure she is dead."

Taking a few steps forward, they discharged several arrows; but their arrows took no effect on the buffalo. The calf receded a few steps, looking round amazed, then he went up to an arrow and smelt it, seeming half inclined to run away.

"Forward," said Victor, who was not so cautious as Jean.

The boys surrounded the calf, and Mirza rushed at him barking. The little buffalo looked attentively at his adversary for a moment, and then with a series of bounds he rushed through the wood; but as he had neither the instinct to avoid the trees and bushes, nor strength, like his mother, to overcome such obstacles, he did not make much way; Mirza soon came up to him and bit his legs, and as the young buffalo was defending himself, with kicks and blows, Jean reached the spot. Not wishing to kill the little animal, he flung a noose at him and caught him. The calf now turning from Mirza, resumed his course, directing his steps towards a stream. Finding an open space in front of him, he ran so fast that Jean could hardly keep up with him, and as the young hunter would not release his hold on the rope, he was dragged along. Jean took hold of whatever he could catch at in his way, hoping to force the buffalo to relax his speed. Victor and Landry, now coming up to his assistance, took hold of the rope also; but the calf was more than their match, and all the boys were dragged along together in the most humiliating way.

They were very near the stream now, and Landry, alarmed,

letting go his hold, the shock threw poor Victor also off; but still Jean held on bravely. He was thrown down and dragged through the water, getting a complete ducking. But, fortunately for the boy, the bank on the opposite side, though not steep, was very slippery, and the calf was not strong enough to climb up it. Mirza now came to Jean's assistance; she was angry at seeing her master so uncereemoniously dragged along, and flew at the animal, first on one side, and then on the other.

When the buffalo at last struggled out of the water, he stood still for a moment, trembling violently, and then sank on the ground. Jean instantly took advantage of this momentary respite to wind the rope round the trunk of a tree, and Victor coming up on the other side, succeeded, after several efforts, in fastening a second noose round the animal's neck. They fastened the second rope round another tree; but the buffalo struggled so violently now, that the only danger was of his hanging himself.

"Landry," said Jean, "try to pass a rope round the middle of his body."

This was by no means easy, for neither Landry nor the buffalo liked the operation.

Jean, at last, proposed to change places with Landry, saying, "Let me try;" and, approaching the animal, Jean fastened the calf's fore-feet together with one rope, and his hind-feet with another, and, uniting all their strength, the boys pulled the buffalo down on the ground, where he fell with a shock like that of an uprooted tree.

"Well," said Landry, wiping his forehead, "what in the world shall we do with the creature now?"

"We must contrive to take him home with us," said Victor.

"That's all very well to say, but how shall we set about it?"

There lay the difficulty.

The boys looked first at the buffalo, and then at each other.

"It won't be easy," said Victor.

"It's simply impossible," cried Landry.

Jean said nothing, for he was cogitating a plan ; and presently, forgetting the discomfort of being wet to the skin, he gave a joyful spring in the air. Thinking the old buffalo had returned to life, Landry uttered a piercing shriek, which in its turn alarmed Monsieur Popincourt, who had just come down out of a tree (where he had remained a spectator during the struggle with the buffalo), and perched on Victor's shoulder.

"What is your plan, Jean ?" asked Victor.

"If we were to fetch Fanchon, I am sure we could get her to suckle the calf, and then we should have no difficulty in making him follow us to Providence."

"That's certainly a bright idea," said Landry ; "but which of us will go and fetch her ?"

"I think it should be you," said Jean.

"Why should I go rather than you ?"

"Very well," said Jean, "I will go ; but next time there is anything rather dangerous to be done, instead of taking it on myself, as I generally do, I shall remind you of your reply."

"A league there and a league back," muttered Landry : "that's two leagues, and all the way through thorns and long grass."

"Do you think the walk would be pleasanter for me than for you ?" asked Jean ; "but never mind, I will go if you will stay here with Victor ; but if any buffaloes come up, be sure you try——"

"Well," said Landry, who did not like the idea of meeting more buffaloes, "I won't be ill-natured, I'll go to Providence."

"If you would rather stay here——"

"No, no !"

In some respects Landry was quite as great a coward as Fortuné, but having been brought up in the country, he was not afraid to

walk alone in broad daylight, and it was only from indolence that he disliked going to Providence.

Though Victor walked wonderfully well for a boy who could scarcely have walked a mile six months ago, he could not walk fast enough for such a hurried expedition as this one. Landry went at great speed, for he was sharp enough to remember that a good dinner awaited him at Providence. Jean spread out his wet clothes to dry in the sun, and then he and Victor examined the dead buffalo, which was a female, still young, and must have weighed nearly twelve hundred-weight.

"What could have caused her death?" said the boys, looking at her attentively, but in vain, for they could not find any injury. They were not strong enough to turn her over, and they thought the wound was perhaps on the other side.

At last, under some of the animal's hair, Jean noticed a coagulation of blood. Washing this spot with a little water, he found a small hole there which was much inflamed.

"Take care," exclaimed Victor, catching hold of Jean's hand, "she may have been bitten by a serpent; but no," said he, "she has been wounded by an arrow; look here!" he continued, pointing out part of an arrow which still remained in the buffalo's thigh.

"If it is an arrow," said Jean, "there must be human beings in the neighbourhood."

"Very likely," said Victor in dismay, "and what is worse, to judge by the kind of arrow, they must be Bosjesmans. I remember reading a description of the Bosjesmans' poisoned arrows, and to judge from the terrible effect, this must have been one of them. The buffalo may have been wounded several days ago, and perhaps a long distance from here."

"That would explain the reason of the calf's being so tired," said Jean. "Oh dear, dear! if the Bosjesmans should attack Providence!"

led
e or

soon
lly to
perform
t dare
never
icult to
imes he
go any
e on the
to spring
ht in the
was offer
of all the

ere oblige
in from th
was carrie

a few day
likely keep

This spri
christened t

always tak
s foster motl
h such a v
her large
y other no



"It would indeed be dreadful," said Victor. "Maria would be frightened to death. But I remember reading in the book about the Bosjesmans, that they seldom come near the coast, as they fear being captured by the English and Dutch colonists; and besides, some parts of the Bosjesman country are separated from the sea by forests and impassable marshes. Should we, dear Jean, wish to have other human beings near Providence, or should we fear it?"

"God only knows," returned Jean. "If we had but Monsieur Pearson, and Firmin, and my poor old Caillaud here, I should desire nothing better than to remain with you all, to work with you and for you, with the assurance that nothing would ever separate me from those I love."

"Dear, good Jean," said Victor, hugging his friend affectionately, "but don't you feel that nothing in the world can ever separate us?"

"Let us hope so," said Jean, wiping away a tear. After a momentary silence, he said, "don't you think we might turn the dead buffalo to some account?"

"Yes, for they say there is no danger in eating the flesh of animals killed with poisoned arrows."

"But still, I think it would be more prudent not to do so."

"Well, perhaps you are right; but at all events, the skin will be useful to us."

"I think it will, though it is very hard for the purpose; we want leather."

"Shall we begin to skin it?"

"First let us cut away the part which the poison has attacked."

The knives used for this dangerous operation, were afterwards carefully washed, and then the boys set to work courageously to flay the buffalo. They did not get on very fast, for though their knives were good and sharp, the skin was very hard, and they were not much used to this sort of work. About three hours

after they began their task. Mirza pricking up her ears, bounded joyously into the wood. The faithful dog returned in a minute or two, followed by Suzette, Landry, Fortuné, and Fanchon.

The little calf appeared to have fasted a long time, for as soon as they had removed the ropes from him, he took very kindly to his new nurse; but Fanchon was very unwilling at first to perform the duties imposed on her, and if Suzette, whom she did not dare to disobey, had not been present, most likely she would never have adopted the young orphan. They found it very difficult to induce the little buffalo to follow them home. Sometimes he would sink down on the ground, as if to say "I will not go any farther," and then every one lent their assistance to urge on the refractory animal. Perhaps his next freak would be to spring suddenly forwards or backwards, or to bound up straight in the air. In these escapades, one or other of the boys was often brought down with a tumble, to the great amusement of all the party.

They could not turn the dead buffalo over, so they were obliged to be satisfied with the piece of skin they could obtain from the side which lay uppermost. This large piece of skin was carried home by Fanchon.

Jean decided to put off his hunting excursion for a few days, as the proximity of the dead buffalo would most likely keep all other animals away from the spring for the present. This spring was called Buffalo Fountain, and Victor and Maria christened the calf Bobèche.

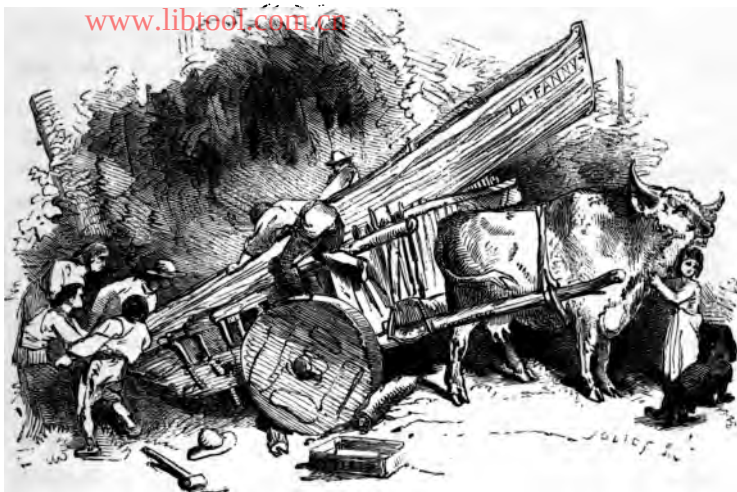
Bobèche proved very difficult to tame, for he was always taking some new whim, and sometimes even disowning his foster mother. Poor Fanchon was astonished to find herself with such a wild and grotesque son, and she stared at him with her large soft eyes, not vouchsafing the unruly little monster any other notice, when he butted at her or kicked her in his vagaries.

But Mirza indignantly protested at such unnatural conduct, snapping at the buffalo's legs, which made the little monster furious; then he butted at the dog, but she easily avoided the blow by passing between his legs.

Bobèche was so violent on these occasions, that he would sometimes strike his head against a tree with such violence as to be almost stunned by the blow. These quarrels, however, soon subsided into friendly games at play, which both the dog and buffalo seemed to enjoy excessively. Mirza knew about the hour for opening the inclosure gate, and watched with evident impatience for her former enemy to be let out, and Bobèche would rub his head against the palisade, as if to wish the dog good morning.

As soon as the buffalo was at large, he would frisk about in the most comic way, running after Mirza, who, barking merrily, jumped about in the funniest manner imaginable.

But the grave Fanchon followed them at a deliberate pace, and, sometimes, to the children's great delight, she would awkwardly take a sort of solemn part in the game, and then the young people would shout with laughter at the queer gambols of their menagerie.



CHAPTER XXII.

COLONIAL UNDERTAKINGS—THE HARVEST—THE BATH-ROOM AND SWIMMING SCHOOL—THE "FANNY" AND THE BLISTERS—FIRST SEA VOYAGE.

It was summer now, and the heat was intense. Our Europeans had never supposed the sun's rays could be so powerful. In spite of the sea-breezes, it was impossible to venture out in the middle of the day. Every evening, however, they indulged in bathing in a magnificent bath-room, the walls of which were formed by majestic rocks, which enclosed a sufficient sheet of water for any swimming exercises, and the floor was of fine sand, and soft to the feet. The women and little girls had their special hours, and every one at Providence could swim now.

A pleasant sitting-room had, fortunately, been added to the hut before this intense heat set in, and, besides being higher and

larger than any of the other apartments, it was cooler and better ventilated. Game killed at ten in the morning could hardly be kept, without dressing, till midday; and to transport fish from the shore to Providence, they were obliged to put it in a barrel filled with sea-water. Gathering in the harvest was so very fatiguing—particularly to Jean and Victor, whose will to work was greater than their strength—that Mme. Pearson, who was now strong and well, undertook to direct every one's labour. She appointed Jean her overseer, and desired that his orders might be obeyed as if they were her own. Fortuné and Landry were obliged, therefore, to accept the work allotted to them, instead of being allowed to choose that which fell in with the whim of the moment, or suited their indolence.

Every one, from Mme. Pearson down to little Maria, had to make themselves useful. Suzette and Landry were the strongest and most experienced of the party, and Landry always maintained a great superiority over his companions as an agricultural labourer. Victor and Jean were the first to praise his excellence in this respect: his self-esteem was thus flattered, and their commendation, besides inciting him to greater exertions, made him less jealous of Jean.

Two months' hard labour, however, cooled the ardour for a colonist's life of more than one of the party. When the crops were cut they had to be thrashed, to separate the corn from the chaff, and Fanchon and Bobèche were of great use in the thrashing. Jean had invented a sort of roller, which they were made to draw over the spread-out ears of corn. Then the straw, which was wanted for many purposes, had to be stacked. The greatest difficulty which they experienced was, in grinding the corn; the only way in which they could manage it was in a sort of hand-mortar, and it was such hard work, that Victor and Jean determined to construct a mill on the neighbouring stream. They required some

kind of barn, too, to store away the crops—and they were becoming so fastidious, by the comparative comfort in which they now lived, that all the colonists, but particularly the women, began to sigh after a more extensive and convenient house. Each of them had some one pet want: Mme. Pearson particularly wished for a laundry; Fanny, for a garden and fruit trees; Suzette, for a dairy and cattle-shed; Maria, for an oven in which to bake pastry; Landry, for a barn; Fortuné, for a room to himself; and Jean, for a boat.

"Why are you so eager for a boat?" asked Mme. Pearson, one evening.

"Because we require tools and nails, to make these buildings which you all wish for so much."

"Yes, it is true we want them," interrupted Fortuné, with his usual rudeness; "but the boat won't give them to us."

"Not exactly, perhaps," said Fanny; "but I guess what Jean's idea is; he wants to go to the bay where the vessel was wrecked."

Jean was delighted that Fanny had so soon understood him; but "it was Victor's idea in the first place," said he. The violence of the tempest was so great on the night of the wreck, that the ship must have gone all to pieces on the rocks where she struck. The strong current drifted the lighter things to land; but the lead, iron, tools, nails, and fire-arms, must have sunk instantaneously.

"If we had but Papa's eight splendid guns!" cried Victor.

"I remember them well," said Jean, "for I helped Monsieur Pearson to pack them up; there were two large ones for elephant and tiger shooting."

"And two small ones for our use," said Victor.

"And a case of common guns ——"

"What would be the use of the guns to you, as you have no

gunpowder?" said Mme. Pearson, discouragingly, for she rather dreaded to see fire-arms in the hands of such children.

"I shall find out a way of making gunpowder," replied Victor ; "for I have a receipt in one of my books."

"Your books seem to contain all sorts of receipts," said his mother, "from the way to make soap and candles, to the way to construct windmills."

"Yes, of course ; to make gunpowder you only want saltpetre, sulphur, and charcoal."

"And of these three things, we have neither sulphur, nor charcoal," said Fortuné.

"We shall be able to get them both," said Jean ; "the yellow spots you see in the clefts of the high rocks are sulphur."

"But," said Mme. Pearson, still in a tone of dissuasion, "the guns must be rusty and useless."

"As to that," said Jean, who had always a ready answer, "I suppose the gun with which Monsieur Pearson used to shoot albatrosses on board ship, is lost ; but the eight guns in the lined case were thickly coated with grease, for Monsieur Pearson feared that the sea air, even, might rust them."

"Well, what about the boat," said Suzette.

"Victor read in one of his books," replied Jean, "that there are certain tides at which the sea goes farther back than at any other time of the year ; it is about two months to one of these low tides, of which I should like to take advantage to go to the reefs."

"Where can you build the boat ?"

"Here Madame."

"And how will you get your boat down to the shore ?" said Fortuné.

"On the cart."

"How will you make a road for the cart ?"

"Nature has already traced one, which only requires a few trees to be cut down to make it quite passable."

"Of what will you make the canoe?" said Mme. Pearson, amused at the young workman's vivacious replies.

"We will hollow out the trunk of a tree."

"Yes; but where will you find one suitable?"

"Victor has found one, more than half hollowed out by Nature."

"What a reasoner the boy is!" said Mme. Pearson, "he has always an answer ready."

So the colonial assembly decreed the construction of a boat, and the establishment of a marine service.

Though they worked most energetically, the boat was only finished a few days before the low tide of which Victor had spoken. The skiff seemed strong enough, and as they had found some oars on the shore, they had not the trouble of making any. Suzette, who came from the neighbourhood of Etretat, could row pretty well; Firmin had begun teaching Jean before they left Paris, and she promised now to complete his instruction in this respect. By means of rollers and pulleys the canoe was raised on to the cart, and Fanchon drew it to the shore. Jean was nominated high admiral of the fleet, and, in obedience to his desire, the canoe was christened *The Fanny*. Of course, Mademoiselle Pearson was godmother, and Jean, who was godfather, presented a pretty work-box, of his own making, to his associate; Fanny returned his kind gift by giving the Admiral a silk waistcoat; one day's march through the thickets would have utterly ruined this dainty garment, but Jean only wore it on state occasions.

By a chance, rare on such great days, the sea was very calm; there was hardly breeze enough to bend the long dried-up grass on the shore; as soon as the tide turned, they took the canoe as far out on the beach as they could; as the tide was coming in, the

current would drift them landwards, so that there was no danger of the small craft going too far out to sea.

Suzette and Jean quietly seated themselves in the boat, and, though they were not free from a certain kind of trepidation, they, without shrinking, awaited the time when the waves should float them off.

They were both provided with hatchets and bamboo boat-hooks, to which strong crooks were fixed, for they had reason to fear sharks. The waves gradually raised the boat, and in a few minutes they were afloat; but our rowers were not strong enough to stem the current, and, the tide drifting them landwards, they again became stationary. They had taken Victor in off a rock, and he was to steer, by Suzette's directions, but he was quite disconcerted at this unexpected difficulty.

"We must add some more tholes," said Suzette (two iron or wooden pins, between which the oars are placed), "and on our next voyage we must have four oars."

"Then I will be one of the rowers," said Fortuné.

"We will have Landry, too," said Suzette, "and I promise you your hands and back will remind you of your first rowing lesson for some time afterwards."

After half an hour's manœuvring at the water's edge, Fortuné and Landry's hands (particularly the hands of the former, who had not been much accustomed to manual labour), were covered with blisters.

"Any one may row who likes," said Fortuné, throwing down his oar, "I shall have nothing more to do with these horrid things."

Jean quietly held up his own hands; he had been hard at work for more than two hours, and his hands were much more blistered than Fortuné's.

Fortuné repeated that his hands were dreadfully sore, and,

turning away his head, almost crying, said he'd never get into the boat again.

"My boy," said his aunt, "as it is not a question of pleasure, but one of usefulness, you must try to have fortitude, and to suffer with the rest ; but, if I am strong enough, I will take your place for to-morrow."

"No, no, mother," said Fanny, "let me try, instead."

"So you shall," said Suzette, "you are not as strong as Master Fortuné, but I'd rather have a persevering little girl, than a great booby, who is never brave unless it be in attacking soup and melon."

Every one laughed so much at this rejoinder, that Landry, who was on the point of complaining, as Fortuné had done, did not dare to raise his voice.

"You are but a child in years, my poor Fortuné," said his aunt, "but circumstances ought to make you a man in sense and courage."

In spite of what she had said to Fortuné, Mme. Pearson would have been very glad if the sea voyage could have been given up, but they were unfortunately so much in want of tools of all kinds, that they could not well abandon the expedition to Cave Bay.



CHAPTER XXIII.

FISHING UP THE TOOLS—DIFFICULTY OF THE UNDERTAKING—SUZETTE'S IDEA.

A WEEK was spent in completing the rigging of *The Fanny*, and teaching the children to use the oars. The bath-room was turned into a navigation school, and was an excellent port for the little skiff. They were obliged to saw off some part of the oars, and also make them thinner, for they were too thick and heavy for the size of *The Fanny*, or to be handled by children.

They had a good deal of difficulty in accomplishing all this. Whilst *The Fanny* was being manœuvred about the school, her

godmother, Mme. Pearson, and Maria, sat on a rock, looking on. Mme. Pearson felt quite a maternal affection for Jean, and even for uncouth Landry, in spite of his many faults. On the ebb of the lowest tide they let the boat float down with the current to the reefs, and anchored her there. It comforted Mme. Pearson to remember that, in case of danger, all the children could swim well ; and Jean and Fortuné were, indeed, first-rate swimmers.

With the boat-hooks they succeeded in raising three small cases, one of which was full of nails. As the water here was not more than five or six feet deep, they could see all sorts of fragments on the rocks at the bottom, and some chests which appeared to be in a perfect state of preservation. Jean was very anxious to dive, but Suzette would not let him do so, on account of the sharks ; though these fish do not generally come near the reefs, or anywhere else where the water is in perpetual movement.

The sea, however, was now so very calm that, without much trouble, they were able to fish up a large piece of *The Julie's* iron chain, which they found jammed in between two rocks. The children felt the torment of Tantalus, in seeing so many things so close to them without being able to get at them.

One of the party recognised the carpenter's tool-chest, another a case of tools ; Fortuné and Jean with their boat-hooks had even raised up the gun-case, which was easily distinguished by its shape, but it fell back again into the sea. At last they were obliged to make for the shore with all possible speed, for the sea was rising fast, and the surf became very dangerous.

The little party was quite discouraged. Farewell to the tools, there could be no house now ; farewell to the firearms too, so they must abandon all thought of the grand hunting excursions they had planned.

As Suzette was serving out the soup, an idea suddenly occurred to her.

"I've thought of a plan," said she, striking her forehead with the palm of her hand.

"That's all very fine," grumbled Landry, crossly, "but meantime you've managed to spill all the soup."

"No matter," exclaimed she, "I can easily make more."

"But how shall we do without our soup now?" said Fortuné, who was quite as much disappointed as Landry.

"Don't grumble," said Suzette, "but listen to me; to-morrow we must bring all the barrels and gourds we can get to these reefs."

"What use will that be?"

"At low tide we will surround the chests we want to raise with all the things, then we will fasten some ropes to the barrels, and, passing them under the sea-chests, we will tie the other end of the ropes to our boat."

"Well?"

"When the tide rises, it will raise up all these things, and the tightened ropes will drag the other things along with them."

"Unless the ropes should snap," said Victor.

"We can use the ship's chain," said Jean.

"I have seen sunk boats raised in this way in Normandy," said Suzette.

Suzette's plan was tried on the following day, but the most difficult part of the proceeding was passing the rope under the chests. They were fortunate in finding one of the reefs, which was hardly three feet under water, and here Jean got out of the boat. As the gun-case was at the foot of Jean's observatory, he was able, by means of a hooked stick, to pass a cord under it, and the other boys raised it on their side with the boat-hooks. As it did not weigh more than about a hundred and thirty pounds, with the assistance of the floating bodies they easily brought it close to the boat, and then it was welcomed on board with a joyous shout.

But M. Pearson's tool-chest was so firmly fixed at the bottom that they could not move it or the carpenter's box either.

Jean fancied that by fastening one end of the chain to the rock, and the other to the boat, they might succeed ; but the strain was so great that, but for the presence of mind of Suzette, who let the chain slip, the boat would have been capsized. They were obliged to abandon M. Pearson's tool-chest ; but they succeeded, at last, in obtaining the carpenter's box.

On arriving at Providence, the boys' first occupation was to examine the case of guns. In spite of all M. Pearson's precautions, they were rusted, but Jean undertook to clean them and put them to rights ; for he had often cleaned iron and steel, both at the manufactory and on board ship. They found in the gun-case boxes of caps, screw-drivers, bullet-moulds, and even some powder-flasks, though these were unfortunately empty.

"Come, come," said Suzette, taking the guns away from the boys (for they were so engrossed with playing at soldiers, that they could think of nothing else), "there is something more important than that for you to do. We must make a last attempt to-morrow to get the tool-chest, and, in order to do so, we must get together several trunks of trees. I am sure the tool-chest would be much more valuable to us than your stupid guns, which you cannot use, as you have no gunpowder."

In the course of that evening, and part of the next morning, the boys cut down several trees with their hatchets, some of which trees had a diameter of nearly two feet.

As Mme. Pearson was present whilst the trees were being felled, and warned them to be careful—and Jean always acted with prudence—no accident occurred. They took the trees to the shore in the cart, and, fastening them to *The Fanny*, towed them to the reefs. Carefully adjusting the chain, the colonists renewed their efforts to obtain the desired chest ; when the tide turned, the chain began to

tighten, and soon the trunks of the trees and the barrels sank in the water. But presently they reappeared, and, to the great joy of all present, the chest was seen to have risen. By means of their boat-hooks they brought the chest close to *The Fanny*, but it was so heavy they could not put it on board the boat. Some of the floating objects were now fastened to the boat, and Jean boldly jumped on one of the trunks of the trees forming the other mass. An oar was given to him, and he helped to guide this rough sort of raft to the shore. The tool-chest was suspended by the chain, between the raft and the boat; but, in spite of all their precautions, it sank to the bottom before they reached the land. Fortunately, however, when this accident happened they were so near the shore that they felt sure of finding it when the tide ebbed back; but, lest a wave should, by any chance, drift it away, they let the heavy iron chain fall on it, one end of which chain they fastened firmly to a rock. As the sea had been very calm for the last few days, this precaution proved quite sufficient.

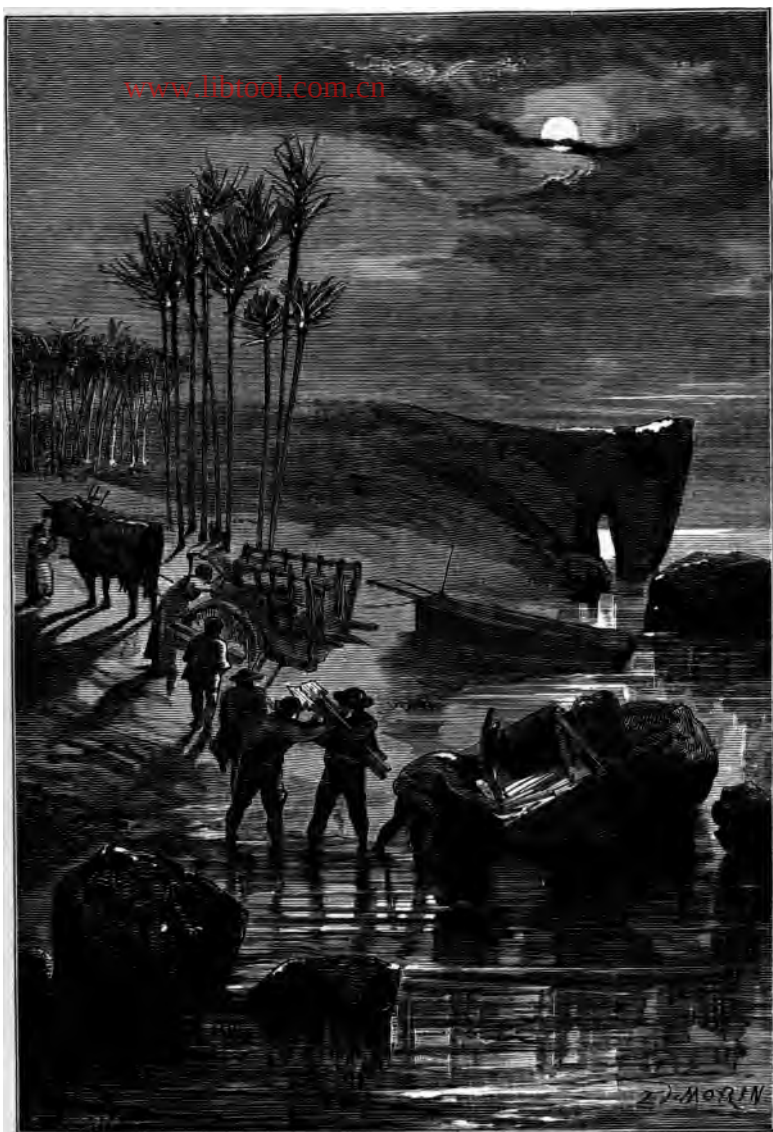
They returned the same evening with the cart, and the sea having then receded they found the chest firmly embedded in the sand. It was too heavy to lift on to the cart, so they were obliged to break it open with their hatchets, and take out the tools. As the tools had been selected with a view to colonial purposes, all the things contained in this chest were of the greatest use to our young friends. There were various sizes of saws, planes, wimbles, chisels, hatchets, axes, pincers, levers, drills, jointers, shovels, pitchforks, pickaxes, &c. in the chest.

It was a beautiful moonlight night, so they spent it in conveying these treasures from the precious chest to Providence. They abandoned all thought for the present, at least, of the other large tool-chest, which was still firmly fixed at the bottom of the reefs.

www.libtool.com.cn

.

www.libtool.com.cn



To face page 164.

EMPTYING THE TOOL-CHEST.

www.libtool.com.cn



CHAPTER XXIV.

BUILDING—HUNTING—VARIOUS UNDERTAKINGS—BOBÈCHE IS TURNED TO ACCOUNT—CANDLE MAKING—VIGILS—THE CHILDREN'S PROGRESS—GAMES—DRAUGHTS, AND LOTO.

THE cold wet season was fast approaching, and it was necessary, therefore, to hasten the construction of a barn, a laundry, and a temporary dairy. The spring was now overflowing, so Jean proposed to make a pond in front of the house, which would be useful for washing purposes, for the cattle, and for the ducks, whose wandering propensities were very troublesome.

As soon as the pond was made, they cut the wings of the ducks in

order to keep them at home and make them cultivate more domestic habits. This measure had an unexpected result, which delighted the inhabitants of Providence excessively. As soon as the cold weather set in, the tame ducks were joined by wild ducks and various other kinds of aquatic birds. The ducks were fed every day, and the strangers must have thought the living at Providence very good ; for, in course of time, they fixed their residence in the pond and became quite domesticated.

During the bad weather our colonists found plenty of interesting indoor occupations ; they made candles of beeswax, and Victor found a plant which answered perfectly well for the wicks. Then they made soap of wrack cinders, mixed with the oil of a fruit something like an olive, which Jean had found very near Providence. In fact, the little colonists had become true Sybarites, and they made themselves some new mattresses of dry sea-weed, covered with sail-cloth.

In the rare intervals, when they could go out of doors, they made a new roof to the stable, and a shed for the firewood—which was plentiful from the old buildings they had pulled down—to make room for the new constructions. Sometimes Jean set traps near the neighbouring springs to catch Zebras, Quaggas, Gnoux, Springbucks, Roebocks, &c., which frequented these drinking places, and were very numerous in the vicinity of Providence. By experience he found out the right way of making the pits, the proper inclination for the sides, and how they should be concealed by covering them over with branches of trees, grass, and earth.

The luckless animal who placed his feet on this unstable mass felt the ground suddenly give way and was instantaneously precipitated a depth of three or four yards. Jean visited these pits in the morning, and, if he wanted assistance from Providence, he sent Mirza home with a string tied round her neck in a particular way. When the dog was seen to wear this signal, all the boys,

with Mirza at their head, repaired to Jean ; Bobèche, who had improved in docility and gained strength, accompanied them and carried the game, and the whole party returned triumphant to Providence ; but, when the young buffalo, still rather whimsical, was unwilling to carry the load, the boys were obliged to cut up the animal, and carry it piecemeal between them.

To prevent the skins shrinking, they were stretched out and nailed on boards, which were placed in the shed till the skins were thoroughly dry. After a time the boys succeeded in tanning them pretty well, quite sufficiently so to render them useful for many purposes. Part of the antelope's flesh was eaten fresh, and the rest was dried to add to their reserve stock of provisions. This precaution proved very wise; for, at one time, the rain fell in such torrents that they were more than three weeks without being able to go out of doors. The colonists were dispersed during the day some were in the barn or shed, and the others either in the laundry or the provision store ; but the evenings were always spent together. I am compelled to admit that the windows, which were made of small squares of melted horn, were neither transparent nor substantial, and our young architects were in despair at not being able to find any substitute for the horn.

When the evening closed in, shutters were put up before the windows to keep the cold out, and, the candles being lighted, every one brought his work to the table. Victor or Fanny generally read aloud, and about eight o'clock the book was set aside and they began talking. It was delightful to listen to the merry chatter which ensued, the children's projects or recitals, and all their animated good-tempered discussion. Jean had introduced a great many games for little Maria, which served to amuse all the party, and sometimes they played at draughts or loto. At nine by Mme. Pearson's watch, everything was cleared away, then they knelt down asking God's protection and guidance for themselves

and their absent friends. When this solemn and simple prayer was ended, rising from their knees, they bid each other good-night, and all the children retired to rest.

Mme. Pearson and Suzette would now indulge in unreserved talk about their husbands, and communicated the observations they had made during the day respecting the children, &c. As no indication of the death of those dear to them had been discovered, these poor women still clung to the hope of seeing M. Pearson and Firmin again some day.

Three years had now elapsed since the wreck of *The Julia*. Fortuné and Landry were not yet sixteen, but they looked fully eighteen; fresh air and constant exercise had made them very robust, and they had grown quite tall. Victor and Jean, who were a year younger, looked older, too, than they were; but they were both of more delicate temperaments, and so had not attained the same physical development as the other two boys.

Victor's lameness had quite disappeared, but he had still a delicate look; he had a bright handsome face, set as it were in a framework of thick brown hair, and his well-developed forehead spoke of intellect and goodness. This noble boy was the joy and pride of his poor mother's heart.

Jean's features, too, had already almost acquired the firm reflective lines of manhood. He was slight, and by no means robust-looking; but he could endure more fatigue than either of the boys, and was undoubtedly the most active and clever of them all. He was a very good-looking boy, which at all events was no disadvantage, and his quiet decision inspired confidence in every extremity. He had never sought authority, but he had become, insensibly, the director of all the colonial enterprises. Whenever circumstances necessitated a prompt decision, Fortuné and Landry submitted to his judgment of their own accord; but the danger

or difficulty was no sooner passed than they began canvassing Jean's advice, no matter what it had been.

Mme. Pearson superintended the occupations of Suzette and the little girls, and was so engrossed with domestic cares that she left all the exterior management to Jean. So Jean decided what every one's employment should be, and, as he kept the most arduous and least agreeable occupations for himself, no one found fault with his arrangements. Fortuné and Landry still continued rather jealous of him, but every one else was very fond of him, Mme. Pearson loved him almost as well as she did Victor; Suzette thought him perfection; Maria could not have been happy a day without her friend Jean (who was always making her some new plaything); and Fanny sought to make amends for her former injustice towards him by her present gentleness. Jean's word was law to her now. Fanny was a good sensible girl, and she had at last learned to appreciate our hero's sterling qualities. She felt he was the leading spirit of the little colony, and there was an instinctive respect mingled with the young girl's silent affection.

Fortuné was exasperated by Jean's unsought influence over Fanny. The severe lesson fate had striven to teach him seemed to have made very little impression on this proud boy, and he still persisted in considering Jean in the light of merely one of his uncle's workmen. Fanny had more than fulfilled her childhood's promise of beauty, and Fortuné bitterly repented now of his ingratitude for her affection in former years. As a child Fanny had been haughty and capricious; but misfortunes had had a very salutary effect on her, and she had become industrious and gentle, and was always trying to relieve her mother by taking the most laborious occupations on herself. Fanny was twelve years old, and, as people used to say long ago, Maria "counted" seven summers. Mme. Pearson was a

good Christian, and she often said that the God who had protected them so long would not forsake them now; and so she sought to cheer the colonists, and strengthen their faith by proving her own. She had received an excellent education, and gave lessons in French, arithmetic, history, and geography, to them all, including Suzette. Thus the young people's minds were developed by study, as their bodies by manual labour. Victor, Jean, and Fanny, had profited very much indeed by Mme. Pearson's instruction.



CHAPTER XXV.

THE NEW HOUSE—M. AND MME. BOBÉCHE—CHOCOLATE AND BLACK COFFEE—
SERAPHIN—THE SHEET OF WATER—BEPPPO'S TRIBULATIONS.

THREE years of judicious labour, aided by the almost incredible fertility of the soil, had, by God's blessing, produced a wonderful change in Providence. In addition to the first rude hut, there was now a comfortable house: it was something like their first habitation, inasmuch as it was constructed of wood; but it was much larger, and infinitely more commodious.

It consisted first of a large room which served alike for drawing-room, dining-room, and kitchen; but beyond this chamber were two rooms for the women and little girls. Then came the former huts, which were turned into a fruit store, a laundry, a dairy,

and a stable; and besides all this, there was a room for recreation on wet days. A room for the boys, a cellar, a shed, and a barn, were on the other side of the general sitting-room. The walls of these buildings were made of trunks of trees roughly sawn apart; the interstices between the wood being filled up with a mixture of clay, sand, and chopped grass. The roofs were of planks made firm with large stones; and they had found no difficulty in separating the different rooms by means of bamboo partitions.

The outside of the house was covered with beautiful creeping plants, and a flower garden, a shrubbery, a small wood, a fish-pond (which was cleverly fed from various neighbouring springs), added to their enjoyment. The windows were the only unsatisfactory part of the house. Jean had worked with Firmin at the factory forge, so that he was able to adapt the locks and hinges of the boxes and chests, recovered from the wreck, for all the smaller house-fittings, and they served as models for the larger ones required. The piece of ship's chain furnished them with sufficient iron for all they required. Until such time as they should be able to make all the furniture they wished to have, the chests and boxes, mended up and arranged, answered very well instead of cupboards, chests of drawers, &c.

Bobèche might now be considered quite broken in, though still given to occasional caprices, and he was married, in due form, to the very steady Fanchon. Two offspring followed this happy marriage, and, from their colour, were called, the one "Chocolate," and the other "Black Coffee."

The elder took Fanchon's place in field work, and was very useful; every care was taken of the good old cow, both from their affection for her, and because she was invaluable to the dairy. A young Quagga, whom they had caught in a snare, and cured of his wounds, lived in a separate compartment of the

stable; he was obliged to be kept apart from M. and Mme. Bobèche and their horned family, with whom he would not agree.

This Quagga, which looked very like a horse, had, at first, been Fortuné's pupil, but soon growing tired of the animal's intractability, the boy had recourse to strong measures, and often struck the Quagga very unnecessarily.

The children christened him Seraphin, in remembrance of a delightful evening they spent, long ago, in the Palais Royal; but this name was not appropriate to the unruly young Quagga. Seraphin was handsome, but his personal attractions were overbalanced by his unamiable character. He used to bite, kick, and fling out his fore-feet, and, besides, he would neither draw nor carry; if it had not been for these defects, he would have been quite a charming creature. He was so unmanageable, that once there had been a talk of either killing him or driving him away, but Jean pleaded earnestly against these suggestions, and asked to have Seraphin's education confided to himself, for he had long wished to break in the Quagga for the little girls to ride. Victor offered to help, and he and Jean, together, showed so much patience, gentleness, and quiet determination, that Seraphin was obliged to give way.

He was allowed to choose between bits of bread and vegetables, if he behaved well; but the whip was applied if he would not yield to the reasonable wishes of his instructors. Seraphin soon showed a decided preference for the dainties. With a leather strap round his head, the boys were soon able to lead him about; after a time the leather strap was replaced by a snaffle, and by-and-by they made him carry an empty sack, which was gradually filled with different articles, till it became heavier and heavier. At last Jean mounted the Quagga himself, but he did not stay long on Master Seraphin's back, for the first kick landed him on the turf, to Fortuné's extreme delight; but, after five or six harm-

less falls, Jean succeeded in keeping his seat for several minutes ; then, whilst Jean was on his back, Victor tried to gratify him by offering him some vegetables.

The first step gained, Seraphin's education progressed much more rapidly than could have been expected. He always retained a great dislike to Fortuné, showing, as animals often do, a keen recollection of former ill-treatment ; but it was not long before he allowed either of the other boys to ride him.

It is true that he often threw them on to the grass, without the slightest intimation, on their part, of a wish to be there ; at other times, without giving them any warning, he would roll over and over with them ; but, notwithstanding these freaks, there was every chance that, in the course of a few months, he would be thoroughly broken in.

The feathery tribe of domesticated water-fowl and the stranger aquatic birds swam and flew about the pond, keeping up a constant *quack, quack*, and stir of life, which would have delighted a naturalist.

Beppo invariably aroused a perfect din and clatter whenever he entered the pond, and he was usually so much alarmed at the sensation he created that he was glad to beat a speedy retreat. He would then walk away, with his tail between his legs, looking quite ashamed, and lie down by the side of M. Popincourt, who had, unhappily, lost his mother. No one is perfect, and that respectable individual was rather greedy ; a disaster brought on by eating candles, had caused Mme. Popincourt's untimely end. Indeed, one of the wicks had stuck in her throat and choked the poor lady.

Providence was by no means a quiet spot ; for, besides all which we have enumerated in the way of noise, there was the barking of Mirza and Beppo, and the bellowing of Bobèche and his family, who either worked, grazed, or sported about.

As a true historian, we are obliged to admit that the land might have been better cultivated. MM. Bixio and Barral's *Agricultural Journal* had not been amongst the books recovered from the wreck. Our little colonists were but young and child-like, they had sometimes neglected the useful for the ornamental. Shrubs, plants, grass-plants, and creepers, were plentiful; the roofs were one mass of flowers, the wall-fruit was abundant, and the garden was full of the most brilliant-coloured flowers. Building the house, and making all these arrangements, had, of course, occupied a long time; but, from the fertility of the soil, their harvest had been so abundant that, from want of sufficient hands, some part of their crops were unavoidably allowed to wither away.

The garden was situated between the pond and the house, and was divided into two parts by a fence and quick-set hedges. One side of the garden was allotted to Suzette's department, and contained vegetables and all kinds of fruits; the other side was under Fanny's superintendence, and was devoted to the most beautiful flowers, which the children, particularly Jean, had brought back from their various expeditions.

Wild beasts are numerous in Africa, but the peace of the little colony was fortunately never disturbed by any of these unwelcome visitors.

As for the savages, the fears they had once entertained of them by degrees subsided; although, in one of their excursions, Victor and Jean had found a dead antelope with a Bosjesman's arrow in its side. But the animal was of a kind not found in the neighbourhood of Providence, and might have travelled in its wounded state a great distance.

Without intimating his intention to any one, and accompanied only by faithful Mirza, Jean had carefully explored the country for many miles round Providence, but had not found the slightest evidence of the vicinity of human beings.

Our friends would have been very happy at Providence, if their life had not been overshadowed by their anxiety about the fate of M. Pearson and his companions. The hope of receiving tidings of *The Julie's* passengers had grown fainter and fainter, and as they grew up the children felt their loss more and more. Poor Mme. Pearson and Suzette tried to be cheerful for the sake of the young people. "Our dear ones," said they, "may be in a desert country (as we are) without any means of leaving it to go in quest of us. Let us thank God for having given us such a beautiful, peaceful home, and patiently await His good pleasure. It would be sinful not to hope."

Comforted by such words as these, the children would press each other's hands and return with spirit to their daily labours.



CHAPTER XXVI.

MME. PEARSON'S ANXIETY—JEAN'S PROJECT—ARRANGEMENTS FOR HIS DEPARTURE—LANDRY ACCOMPANIES HIM—THE MYSTERIOUS FLAG—FAREWELL.

THE colonists were all assembled, one fine spring evening, in a large green arbour which had been constructed in Fanny's garden. Each one had worked hard during the day, and felt the inward satisfaction which always arises from the consciousness of well-spent time.

On a little bamboo table, in the centre of the arbour, stood a rush basket of Fanny's making, which was filled with different kinds of fruit, and surrounded with lovely tinted flowers. Each of the party helped himself as he pleased.

At the same table Victor was giving Maria a botanical lesson, and M. Popincourt was perched on his master's shoulder, looking as if he were listening to the lesson of the professor with great attention; but the monkey was, in *reality*, intent upon the fruit which Victor held in his hands, and which the young rascal surveyed with longing eyes.

Not far from Victor, Fortuné and Landry were playing at draughts, and from time to time quarrelling as usual. Both the boys played badly, and Fortuné was rather absent-minded just then, and very cross, for he was listening to a conversation between Jean and Fanny on the opposite side of the table.

Jean was showing to the young girl the plan of a mill which he was anxious to construct, and explaining it to her. Pleasure was visibly portrayed on Fanny's pretty face, for Jean's explanations were so clear, and his manner was so energetic and frank, that she could not help being interested. It was a pretty sight to watch these two young people. Jean's bright eyes beamed with intellect as he talked of his long-desired mill, and Fanny's eager and intelligent attention showed that she was striving, and not in vain, to understand his explanations.

"How interested they seem!" whispered Suzette to Mme. Pearson.

"Poor children," murmured she, with a sad, gentle smile.

"I don't see that they are so much to be pitied," rejoined Suzette; "they are well housed, clothed, and fed, besides being strong and healthy, and as happy as birds. What more could we desire in our solitude?"

"Ah! my poor Suzette," exclaimed Mme. Pearson, "why do you try to dissimulate? You know very well that we are not contented; even now, whilst you are speaking, I see tears in your eyes."

Suzette hung down her head, silently.

"Where are they now?" said Mme. Pearson. "Are they still alive?—an indefinable presentiment tells me that they are, but, if so, why do not our husbands come in search of us?"

"There may be many reasons, madame," replied Suzette; "but, at all events, I am sure it is not their fault that they have not found us. Perhaps they were carried by the sea far from here; perhaps they have already made vain efforts to find us; perhaps they are themselves in some desert place, and as eager to know our fate as we are to learn theirs."

And so the two poor widows, as they called themselves, naturally fell to talking of their lost husbands.

"How sad your mother looks," whispered Jean to Fanny; "she seems to be crying."

"She is crying," said Fanny, her own eyes filling with tears; "but we had better not appear to notice her. She hides her sorrow for our sakes, but, at night, when she thinks I am asleep, I often hear her sobbing, and asking God to protect my father and bring him to us. Oh, if my poor father and the others were but here, how happy we should be!"

When Fanny had done speaking, Jean leaned his head on his hand absently, as if lost in thought.

Next day he collected all the books and maps relating to Africa, and began perusing them. Victor asked what he was doing, and Jean refused to tell him; but Victor coaxed the secret out of him at last. Two days after this, Jean went to Mme. Pearson and told her that he intended setting out in search of some of the towns on the coast, which he knew were inhabited by Europeans.

He had already attempted this expedition in the canoe, but had signally failed, for the frail vessel had been drifted on to the reefs, and he had only reached the shore by a miracle.

Jean's present intention was, therefore, to set out on foot.

"Everything proves to me that we are not on an island," said

he to Mme. Pearson, "and it is very likely that we are between the English and Portuguese colonies. I will follow the coast towards the south till I find some Europeans."

"But, my child," said Mme. Pearson, "you have already tried this expedition, and were obliged to give it up, because you found, only a league from here, the forests so dense, that it was impossible to traverse them."

"Yes," said Jean; "but I mean to take quite a different course. I shall follow one of the rivers which empty themselves into the sea near here, and make straight for the interior, at first, till I reach the open country, then I shall turn off towards the south. There must be other rivers flowing towards the sea, so I shall be sure not to be long without water, which is the most important consideration."

Mme. Pearson generously tried to dissuade him from this expedition, in spite of her secret longing that he should undertake it; but Jean persisted none the less in his resolution, saying: "I owe everything in the world to your family; God has shown me a way of proving my gratitude, and nothing shall induce me to relinquish my intention."

At last, after much persuasion, he was induced to take one of the other boys with him; and as Victor was still too delicate to undertake such a long journey, his choice lay between Fortuné and Landry.

At first both these boys were enthusiastic in their desire to accompany him; but their ardour soon cooled down; and it was easy to see, in spite of their assurances to the contrary, that they were unwilling to give up their comfortable home at Providence, and Suzette's good cooking, for a perilous and toilsome expedition.

Thinking, and rightly too, that Fortuné would be of but little use to Jean, Suzette took Landry apart, and impressed on him

www.libtool.com.cn



To face page 181.

JEAN AND LANDRY READY TO START.

www.libtool.com.cn

www.libtool.com.cn



what he owed to the Pearson family, and proved to him how ungrateful it would be not to accompany Jean in his search after his benefactor. She dwelt upon the wonderful advantages which might result from the expedition, and induced him to beg Jean to let him be his companion. Taking him at his word, Jean hastened forward the preparations for their journey.

For some time past, Jean and Victor had been at work in a sort of summer house, which they had constructed about half a league from Providence. Their secret occupation excited every one's curiosity; but they only replied jestingly to questions, and kept their secret inviolate, until success had crowned their efforts.

Victor had perused his different books till, by their aid, he had succeeded in making some gunpowder; of a very imperfect sort it is true, but, nevertheless, sufficiently good for shooting even the larger kinds of game.

Each of the travellers was equipped with a knapsack, like those worn by soldiers, and a sort of cartridge box, for their ammunition. A teapot, teakettle, and large gourd, were rolled up in a woollen covering, and strapped on the outside of the knapsack. The knapsack itself contained a change of clothing and other indispensable things, a spoon, some needles and thread, some matches, a tinder-box, a turncrew, a bullet-mould, and a small provision of salt meat; and Victor had entreated Jean to take his little telescope.

Each of our explorers was armed with a double-barrelled gun, a pistol, a knife, and a stick with an iron point at one end and a crook at the other. This stick was useful in many ways—to help them in walking, to rest their guns on, or to pull down the branches of trees laden with fruit. The boys' loads were heavy, for such young lads; but being accustomed to labour and exercise, they were enabled to carry their burthen cheerfully.

Their dress consisted of a kind of jacket and trousers, with boots of springbock skin, laced half up the legs, and a large straw hat. At night the hats were to be fastened to their knapsacks, and replaced by skin caps. A tender farewell was taken of the two boys, for every one felt they were perhaps sacrificing themselves for their friends. At parting, Mme. Pearson and Suzette gave them their blessing, and, kneeling down, all the inhabitants of Providence solemnly asked God to bless and preserve the bold adventurers.

At parting, Fanny slipped a small gold cross into Jean's hand (it was the only ornament she had saved from the wreck): "Wear it always, dear Jean," said she; "it will remind you of Him who alone can protect you."

All the menagerie seemed to share the general sorrow. Even Seraphin bounded over the palisades surrounding his enclosure, and rejoined his young master when he was a short distance from Providence. Jean was obliged to return with him and give him into the care of Victor and Fanny.

The latter soon monopolized Seraphin as her own pet, and endeavoured to complete his education. I suppose her friendship for Jean was partly the reason of her being so fond of his favourite Quagga.



CHAPTER XXVII.

THE JOURNEY—THE BOSJESMAN—THE WILD BOAR—THE RHINOCEROS—LANDRY'S
FRIGHT—THE SAVAGES—THEIR KING ISÉBALÉ.

WHILST the little party at Providence looked sorrowfully at the two empty seats, Jean and Landry steadily pursued their toilsome journey.

We will not enter into a detailed description of all the obstacles they had to overcome. There were mountains to climb, rivers to cross, thorny thickets to traverse; then they had to endure a burning sun by day, and cold and fog by night; and, besides all this, they had encounters with serpents and wild animals.

Landry soon began to lose courage ; the farther they went, the more he sighed after a return to the arduous, but peaceful life he had led at Providence. Jean had no compass, or any certain knowledge of the country by which to guide his course ; so that, from frequently taking a wrong direction, he had advanced much farther into the interior of the country than he had intended to do.

They had left Providence about a fortnight, when one day Jean discovered the print of a human foot, not far from a spring where he was preparing to pass the night in ambush, with the hope of renewing his stock of provisions. Many circumstances (which it would take too long fully to relate here) led Jean to suppose that it was the footprint of a savage. As our heroes knew that the natives of the African coast are not always well-disposed towards strangers, the boys did not know whether to grieve or rejoice at this token of their proximity. They gave up their projected ambuscade, though it was a splendid moonlight night for the purpose, and, after making a huge fire, lay down to rest under a tree.

Towards the middle of the night, they were awoke by a cry of distress, evidently from a human voice, and which seemed to proceed from some one not far distant. Seizing his gun, Jean listened attentively ; in a moment the wail was renewed. He was certain now from whence the cry came, and hastened to the spot. Landry was by no means ready to face an unknown danger ; but as he was still less desirous of remaining alone, he rejoined his comrade, to whom Mirza was pioneer.

Guided by the dog, Jean soon reached an opening in the wood, and quickly perceived a man extended on the ground. A wild boar was furiously stamping on him, and trying to thrust him through with his tusk. The unfortunate victim, having caught hold of one of the animal's legs, clung to it with the energy of

despair; but his shrieks for help were growing fainter every moment, and he was on the point of letting go his hold.

Mirza now rushed at the animal, barking loudly, and Jean took advantage of this moment to fire off his gun. The ball went through the animal's body; but the creature had nevertheless strength enough left to make a rush at the boy. Having discharged a second shot at him, Jean eluded his blind charge. But now the boar's legs began to stiffen, he stopped short, fell down heavily, and in a second or two was quite dead.

Then Jean went up to the man and found that he had fainted. He proved to be of dwarfish stature, much smaller than Jean himself, though he was evidently a full-grown man. His slight frame gave him no evidence of strength, and his only weapons were a bad knife and small bow and arrows. Jean was not long in coming to the conclusion that he had to do with a Bosjesman. During the last three years, he had several times found animals which had been killed or wounded by poisoned arrows, and he thought it very likely that the parts of poisoned arrows found in these creatures had been shot by this man.

Whilst he was raising the savage, and throwing water in his face to revive him, Jean told Landry what he fancied. Thereupon Landry's first care was to take possession of the bow and arrows, break them in pieces, and fling them into the thicket. When the savage revived he was much alarmed to find himself in the power of two people so different to himself, and the poor creature trembled violently. He got up as soon as he was able and tried to run away; but, before he had taken many steps, he was so exhausted that he fell down flat on the ground.

Jean then went up to him and made him understand, as well as he could, that they had no hostile intentions towards him.

The boy pointed to the boar, which he struck with his gun, gave the poor savage something to drink, staunched his wound,

and did all he could to reassure him. The Bosjesman became somewhat less alarmed; but his fears returned when he found that both his knife and bow and arrows had disappeared. Jean now tried, by signs, to make him understand that he and Landry would provide him with food and protect him; and also, that they would give him a handsome reward, if he would guide them to a country inhabited by white people like themselves.

The savage replied at first by negative signs; but, when Jean showed him a knife, a hatchet, and other things, which he promised to give him as a recompense, the Bosjesman seemingly made up his mind to comply with the boys' wishes, and they all set out together.

The journey was long and toilsome. After four or five days had passed, the Bosjesman grew quite familiarized with Jean, but he still feared Landry, whose brutal nature loved to tyrannize over the weak and helpless. When Jean was not present to prevent him, Landry worried the poor creature, laughed at him and forced him to carry all the baggage.

One day the travellers suddenly came on a rhinoceros. The huge animal would most likely have passed by, without attacking them, if Mirza had not ran after him, barking violently. The rhinoceros naturally turned round to rush at the dog, and Mirza retreated instantly to her master's side. Jean, in his turn, now ran away; but, as the rhinoceros ran faster than he did, the monster soon gained on the boy. Seeing himself, therefore, on the point of being attacked, Jean faced his foe, and firing, hit him in the shoulder. The furious colossal creature now strided rapidly past Jean, and continued his blind course to the foot of a tree which Landry was in the act of climbing; but, in his haste and fright, Landry had unfortunately chosen a tree, the trunk of which was too large for him to clamber up easily, and after ascending a few feet he was quite unable to advance any higher.

At the same time, the presence of the rhinoceros at the foot of the tree quite overcame any desire he might have had to set foot on *terra firma*. The creature's head was indeed within a few inches of the boy, who, feeling the animal's breath like a hot blast, uttered piercing shrieks of agony. As for the Bosjesman (whom his companions ironically called Cæsar), he was installed on the branch of a tree at least twenty feet from the ground, and seemed to derive great enjoyment from the sight of Landry's critical position. Landry could not have held on much longer, for his strength was ebbing fast; no possible exertion of his own could now have saved him from his enemy's tusk, his hands relaxed, and cold drops stood on his forehead.

Seeing his comrade's danger, Jean bravely left his own safe position to go to the assistance of Landry, who had deserted him in his need but such a short time before. First Jean picked up the gun, which Landry had thrown down that he might run the faster; then, sheltering himself behind a tree (which he hoped would receive the rhinoceros's first charge in lieu of himself), he fired at the animal; but the ball rebounded from his thick skin, and the rhinoceros took no other notice of it than to rub his long pointed snout against Landry's tree in anything but a friendly manner. A third shot, better aimed, hit him in the head; now he wheeled round with surprising agility, for an animal of his huge size, and made as if he would attack Jean. But a fourth ball apparently induced him to alter his mind; for, after tearing the bushes with his tusk, and stamping them under his feet, he set off at a brisk trot in an opposite direction to that of the hunters.

Poor Landry was so completely exhausted that he fell on the ground in a heap like a great bundle; but it was not long before he found energy to treat Master Cæsar to a smart blow, for the savage's cunning face had betrayed his satisfaction at his tormentor's ridiculous situation.

Jean reproved him for this brutality, and explained to him how very impolitic such conduct was towards one in whose power they were, either to lead them to friends or betray them to enemies. This last consideration made some impression on Landry, and he promised to treat Cæsar better for the future. But, when the boy was out of humour, his natural propensities got the upper hand, and he visited his ill-temper on the savage.

Perhaps it was from revenge, or it might be that the poor creature misunderstood Jean's wishes, or even that he had by sheer mistake lost his way ; but, be the reason whatever it might, the travellers were awoke one morning by Mirza's barking, and found themselves surrounded by savages, the little Bojesman having disappeared.

These savages were dark-complexioned, and their skin shone with grease and oil ; they were tall, with woolly hair, flat noses, narrow foreheads, and were very ferocious looking. They were naked, save a sort of sash tied round their waist ; and their arms consisted of a sword, a lance, an assagai, or sort of javelin, and a wooden shield covered with leather.

The chief was named Isébalé, and wore a kaross, or sort of fur cloak, a necklace of animal's teeth, and a ring of two or three inches diameter put through his nose. In that part of the world rings are worn in the noses instead of in the ears as with us. Let us hope that this savage fashion of nose-rings will never obtain elsewhere. Ear-rings are surely quite sufficient for civilized beings.

The two white-skinned prisoners were instantly taken before the chief, who brandished a javelin in the air all the time he treated with the boys, indulging them also, in a loud voice, with a long discourse rapidly delivered, and accompanied with fierce gesticulations. Landry trembled from head to foot, and did not venture to open his eyes ; and Jean, with his hand on his pistol,

commended himself to God, and determined, should the king come to extremities, to return the favour of his javelin by a shot at his Majesty's head.

But the King's intentions proved to be peaceful, in spite of his warlike attitude ; and, letting fall his assagai, he made a signal for a splendid breakfast to be brought to the prisoners. The bill of fare consisted of boiled grasshoppers and caterpillars, boiled roots, and a sort of sour beer. But, with the exception of Mirza, our travellers ate little of these delicacies.

"I prefer Suzette's soup," murmured Landry, who had always had a weakness for soup. When the repast was terminated, Jean tried to make the king understand that Landry and he were most anxious to quit his hospitable camp, and go about their own business, which was important.

But, on his side, Isébalé explained quite as clearly that he was most desirous of keeping them with him, and that, if they stayed willingly, they would be well treated ; but, if they attempted to escape, they would be slain without pity. Jean would rather have been without this kind of friendship, but he felt that, at present, he could not choose, and must therefore resign himself, with the best grace he could, to his fate.



CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE WORKERS AND THE IDLERS—A GRAND CEREMONY—THE MILL—JEAN BECOMES
THE KING'S FAVOURITE—A ROYAL CAPRICE—THE SOUL OF THE GUN—
LANDRY'S EXPEDITION.

A FEW days after their arrival amongst the savages, the attention of our heroes was attracted to a company of from sixty to eighty young men, who never laboured, but were nevertheless served with the best food, and attended with excellent care. Our friends remarked another division of savages, who were some few years older, and these latter worked hard. Pointing out these two divisions to his prisoners, Isébalé seemed to ask them which they would join.

Landry quickly chose to be enrolled with the younger company.

"I think you have made a mistake," said Jean ; "I suspect that the savages have some hidden motive for taking such good care of these idle young men."

"So much the worse for me, if they have," rejoined Landry ; "but I would rather enjoy myself with them than fag like those poor wretches there who are grinding corn."

Jean chose to belong to the labouring division, and set to work immediately.

His mind was quick and inventive, and, added to these advantages, he had acquired great manual dexterity. His superiority to his associates was soon recognised, for he discovered many ways of simplifying the tasks set him.

He also made several pieces of furniture for the king, with which Isébalé was excessively delighted. Amongst other things he made him a cup and ball, a little cart, a trumpet, a splendid rattle, a top, and a set of nine-pins. When he was firmly established in the king's good graces, he proposed to Isébalé to allow him to construct a windmill, and explained his plan of doing so to the king at great length ; he made a drawing of the windmill on the sand, but, as Jean was powerless to portray the wind, Isébalé was unable to understand what he meant. But the king had such entire confidence in Jean that he acquiesced in all our hero said with an air of great satisfaction.

A few days after this preparations were commenced for a grand ceremony. It appeared that Landry and his companions were to play some principal part on the great occasion, for they were prepared for it by a severe fast, which rather disgusted Landry with his new position.

About ten o'clock one morning the savages stood round, forming a large circle ; in the midst of them there were two rows of men, who were armed with long thin flexible, though strong rods. At one side a throne was erected for Isébalé, on which the monarch

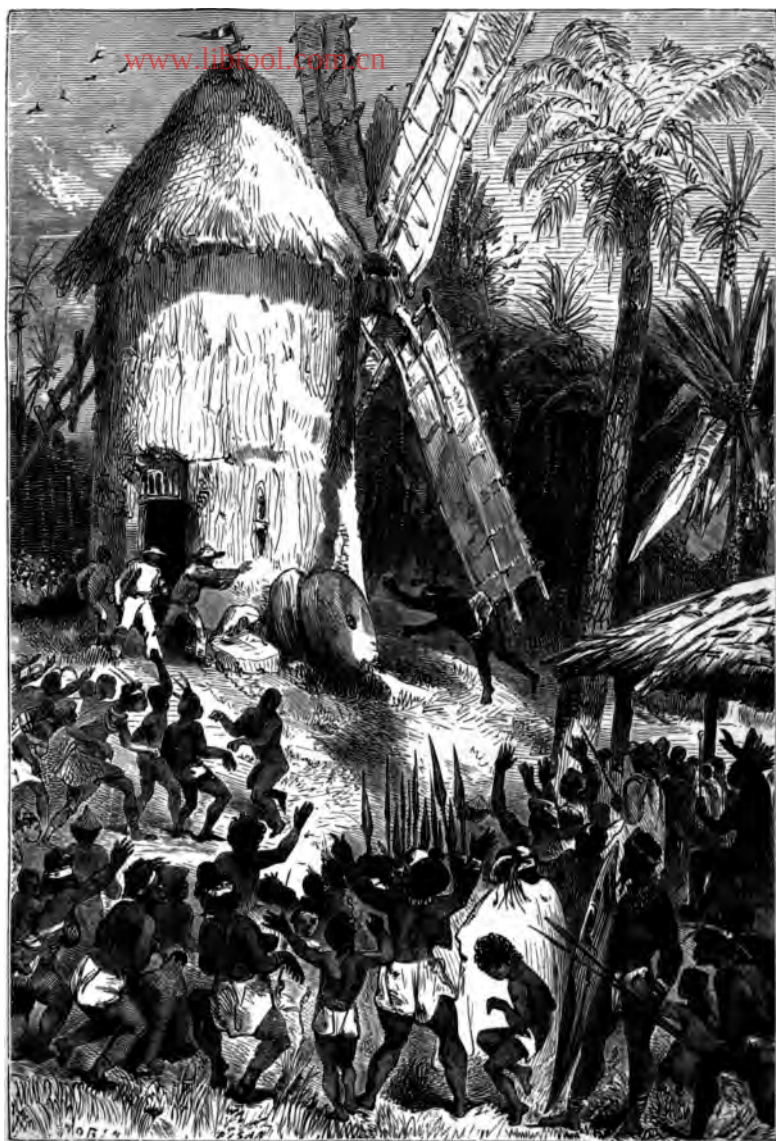
climbed, placing Jean beside him. When all these preparations were completed, at a given signal, the band of young lads (amongst whom was Landry) were made to pass down the long avenue formed by the two lines of men. The only garment of the young lads consisted of some trousers made of springbock skin, and each of the youths was presented with a pair of sandals. Landry hastening to put on his sandals, his comrades looked at him admiringly, but kept theirs in their hands.

Now the king gave a second signal, and the young lads began to dance and sing, and Landry was obliged to do as the others did. At a third signal, the long rods (which Landry had been looking at uneasily for some time past) began to play their part in the day's ceremony. For they fell, in time to the singing, on the shoulders of the young men, who continued the dancing and singing, cleverly raising their hands, armed with the sandals, to protect their heads; but stoically, and even with a smile on their lips, bearing the blows directed to any other part of their body.

Landry found this pastime anything but agreeable, and his only desire was to escape from the lines of tormentors, and put an end to his share in this terrible dance; but the savages indignantly prevented his escape, and the blows continued to fall violently and frequently on his naked shoulders.

Isébalé explained the intention of this ceremony, as well as he could to Jean, who pleaded in vain for his companion's release. The king said that all the men of his nation had to pass through this ordeal, and that the intention of it was to accustom them to suffering, and teach them to bear it with smiles and songs. After this ceremony, they entered on the duties and privileges of men and warriors. Isébalé had thought, from the choice made by the boys on their arrival, that Jean must have gone through this initiation amongst his own people, but that Landry must have left his country too young to have done so.

www.libtool.com.cn



THE WINDMILL.

To face page 183.

www.libtool.com.cn

www.libtool.com.cn

The savages were much amused by Landry's frantic cries, but his want of courage made him fall very low in their estimation. The poor fellow came away from this painful castigation with his shoulders sore and bleeding, and deeply mortified by the pain and humiliation he had endured; he sat down in a solitary spot and wept bitterly from vexation and suffering. Jean sought him out immediately, but he met with only a cool reception; for Landry accused him of not having told him what dreadful misfortunes might befall him, when he decided to belong to the do-nothing set. Besides this, Landry said that Jean might have got him excused from the terrible ordeal, if he had used his influence with Isébalé, as he ought to have done to spare his friend.

It was in vain that Jean reminded him that he had warned him not to choose for companions the idle set of youths, and explained to him that he had done his best to have him reprieved, although his entreaties had proved in vain. Landry swore he would never forgive Jean as long as he lived.

Though these savages were by no means clever, they imitated the models Jean made for them with great success, and thus all the different parts of the mill were soon ready. Indeed, in the course of a week or two, the mill was erected on a hill near the king's hut, and was found to work in the most satisfactory manner.

When the savages saw the sweeps revolve, they showed their astonishment and delight by dances, games, and the strangest cries imaginable. This manner of working, by an impalpable and invisible agent, exceeded anything they could possibly have conceived. They considered Jean some superior being, descended from a higher sphere, for he seemed to them to command even the elements, and give life to dead matter.

One very influential person, however, was jealous of Jean; for previous to his arrival, L'Om Tagaty, the king's medicine man and sorcerer, had been one of the most important of the king's

subjects. Now it happened that one day, as this great doctor was passing close to the sweeps, he was knocked down by them, like Don Quixote of old ; then the savages looked at the mill with even greater terror and respect than before, for it seemed not only to live and die at Jean's pleasure, but to revenge itself on his enemies of its own accord. L'Om Tagaty had been tossed full twenty feet into a pond, where his appearance was not improved by there being a thick coating of slime over the surface of the water.

The king's admiration for Jean was so great that he rewarded him with a present of twelve magnificent elephant's teeth. Each of these teeth weighed from eighty to a hundred pounds, and, as ivory is very valuable in commerce, this present was even more valuable to a European than the savage monarch had supposed.

Thanking Isébalé for his kindness, Jean asked permission to share the munificent gift with Landry, who had helped to superintend the building of the mill. But Isébalé objected, saying a workman was not entitled to the same recompense as an inventor and director. He, however, gave Landry two elephant's tusks, though he felt but little respect for him since he had shown so much cowardice.

The natural preference felt for Jean exasperated Landry ; for if adversity improves the good, the ill-disposed are frequently made worse by it.

"You are unkind and selfish," said Landry, referring to the elephant's teeth.

"No," replied Jean with spirit ; "the proof that I am not so, is, that until now I have always shared everything with you."

"Everything !" cried Landry, looking at him spitefully, "you did not share that terrible thrashing ; and besides, it is your fault that we are here at all, if it had not been for you, we should both have been comfortably at Providence at this moment, instead of ;" and, pushing away Jean, who was vexed at these unjust

reproaches, Landry went off crying like a baby, as in some respects he was.

During the intervals between his more serious occupations, Jean performed wonders with his gun, which made him so excessively popular with all the tribe, that Isébalé, who thought him perfection, secretly determined on making him, some day, his son-in-law and the heir to his throne.

Jean, the same Jean, who long ago had been the poor little *protégé* of Suzette and Père Caillaud ; this little wandering orphan to become a king, how strange are the vicissitudes of fortune ! It must be confessed that Jean was too young to think of marrying at present, and that, had he been aware of the king's benevolent intention, he might not, perhaps, have been altogether charmed by these brilliant prospects. It is more than likely that he would have preferred a place at Providence, between his friends Victor and Fanny, to dominion over a tribe of savages with a sable princess for his wife.

For some time past his majesty had been haunted by one fixed idea, which was to fire off Jean's gun ; but our young hero was too prudent to let the principal instrument of his influence slip through his hands in this way. So he allowed the king to believe that a spirit dwelt in his gun, who would only obey one person's will, and that this spirit became dangerous if any one, except his legitimate master, attempted to fire off the gun.

This belief was quite in harmony with savage credulity, and for a long time was sufficient to restrain Isébalé's wish to fire off the gun ; but one fine day the king insisted on firing a shot, despite all these fearful risks. Jean had now no option, and was compelled to gratify Isébalé's whim, but he determined to disgust his majesty, once for all, with European fire-arms. To do this, he put three charges of powder and two of shot into each of the barrels before giving up the gun to the king, who declared he was quite able to

fire it off, for that he had taken notice of the exact way in which Jean was accustomed to do so. Without paying any attention to a final representation which Jean ventured to make, Isébalé impatiently fired off both barrels at once. The recoil was so great that the gun fell out of his hand, and his majesty's sacred person came violently in contact with the ground. No jaw had ever been more roughly used by the butt-end of a gun ; but his majesty was very brave, and like all savages inured to pain, so he got up without making the slightest remark on the inconvenience he felt (though perhaps his silence might be accepted as a sign that he thought all the more), and walked deliberately into the royal hut. When he came out again on the following day, his face was swollen up to twice its natural size.

This accident did not in any way diminish Jean's favour with the monarch ; because he had warned him of what would be sure to happen. Isébalé's affection for Jean, however, had one great inconvenience ; for the more Jean became necessary to him, the less Isébalé felt inclined to set him at liberty. One great source of the king's delight was, that Jean had learned the Bosjesman language, and so Isébalé used to favour him with interminable conversations. This savage was very inquisitive, and eager to improve himself, and was really very superior to his subjects.

Every idea which passed through his mind was communicated to Jean, who would have been quite as well pleased if his majesty's confidence had not been so entire. Jean's greatest uneasiness was caused by the thought of the anxiety of his friends at Providence ; he could hardly restrain his impatience since the time fixed for his return to them had slipped by. "Oh, when shall we see our poor friends again !" thought he ; "what will they do without us ?"

He made several attempts to escape, but he was so closely watched that it was impossible for him to succeed in getting off.

"I will not let you leave me," said Isébalé, fixing his large eyes affectionately on Jean; "why do you want to go away from me, when I love you so much?" At last, seeing no other resource left him, Jean declared he would work no more, upon which the king tried to intimidate him by threats, and even punished him severely; but Jean persisted in his resolution, in spite of anything Isébalé could do.

When he found that Jean would rather die than yield, the king proposed a compromise, and consented to set Landry free, and even to send some of his men with him to a country supposed (from accounts given by some of the oldest savages of the tribe) to be inhabited by Europeans. "About three years ago, some wandering Bosjesmans passed through my kingdom," said Isébalé, "and from what they told me, I fancy there must be a town inhabited by white men lying out in that direction," and, as he spoke, the king stretched his arm out towards the south-east. "They told me that those men had thunder like yours, and that they lived in large high stone boxes. My subjects remember what they said, and would be almost certain to find the place," continued the king; "but it would be a long and dangerous journey."

"This expedition might prove very useful to your people," said Jean, "and you should therefore select the most intelligent of your subjects to send with my friend; for they will be able to bring us back valuable information about the countries they pass through, and later, you might be able to make some exchanges with the white people which might be very advantageous to your tribe."

In order to induce the king to send Landry, Jean was obliged to promise that, for his own part, he would give up any attempt to escape. Thus, as had so often been the case, Jean sacrificed himself for the good of his friends.

"From what the savages tell me," said he to Landry, "you will

reach a European colony, and if, as they say, it is really a town, it must be a very important one. As soon as you get there, hasten to some of the public authorities, and give them all the information you can to assist them in finding our friends at Providence, then try to discover what has become of M. Pearson, Firmin, Caillaud, and all the crew of the *Julie*. Give a detailed account of the wreck to the authorities of the place, set an inquiry on foot, and give everything the utmost publicity in your power ; and, when all this is done, explain my situation, that I, in my turn, may be restored to my friends."

Landry was divided between a wish to obtain his freedom, and the fear inspired by the idea of a long and perilous journey ; but he promised to follow Jean's advice, and, bidding his comrade farewell, set out accompanied by twelve savages.



CHAPTER XXIX.

THE RETURN OF THE TWELVE SAVAGES—JEAN'S ILLNESS—JOURNEY TO PROVIDENCE—RETURN TO THE BOSJESMANS.

SAD at heart, though apparently resigned to his situation, Jean awaited the result of his fellow-prisoner's journey, with an anxiety easily to be imagined.

The savages, who had accompanied Landry, returned after an absence of about six months. They reported that they had left him at the entrance of a great city inhabited by white people, and called Port Natal. And they told the wildest stories about this town, its shops, and its inhabitants. But, to Jean's great surprise, they did not bring him either a letter or message from Landry.

When he was alone that evening in his hut, Jean thought over all the reasons he could imagine for his companion's silence.

"He may not have written for fear of exciting the savages' suspicions," said Jean to himself; "or Isébalé may have forbidden his men to bring me any communication from Landry. Who knows whether the savages may not even have killed my poor friend, and all they say about having left him with the white men may be false?"

All these thoughts passed through poor Jean's mind. During some months he entertained a vague hope that some expedition, either headed by Landry, or, at all events, sent at his instigation, would come and set him free. When a year, however, had passed without any change in his situation, he was obliged to abandon all hopes of this kind.

How often did the solitary youth ponder over the cause of this apparent neglect, and drive from his mind the thought that Landry could possibly have been so dastardly as to abandon him!

"No," said the brave young fellow; "that cannot be. But perhaps he has not been able to retrace the road to Isébalé's camp; or, if that is not the case, then some misfortune must have happened to him. But provided he has been able to send help to *Providence*," said Jean, with his habitual self-abnegation, "I can bear my lot."

Jean continued his occupations, in spite of his sadness and his fears, and he became more and more useful to the savages. But at last, either from over fatigue or grief, he became very ill. The king saw that he daily grew worse, and began to tremble for the life of his favourite.

"How can I cure you?" said he one day, when Jean was sadder, and more cast down than ever.

"Give me my freedom, and let me return to my friends," replied Jean.

Isébalé shook his head, in sign of refusal.

"Well," said Jean, "if you will let me go away, for three months only, I promise to come back to you at the end of that time."

The king hesitated ; but Jean became so ill that he had not the heart to refuse him any longer.

The hope of seeing all his friends at Providence, but especially Victor and Fanny, put new life into the poor fellow ; and, a fortnight after this permission had been granted, Jean, though still weak, was able to set out. Not wishing to reveal the retreat of his friends to the savages, he insisted on being allowed to go to Providence alone, and he only consented to have an escort as far as the place where he and Landry had been made prisoners four years previously.

When he reached this spot, he took leave of the savage, who had accompanied him thus far ; and, to prevent the man's following him, or finding, by his track, where he had gone, he swam across two rivers, and walked a long distance down the bed of a stream. Indeed, it was only when he felt sure that it would be impossible for any spy to trace him, that he continued his route to Providence. He was guided by the marks which Landry and he had left on the trees, when they had come this way from their peaceful home, now so long ago.

Three weeks after leaving the savages, he recognised the neighbourhood of Providence. Oh, how fast his heart beat, as he thought how soon he should see his friends ! But as he came near the house, he was struck by the desolate appearance of the land they had all cultivated together. The harvest had evidently perished without an attempt having been made to gather it in. Jean went on, feeling more and more uneasy, and did not stop

till he found himself in front of the house. Jean's heart almost stopped beating, for what a spectacle met his eye here—the house was closed, and evidently uninhabited.

“They are all gone away,” he ejaculated.

The windows were overgrown with creepers, and the pond was covered with a quantity of water-fowl, who seemed to be living there at their ease. Some of these birds, however, screamed and flapped their wings at the sight of Jean and Mirza, which convinced him that they must have been some time without seeing a human being.

Presently Jean heard something trotting after him, and, turning round, recognised poor Bobèche, and Mirza barked with delight at seeing her old companion. The buffalo had grown quite wild, and did not, at first, remember Jean. But as soon as the animal recognised his former master, he walked cautiously round him, and, taking courage, after a time, he came quite close and leaned his large muzzle on Jean's shoulder, as of old. Presently three of his family came up to Jean. Mirza, who hunted about everywhere, discovered Seraphin in a neighbouring meadow. The quagga was at first cautious in approaching near our hero, but he ended by fondling him as Bobèche had done.

The stable doors were left open, and Jean saw that the animals went in there to sleep at night. He then got into the house by breaking a window with his iron-capped stick. After carefully examining the interior of the house, he came to the conclusion, that it must have been deserted for a year at least, and perhaps for a much longer period. He saw no evidence of violence anywhere, so ventured to hope that his friends had left Providence of their own accord.

“Landry may have returned here, with some other people, to fetch them,” thought Jean; “but oh, they must have forgotten poor me! And yet that is not possible,” thought he, dismissing

the cruel thought from his mind, and he searched everywhere in the hope of finding something by which to discover what the fate of the Pearson family had been.

It was in vain that he looked in every corner, he could not find the slightest indication of why they had left Providence, or whither they had gone.

Poor Jean racked his brain to discover why his friends had so entirely forgotten him, as not even to leave a token for him in case he should ever return to their old home. He pondered over his disappointment in bitter sorrow, till he became very ill, and was laid up with violent fever and delirium for more than a fortnight. Mirza now showed her attachment. Hardly quitting him to go in search of her daily food, the faithful dog sat with her large eyes affectionately fixed on her master, anxiously watching his every movement; and when his suffering drew a groan from him she would go up to him and lick his hands.

Even the quagga and Bobèche came several times a day to the door and looked in at Jean, as if to see how he was. They gazed at him seemingly with love and pity. When his sufferings abated a little, poor Jean smiled affectionately at the only friends who had remained faithful to him, and felt less desolate after one of these kind visits. At last the fever came to a salutary crisis, and he gradually became convalescent; for youth had won the day.

He was now obliged to think of returning to the savages, for he had barely time to redeem his promise to Isébalé. Jean spent a day or two in making excursions in the neighbourhood, and then he felt that he, too, must abandon Providence for ever. He was in despair at being obliged to go away without having obtained any tidings of his friends; and, to provide for the very improbable event of any of them ever returning to Providence,

he wrote letters to Mme. Pearson, Victor, Fanny, and Suzette, and put these epistles in the most conspicuous situations. Then, after repairing some of the injury done to the house, and clearing out the stable, which served as a shelter to Seraphin and the Bobèche family, he set out to return to the savages.

The Bosjesmans uttered shrieks of joy, when they saw him approaching, and the good faith with which he had kept his promise raised him even higher than before in their estimation. When he went into his hut he found there a present from Isébalé, it consisted of two dozen elephant's teeth, a dozen lion skins, and twelve rhinoceros tusks.

We will now leave our friend Jean to resume his daily avocations, and see what took place at Providence after Jean and Landry departed on their exploring expedition.



CHAPTER XXX.

WHAT TOOK PLACE AT PROVIDENCE—VICTOR AND FORTUNÉ GO IN SEARCH OF
JEAN AND LANDRY—SIGNS OF STRIFE—THE SAVAGES—THEY RETURN TO
PROVIDENCE.

YOUTH is the season of hope, when all things look bright, and when even the steadiest people are apt to build castles in the air. Our young friends at Providence had talked over the expedition of Jean and Landry, till their success (which was in reality so doubtful) was looked upon as certain.

They had also taught themselves to believe that the expected assistance would most probably come by sea; and scarcely a day past that our little colonists did not go down to the shore to look out for the ship so eagerly desired. In this way many months passed away, but without a sail being visible on the

horizon ; without the appearance of any European to help them to return to a state of civilization.

After many alternations of hope and fear, Victor could endure the suspense no longer, and, dreading some harm had happened to his friends, he decided to go in search of them. His mother tried to dissuade him from the undertaking, of which she foresaw the difficulties ; but the brave boy represented so eloquently and affectionately how ungrateful it would be to make no search after Jean and Landry, that she could not finally withhold her consent to his setting out with Fortuné in search of the lost pair.

The boys promised that nothing should induce them to remain away more than two months. Jean and Landry had naturally chosen the easiest path, so that the nature of the ground indicated where they must have passed ; and besides, they had left traces of their route by breaks made in the forest with their hatchets.

Moreover, they occasionally found an isolated tree in a conspicuous place, which Jean had taken the precaution to mark in some special manner, in order the more readily to find his way back to Providence. Victor and his cousin had, therefore, little difficulty in reaching the spot where the other boys had been taken prisoners.

One day, in passing by a spring which rose in the midst of some trees, they discovered the skeleton of a man whose flesh had been completely devoured by vultures and jackals ; and, near these mournful remains, Victor found a knife and two other small articles, which he recognized as having belonged to Jean and Landry. A little farther on they found a bow and arrows, which, from their shape and size, Victor supposed must have belonged to a Bosjesman. Fortuné also picked up a javelin and a sort of tomahawk ; and, a few steps farther on the other side of the clump

of trees, traces of an encampment of savages were discovered. The ground was strewn with branches, which must have formed part of their huts ; and a bare, black spot, in the centre of the camp, showed where their fire had evidently been.

The skeleton which the boys had found, and which was partly destroyed by hyenas, was that of the Bosjesman who had served as guide to Jean and Landry. He had been surprised by a tribe of Caffres—who, like the Arabs, are always travelling from one place to another—and had been killed by them. But two other skeletons, which the boys found buried under a small mound of earth, proved that he had not died without a struggle.

The sight of these skeletons, coupled with having found the knife and other things belonging to Jean and Landry, made the cousins painfully anxious respecting their friends. They piously buried the two skeletons ; but, as there was still a doubt as to whether they were indeed the remains of Jean and Landry, the two boys explored the ground all round the spring, in the minutest manner.

The sun sank behind the thick forest-trees, and, in spite of Fortuné's terror, our travellers were compelled to spend the night where they were. Even Victor was by no means free from apprehension ; but his faith was strong in God, and, praying that the Almighty would watch over himself and his friends, he fell asleep.

At daybreak Victor and Fortuné resumed their march. Though Victor could not divest himself of the fear that his friends had perished, he persisted (notwithstanding Fortuné's advice to return at once to Providence) in going farther into the interior.

About the middle of the second day, a herd of animals rushed by them with evident marks of the greatest terror. Then a distant noise struck on their ears, a noise which they soon ascertained must proceed from some savage who were hunting

the poor creatures. The clamour came nearer and nearer, and, climbing up into a tree, our friends hid themselves in the foliage. Through the gaps in the forest they could perceive that an immense prairie lay stretched out before them. When they had been about two hours in the tree, a troop of zebras, gnous, and elands, crossed the prairie, and were soon followed by the savages, who pursued the animals with incredible agility. There were, doubtless, others of the tribe in ambush on the opposite side of the prairie, for the troop of animals was soon seen returning in haste and confusion quite indescribable. Making a circle round some of these creatures, the savages pelted them with their javelins, and killed several of them. The rest dispersed in all directions. Now the savages separated, forming into two companies, one band carried off the slain animals, while the other continued to pursue those which had fled: both divisions soon disappeared in the distance.

Victor felt so anxious to obtain tidings of his friend Jean, that he would gladly have made inquiries of the savages, notwithstanding the natural terror with which they inspired him, and the ferocity he had just seen them display in killing the wounded animals; and, had he been alone, he would most likely have thus tried to gain intelligence of the fate of the explorers, but Fortuné had no desire to run such a risk.

Seeing it was impossible to influence Victor, by the idea of personal danger, Fortuné reminded him that in putting himself at the mercy of the savages, he not only endangered his own safety, but also that of his friends at Providence.

"You are certainly at liberty to risk your own life," said Fortuné, "but would you be right in exposing to danger your mother, sister, Maria, and Suzette? If the savages speak to us, they will naturally seek to find out whence we come; they will easily discover our track, and have no difficulty in reaching Providence. Think, therefore,

of the terrible consequences which might result from making ourselves known to them."

Victor hung down his head, and was obliged to confess that his cousin was right.

"We have been away six weeks," continued Fortuné, "and you promised your mother not to be absent more than two months; it is high time to set out on our return; besides, you see how imprudent it would be to advance farther into a country which is inhabited by such ferocious-looking beings. As for that unfortunate Jean, his fate is but too evident, and it is not likely that Landry has been more fortunate than he."

"We will go back to Providence," said Victor, taking his hands away from his face, which was bathed in tears. "Farewell, my poor Jean! farewell, Landry! farewell, my good, faithful friends! If you are with God, perhaps you are able to read my thoughts, and see that, if I renounce any farther efforts in your behalf, it is because my life belongs to those for whom you so bravely sacrificed yours. If you are still alive, may the good God watch over you, and bring you back to me and your other friends."

Taking hold of his cousin's arm, Fortuné drew him away. Their return was sad, and their arrival at home still more sorrowful.

That they might not unnecessarily alarm their friends, and deprive them of all hope, they had agreed to say nothing about the skeletons. But the negative result of their expedition, and the absence of all tidings of Jean and Landry, were sufficient to sadden the inhabitants of Providence.

"In what desert country can we be living!" cried poor Mme. Pearson; "by what an enormous distance must we be separated from all the European colonies! How shall we ever be enabled to quit this unknown land? If my dear husband and his companions escaped the fury of that dreadful tempest, how shall we ever find them? and what can have become of our brave, devoted Jean?"

Dead for our sakes, perhaps ? and poor Landry, too ! Oh that God may still protect them, and bring them back to us."

Of all the little colony, perhaps Fanny was the one who struggled the most to hide her grief ; but how often her mother found her (unknown to any of the rest) silently weeping alone, and praying for the absent ones !

The poor girl had placed all the little things, which Jean from time to time had given her, in her room. She took especial care of the flowers and animals he used to like, and which they had tended together. Often, in the midst of the most lively conversation, she would grow suddenly pale, and turning away her head, put her handkerchief to her eyes. Then Mme. Pearson raised her thoughts silently to heaven, and asked God to console her darling child. Sometimes she could not control her own sympathetic feelings, and would silently embrace Fanny, who, laying her head on her mother's shoulder, would, amidst affectionate kisses, dry her tearful eyes.



CHAPTER XXXI.

A DELIGHTFUL SURPRISE—FIRING OF CANNON—THE SIGNALS—THE HAPPY MEETING—LANDRY'S DASTARDLY CONDUCT.

MORE than two years had now elapsed since Jean and Landry set out, and their friends had long given up all hope of ever seeing them again, when one morning the colonists heard a distant rumbling noise, apparently in the direction of the sea. It sounded exactly as if a cannon were being fired. Every one hastened down to the shore, and soon perceived in the distance a little vessel, which seemed to be cruising about a few miles from the land.

The children shrieked with delight, and seizing their guns,

Victor and Fortuné fired them off in the air, in the hope that the sound would be heard in the ship. Suzette and Fanny hastened to light a fire on the highest rock they could select, and Mme. Pearson and Maria meantime manufactured a sort of flag, which was hoisted on a long pole.

Now the cannon boomed out a second time, as if to salute the colonists' flag, and the ship's course was set landwards. They had reefed some of her sails, for it was necessary to approach the shore with great caution.

At a few cable lengths from the land, the anchor was thrown out, and then the long boat was let down. Eight persons were seen to get into it, and the boat put off landwards.

"I do believe it is Jean and Landry come back to fetch us," said Victor.

"Yes, yes!" cried Fortuné, who had very long sight; "I see Landry, he is at the prow of the boat, waving his handkerchief!"

"Do you recognise any of the other seven men, my children?" said Mme. Pearson, in a trembling voice.

"The boat is manned by four sailors," said Victor; "then I see—why," said he suddenly, "can it be? yes, it is—my father!"

"My husband!" ejaculated Mme. Pearson.

"My father!" exclaimed Fanny.

"Look, Fortuné," said Victor, "who is that at the helm?"

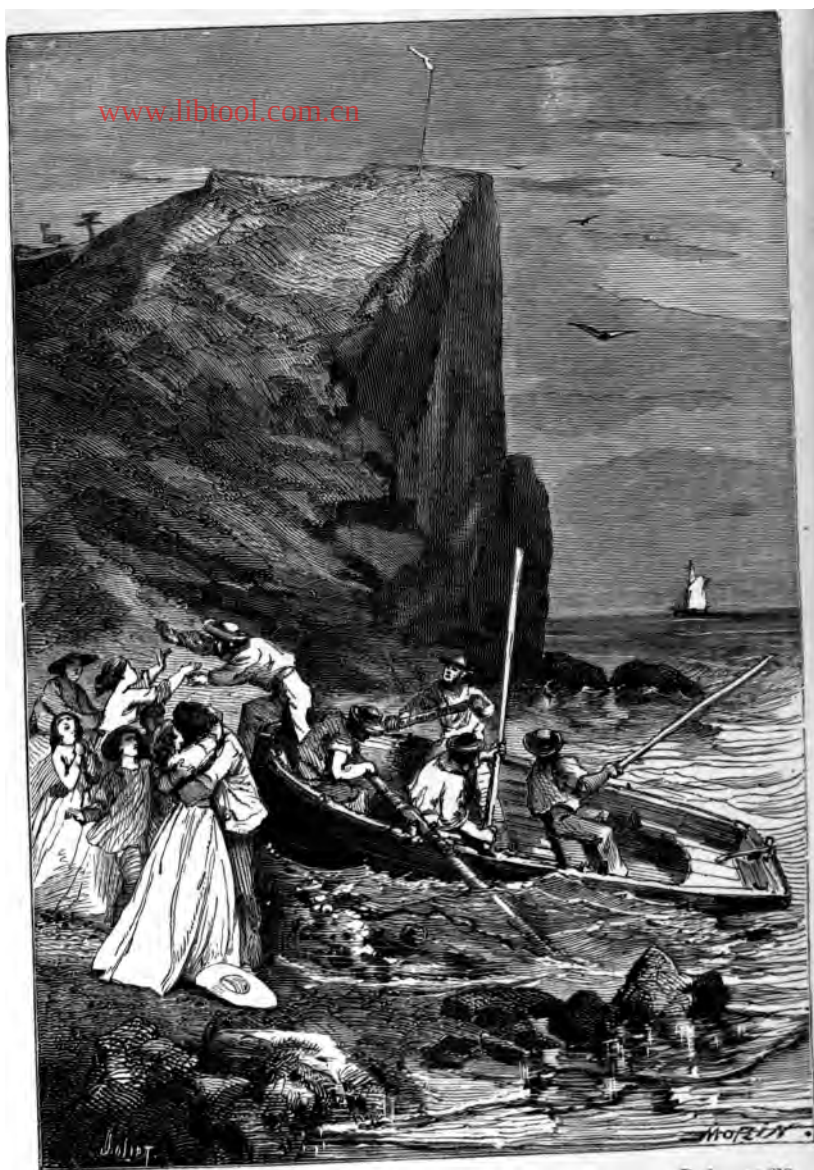
"It is my uncle!" cried Fortuné, "and by his side is Père Caillaud."

"And Firmin, where is my poor Firmin?" sobbed Suzette.

"Wait a minute," said Victor; "behind that sailor there is a tall man whose face I cannot see, perhaps—"

"Yes, it is Firmin!" cried Suzette; "there he is, getting up!"

www.libtool.com.cn



To face page 213.

THE HAPPY MEETING.

www.libtool.com.cn

www.libtool.com.cn

"Oh, Madame," said Suzette, throwing herself into Mme. Pearson's arms, "thank God they are alive!"

"Oh God of goodness and mercy!" exclaimed Mme. Pearson, kneeling down, "bid me not to relinquish the hope of the last few minutes, for I feel it would be death to me to give it up now!"

"Let us pray to God," said Suzette, kneeling down by Mme. Pearson; "I am sure He would not offer us such great happiness for one moment only, and then withdraw it again."

"I see them all distinctly now," said Victor; "but where is my poor Jean? I don't see him!"

"Nor I either," said Fanny, her voice choked with tears.

"He may have remained on board," said Mme. Pearson, affectionately pressing her daughter's hand; "as Landry is there, Jean must be there too—he may be one of the four rowers, for he was always ready to make himself useful; poor Jean! you have good eyes, Fortuné, look again."

"No aunt, he is not there, and the boat is so near now that we can see every one distinctly. Look, my uncle has just got up and is waving his hat, and Firmin is waving his too."

"God be praised," ejaculated Suzette; "if poor Jean were but here we should be perfectly happy."

The long boat was now so near to the shore that two or three more strokes of the oars would land them.

Who could describe the ensuing scene? how smiles and tears were mingled; even the English sailors were so much affected at this meeting that tears coursed down their weather-beaten cheeks.

"Where is Jean?" asked Victor, welcoming Landry affectionately. But Landry was silent, and looked confused.

"Yes, where is he!" repeated Mme. Pearson; "what has become of our brave and faithful friend? Ah, my dear," continued

she, speaking to M. Pearson, "if you only knew half his devotion to us all, and what a brave, noble heart his was."

"Alas!" said M. Pearson, "poor Landry is afraid to avow the sad truth. You will never see poor Jean again on earth, my children."

"Have the savages taken him prisoner?" asked Maria.

"He is dead!" exclaimed Victor, who read the terrible truth in his father's sorrowful face.

"God has taken him," said M. Pearson, wiping away the tears which rushed unhidden down his face; "he was killed in an encounter with the savages, and Landry closed his eyes."

Mme. Pearson instinctively took hold of Fanny's arm, and, feeling how the poor girl trembled, made her sit down on the rocks, where she soon lost all consciousness. But Victor and Fortuné were so busy questioning Landry that they did not remark that Fanny had fainted. Suzette and Mme. Pearson, however, succeeded at last in restoring her. Meantime Landry had related all the details of Jean's pretended death.

What he stated was, of course, nothing but a tissue of falsehoods. Landry had always detested Jean, for he could neither forgive him for his superiority, nor for the affectionate regard which he had inspired in the Pearson family. Since the day they were taken prisoners by the savages, and the misfortunes Landry had met with there, his dislike had grown into positive hatred. Therefore he had been silent at Port Natal respecting Jean's captivity, instead of giving the authorities there the necessary information to enable them to send people in search of him.

When Landry saw M. Pearson, the worthy merchant immediately made inquiries after Jean, and, as Landry could think of no other way of concealing his infamous abandonment of his comrade, he pretended that Jean had been killed in an encounter with the savages. By dint of repeating this story, and pondering it over in

his mind day and night, he had contrived to give it a colour of probability. No one could have supposed him capable of such a dastardly act, so they gave easy credence to his narration. Besides, this recital only confirmed the fears of Victor and Fortuné on finding the skeletons. The boys had no doubt now that one of them had been all that remained of their noble and faithful friend. Every one mourned his loss, and their sorrow for his death was a bitter drop in the cup of joy they were tasting.

Landry was still talking of his adventures with the savages and poor Jean's untimely end, when they came in sight of Providence. The sailors would not leave the long boat, for they distrusted the appearance of the weather; so Landry carried them down some provisions from Providence.

Meantime M. Pearson related how he had escaped on the night of the wreck, and how, when Landry reached Natal, he had found out where his family were.

On the night of that awful storm, after the long boat went off with Mme. Pearson, Suzette, and the children, it was naturally thought on board that, as the boat did not return, it must have sunk before they were able to reach the shore. So the captain made the passengers get into the cutter (their last remaining hope of safety), and the brave sailors awaited on the wreck the death which they could not escape. They attempted to construct a raft, but the waves swallowed them up on the bulk of the unmasted ship, before they had time to complete it.

The ship's timbers were crushed into a thousand atoms, several of the sailors tried to save themselves by swimming, but not one reached the shore. The cutter was drifted by the ebbing tide out to sea; after a fortnight of great danger, and inconceivable anguish and suspense, the little skiff was hailed by a ship bound for Ceylon, and the poor, starving, miserable people, were welcomed on board.

As soon as M. Pearson had arranged his affairs at Ceylon, and set on foot the most important works, he left everything under the management of Firmin and Père Caillaud, and set out for the Cape of Good Hope, where he thought he might find some trace of his family if they had really escaped. For though there was but the vague chance of their having landed, the disconsolate father clung to this last ray of hope. When he reached the Cape, he sent emissaries out in all directions, and promised large rewards to any one who would bring him tidings of his missing family.

But Providence was situated so far from any part of the coast known to Europeans, that no one had ever heard of its inhabitants. Neither travellers nor ships ever passed near it; and repeated failures served only to confirm M. Pearson's worst fears, so that at last he was compelled to leave the Cape, feeling broken-hearted. Yet before he set sail again for Ceylon, he obtained a promise from the French consul at the Cape to continue the inquiries, and to send him any tidings he might obtain.

The news of Landry's arrival at Port Natal, and the account he gave of the Pearson family, reached the ears of some people who were acquainted with the Government instructions respecting the shipwrecked family. These people furnished Landry with the means of reaching the Cape, and, as soon as he arrived there, the French consul forwarded the information to M. Pearson.

The worthy merchant was overjoyed at these happy tidings; he had already realized a large fortune, so he sold his establishment to an American, and, taking his French workmen with him, set sail in the first ship bound for the Cape. There he found Landry, and hastened to charter a small vessel and go in search of his long-lost family.

The captain whom he engaged knew the coast very well, and, guided by Landry's instructions, he had no difficulty in finding the Bay where the *Julie* had been wrecked. But these parts of the

African coast, bristling with reefs and ploughed by rapid currents, are too dangerous to admit of a ship's making a long sojourn near the shore. The captain explained this to M. Pearson, and warned him that, on the slightest sign of danger, they must at once put out to sea.

It had been agreed to fire the cannon three times as a signal for the cutter to return. The sailors were not afraid of a tempest if well out at sea, but a storm was truly alarming on a dangerous coast, without any harbour of refuge near.



CHAPTER XXXII.

HASTY FAREWELL TO PROVIDENCE—GENERAL REGRET—POOR JEAN—RETURN
TO FRANCE—FAMILY DETAILS—PROJECTED MARRIAGES—FANNY'S GRIEF—
FANNY AND FORTUNÉ—VICTOR AND MARIA.

M. PEARSON and his companions had hardly been two hours at Providence before a cannon was fired three times, and as it boomed out the last time, a sailor ran up to the house quite out of breath. "Sir," said he, "it looks very black over yonder, there's a storm brewing—you heard the captain's signal, we've no time to lose, for if a storm overtook us on this horrible coast, we should all be lost to a certainty. From what the old pilot at Natal told me, we have been very lucky to reach the shore at all without accident. The

tide is in our favour now, and, if we set out at once, we shall have time to reach the sloop before the tide turns."

"The man is quite right, my children," said M. Pearson ; "the joy of seeing you all again made me forget the captain's warning. Come, let us go at once."

Though they had all so ardently desired to leave Providence, the hasty announcement struck consternation into the children's hearts, and even the women were sad at the thought of leaving their beautiful, peaceful Providence so hastily. This land, which had sustained them all for such a length of time, seemed to deserve a longer and more tender farewell. Besides, the children wanted to take Bobèche, Séraphin, Fanchon, and all their other pets away with them ; and each of the young people had some specially cherished object which he or she did not like to leave behind.

But both time and space were wanting, for the sloop was barely large enough to contain all the passengers. So, hurried by M. Pearson and the sailor, the children rushed about in all directions, looking at everything for the last time, and weeping bitterly.

They kissed Fanchon, Bobèche, and Séraphin, and the poor animals really appeared to understand that they were to be abandoned, and by their many affectionate looks, to ask why their young friends showered so many caresses on them.

The sailor was now joined by another of the men from the cutter ; "we must be off," said they, "there's not a moment to lose. In an hour's time the tide will be against us, and then we should have but a poor chance of reaching the ship, and at all events we should be four times as long in doing it, so for Heaven's sake make haste, ladies."

"Would it not be better, father," said Victor, "to let the vessel go away with the sailors now, and return for us in the course of a few days?"

"No, my boy, that is not possible, for when the south-easterly

winds set in at this time of year, the wind blows constantly from the same quarter, and the coast is so dangerous, that no ship would dare to approach it. From what we were told at Natal, we ought to consider ourselves very fortunate in having been able to land at all at this season of the year. I quite understand and share your wish to remain here a little longer, but in questions of life and death, all secondary considerations must be set aside. Therefore, I entreat you to come at once."

Hesitation was no longer possible, so M. Pearson drew his wife's arm through his, Firmin followed with Suzette, and Caillaud carried a few hastily made-up parcels. Thus they set off towards the shore, urging on the weeping children, who looked back every moment at the little home which had been created by their own industry. Fanchon, Bobèche, and Séraphin were astonished at the sight of so many strange faces, and at their friends' tears, and slowly followed the procession. From time to time the animals would butt their heads against the children's shoulders, and Séraphin followed Fanny closely, while the poor girl wept as she looked at him.

Perched on Victor's shoulder, M. Popincourt held on fast by his collar, as if to say that he at all events would follow his master wherever he went. He was not very heavy, so he was admitted on board, and we must mention that his old playmate, poor little Beppo, had died the year before of old age.

Every one was touched by the air of desolation about the animals as the boat pushed off. When the craft was far out to sea, they could still hear the plaintive bellowings of Fanchon and Bobèche.

"Poor Séraphin," sobbed Fanny; "how fond Jean was of him,"

"Poor Fanchon, too," said Maria,

"And who would have thought that Bobèche would be sorry to part with us?" cried Victor,

"What will become of them all?" cried Fanny.

"God will take care of them," said M. Pearson; "they have plenty of food near them and can do very well without you. No doubt they will miss you, and I wish we could have taken the poor creatures with us, but you must see yourselves how impossible it was to do so."

"I wish we could have taken the house and garden, too," said Victor sadly; "and ah, father, how horrible it is to think that we leave Jean's remains in the land where, by his brave example, he did so much for us all."

"It is horrible, indeed," murmured Fanny.

Seeing how sorrowful she was, Maria kissed her affectionately, saying, "Dear Fanny, we will talk of Jean every day."

"We must not murmur at God's will," exclaimed M. Pearson; "we ought rather to thank him for having brought us together again so miraculously."

As soon as they got on board, they found that the captain had been quite right to recall them; for there was barely time to hoist the sails and get clear of the reefs before a violent hurricane arose. The storm did not abate for five or six hours; but after that time they were able to resume their voyage to the Cape. A few days afterwards they sighted Table Mountain, and soon landed at Capetown. A month after arriving at the Cape, they set sail for Havre. But before leaving Africa, M. Pearson fulfilled a promise he had made to the young people, and described the position of Providence to an Irish family, who were desirous of emigrating.

Various circumstances, which it would take too long to relate here, prevented their settling at Providence, and it was still deserted until some Germans arrived there about three years after the Pearsons left it. This German family came from Port Natal, and their little colony is becoming daily more numerous and

important, so that we hope it will soon figure on the maps of the district.

Not to tire our readers with too many details, we silently pass over all the business M. Pearson had to arrange on his arrival in Paris, remarking only that he purchased the old manufactory of the shareholders, and superintended the working of it himself.

Victor became his father's secretary, and supplied his place whenever he was absent. The pale, delicate, lame child, by his residence at Providence, had become a robust man; his forehead was large, and beamed with intelligence; there was a touch of his father's firmness, accompanied by an expression of great benevolence in his face, and he had occasionally a look of almost feminine gentleness.

As for Fortuné, he nominally worked at his uncle's counting-house; but, in point of fact, he spent his time in amusing himself. He frequented cafés and theatres, and bore but a slight resemblance to the Fortuné of Providence; he wore long bushy whiskers, and an eye-glass stuck in one eye, while his dress was always, as people say, of "to-morrow's" fashion.

Fortuné's foppishness caused his family much sorrow; and, in the hope that a good wife would steady him, some of his relations wished him to marry his cousin Fanny. M. Pearson was so dissatisfied with his nephew's conduct and character that he would not consent to this project for some time. Fanny, though in a different way, gave her friends much cause for uneasiness; nothing seemed to rouse her from a state of settled melancholy. Her parents had hoped that her home cares and duties would have dissipated her grief; but alas, her cheerfulness did not return. When asked to marry Fortuné, she requested that a year might be granted to her to reflect on the subject.

To the great astonishment of her family she seemed to take more pleasure in talking to Landry than to any one else. But their

conversation always related to the famous expedition he had undertaken with Jean. Landry did his best to avoid this subject, for it always brought his wicked conduct painfully to his recollection ; but Fanny was insatiable in her curiosity, and always returned to the details of their being made prisoners, and of Jean's death, with renewed interest.

Victor's marriage with his young cousin Maria was quite settled, and all but the day was fixed ; they were both so amiable that they bid fair to be one of the happiest couples in the world.

Suzette was nominally Mme. Pearson's confidential servant, but was treated quite like one of the family, for they could never forget her devotion to them all at Providence.

Firmin was foreman of the manufactory, and directed the affairs there with great ability.

Both Père Caillaud and Landry occupied important posts in the factory. Père Caillaud had at last abandoned his unfortunate propensities, but his health was so much deteriorated by his former excesses that he was unable to apply himself to anything assiduously. M. Pearson kept him on at the manufactory that he might have an excuse for paying him a salary which he would otherwise have been too proud to accept ; and, unknown to the old man, Fanny and Victor doubled the sum. The old man's opinion was often very valuable to M. Pearson, and the workmen were very fond of him, and always consulted him if they got into any difficulty. Fanny watched over the old man with kind and special care, for she looked on him almost in the light of Jean's father. She showed him so much affectionate thoughtfulness that the old man did not know how to be grateful enough to her.

When old Père Caillaud spoke to Suzette about Fanny, she would answer, "Ah, they may think as they please, but she will never forget ——."

"You mean about Jean's death ?" the old man would rejoin.

"Yes; she is always talking to me about him; she was so fond of him, poor fellow. Oh, if it had been M. Fortuné instead of him! In spite of our young master's grand tangled whiskers and magnificent long hair, what a pity it was he did not die amongst the savages instead of poor Jean!"

"We should not wish any one harm," said Père Caillaud. "Fortuné is thought of for Mme. Fanny because he is on the spot; but, if Jean were alive, he would soon be set on one side."

Suzette went away weeping, and Père Caillaud took a long pinch of snuff, saying mysteriously, "How could our poor Jean have perished in a squabble, out of which that fellow Landry managed to escape alive?"



CHAPTER XXXIII.

THIRD ANNIVERSARY—PREPARATION FOR THE GRAND DINNER—FATHER CAILLAUD
IS LATE—AN UNEXPECTED GUEST—A FRIEND'S RETURN.

EVERY year M. Pearson celebrated the anniversary of the day on which he had found his family by giving a dinner at his country house. Firmin, Caillaud, Landry, and all who had taken part in the unfortunate expedition of the *Julie*, were naturally guests at this fête.

The sun rose gloriously on the morning of the third of these anniversaries. Fanny and Victor had entreated Mme. Pearson to allow

the dinner to be served in an arbour which the young people had constructed after a plan of Jean's.

"Let us arrange everything as we used to do for our evenings at Providence," said Maria, who was helping Fanny to place the fruit in the baskets.

A tear glistened in Fanny's eye, and, hastily arranging the fruit she had in her hand, she rushed upstairs to her room, Victor and Maria looking sorrowfully after her. In about a quarter of an hour she came down again, but her eyes were very red.

With the exception of Père Caillaud, the guests were soon assembled ; they waited for him some little time, but at last M. Pearson said impatiently, "Can he have given way to his old propensity ?"

"He is getting aged, and walks slowly now, father," Fanny quickly replied.

"Well, then," said Fortuné contemptuously, and as if it were a fine thing to be ill-natured, "he might have come by the railway omnibus."

"It may have been full," continued Fanny.

"Mademoiselle Fanny always stands up for the old drunkard," observed Landry.

"I never abandon my friends," replied Fanny, with evident emotion. It was now agreed to wait no longer for the old man, but to sit down to dinner.

At last Père Caillaud made his appearance, excusing himself for his want of punctuality by saying, as Fanny had imagined to be the case, that the omnibus was full. The old man, however, seemed quite odd in his manner, though at the same time so very merry, that M. Pearson suspected he must have stopped at some wine shop on his way. But it soon became evident that this could not have been the case.

When the soup was removed, an uninvited guest slipped in, at first unperceived. It was an old dog, which walked slowly, and

its dim eyes and rusty coat revealed its age and long service. The dog looked around, as if making a selection, and then walked demurely up to Fanny, and laid its head on her knees; she happened to have one hand in her lap, and this the dog took affectionately into its mouth. Mdlle. Pearson gave a start of surprise, quickly succeeded by an ill-concealed gesture of pleasure. "Why, it is Mirza!" exclaimed she, in a voice which made every one tremble.

"What an absurd idea!" ejaculated Landry, becoming as white as a sheet.

"I am quite sure it is Mirza!" exclaimed Fanny; "look at this spot in the middle of her forehead."

"The dog is certainly something like Mirza, but what of that?" said Landry.

"It is not a dog like Mirza," continued Fanny, "it is Mirza herself; for there is not another dog in the world who could take my whole hand into her mouth without hurting me, as Mirza used so often to do at Providence. Mirza, Mirza, poor Mirza—see how she remembers my voice. But how in the world did she get here?" and kneeling down, Fanny began kissing the old dog.

Mirza was very proud of being remembered, and uttered little cries expressive of dog-pleasure; cries which were redoubled when Victor and Maria came up also to caress her.

There could be no doubt that it was Mirza herself, and she sniffed about all her old friends, and jumped round Mme. Pearson and Suzette.

She recognised Landry also, but in a very different way; he had often beaten her and treated her unkindly, and she did not now forget to show him her teeth and bark at him.

The dog's unexpected and inexplicable presence gave rise to a cross fire of questions and conjectures. "How on earth did the dog get here?" they all exclaimed to each other.

Père Caillaud was the only silent one of the party ; but, though he said nothing, he smiled mysteriously. "Well, Landry," said the old workman at last, "you seem no better pleased to see Mirza than she does to see you ?"

M. Pearson had not yet spoken, but he had been watching Landry very attentively. Mirza's inexplicable return had given him food for deep reflection. At last M. Pearson exclaimed, "For a moment after Mirza's appearance, I almost thought she would have been followed by poor Jean ; if Landry had not assured me, not only that he was dead, but that he himself helped to bury him, Mirza's presence would really have given me some hope of seeing her master."

The palpitations of Fanny's heart might almost have been heard whilst her father spoke of the hope Mirza's return had awakened in his mind, as it certainly had done in hers.

"Are you quite sure, Landry, that Jean had ceased to breathe before you abandoned him ?" said Suzette.

"Certainly ; otherwise I should never have left him," replied Landry, trying to steady his trembling voice, and to brave out his cruel falsehood.

"I should wish to think you incapable of such a dastardly action," observed M. Pearson.

Each of the party now resumed his place at table, and the dinner, as well as the conjectures respecting Mirza's return, were resumed. The servants were questioned, but they looked confused, and seemed to think it quite extraordinary how the dog could have got into the garden.

Fanny kept the dear Mirza by her side, and struggled bravely to repress the tears which seemed ready to choke her. But her swollen eyes betrayed her emotions, and Mme. Pearson and Suzette exchanged many sympathising looks.

"My friends," said Victor, "let our first glass of wine be drunk

to poor Jean's memory, it is the only testimony of our friendship we can offer him now ; you all knew him, and knew how noble he was, how loyal, how constant and devoted to his friends, how—"

But poor Victor was unable to finish his sentence, tears choked his voice, and it was only between sobs that he was able to ejaculate

"To the memory of Jean Belin."

"To his long life, rather," said Père Caillaud, rising with a bound, as if suddenly restored to youth and vigour.

"Ah well," continued he, "I have done the mischief ; I was not to have revealed his secret, yet—but I could not help it—it choked me—our friend Jean is there—he is alive—and in this house ; but he wished his arrival to remain secret till he could see M. and Mme. Pearson alone. It was Mirza who betrayed him. He thought you had all forgotten him ; but, if he could have been present now, he would soon have found out his mistake. Jean Belin's health !" he repeated ; and, as if forgetting his age and infirmity, the old man sprang about in a way which must have ended in a fall, if Firmin had not been on the alert to catch him.

Victor was the first to seek out Jean ; and—who could believe it ?—Fanny was the last to welcome him. Poor child ! for some minutes she had been like one chained to her seat. Who shall describe all she felt, when the devoted friend and playmate of her childhood, fulfilling all the promise of his boyhood, stood before her a distinguished-looking man ? Distinguished, and yet wholly unaffected and simple in his manners, was Jean Belin still. How did she feel when he tenderly pressed her hand and imprinted a respectful kiss on her forehead ?

Jean was taken out in triumph to the garden, where questions and answers, and warm congratulations, were showered upon him.

The conversation, as you may suppose, was broken by tears and

smiles. At last, Suzette exclaimed, "I don't see that Jean's resurrection is any reason for letting our dinner grow cold, and it does not seem to me that to die of hunger on the day of his return would be a good way of proving our joy at having him amongst us again."

"Let us begin our dinner, then," said M. Pearson.

"Come and sit by me, Jean," said Victor, making room for him, not however between himself and Maria.

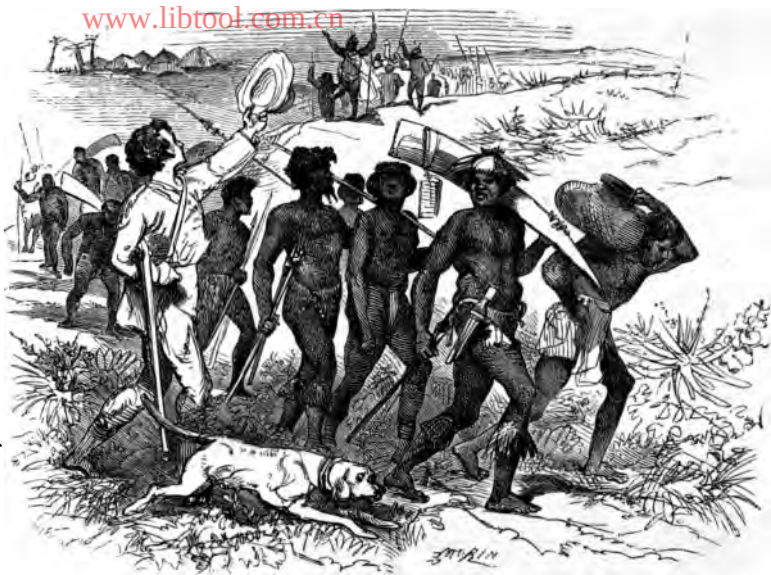
"What," said Suzette, "two gentlemen together; that will never do; I think he had better sit on this side;" and she placed a knife and fork for him next Fanny, who shrank away from Landry without even an effort to conceal her disgust.

"But, Suzette, why do you move me away from Mdlla. Fanny?" said Landry, trying to regain his composure.

"Why?" replied Suzette; "why, because the joy you feel at the return of the friend you buried has so completely upset you that you would be a dismal neighbour for Mdlla. Fanny. Do look at yourself in the glass, you are quite sallow with the surprise." Landry certainly looked anything but joyous.

Jean had made up his mind not to reveal the full amount of Landry's treachery, but he was not so hypocritical as to greet him warmly.

Landry was so embarrassed, that, though they did not know the facts, every one suspected he had acted badly. When the dessert was put upon the table, and the servants had retired, they insisted on Jean's relating his adventures, and how he reached France.



CHAPTER XXXIV.

JEAN'S RECITAL—BATTLE AMONG THE CAFFRES—RETURN TO FRANCE—LANDRY'S
DUTY—THE RIVALS—THE TWO MARRIAGES—THE CONCLUSION.

"WHILST Landry thought me dead" (a smile here crossed his face), "I was living amongst the savages. I was able to render them many services, and rose higher and higher in their king's estimation. He overwhelmed me with presents, and in every way in his power sought to lighten my captivity. But all the presents and favours in the world could not make me forget my lonely position, or prevent me from thinking about my native land, the Providence I had left, and all my dear friends. I grew

more and more melancholy ; one thought was ever present to my mind, which was—to make my escape, even at the risk of dying of hunger and thirst in some unexplored forest.

“Mirza was the only friend I had left, and I had no pleasure but that of hunting with her. This violent and perilous exercise suited the mental misery in which I lived, and sometimes withdrew me for a few minutes from my sad thoughts.

“One day I set out on one of these expeditions in company with twenty of Isébalé’s men. In my absence, the king’s camp was attacked by a tribe of Batongas, who gained a complete victory over the Bosjesmans.

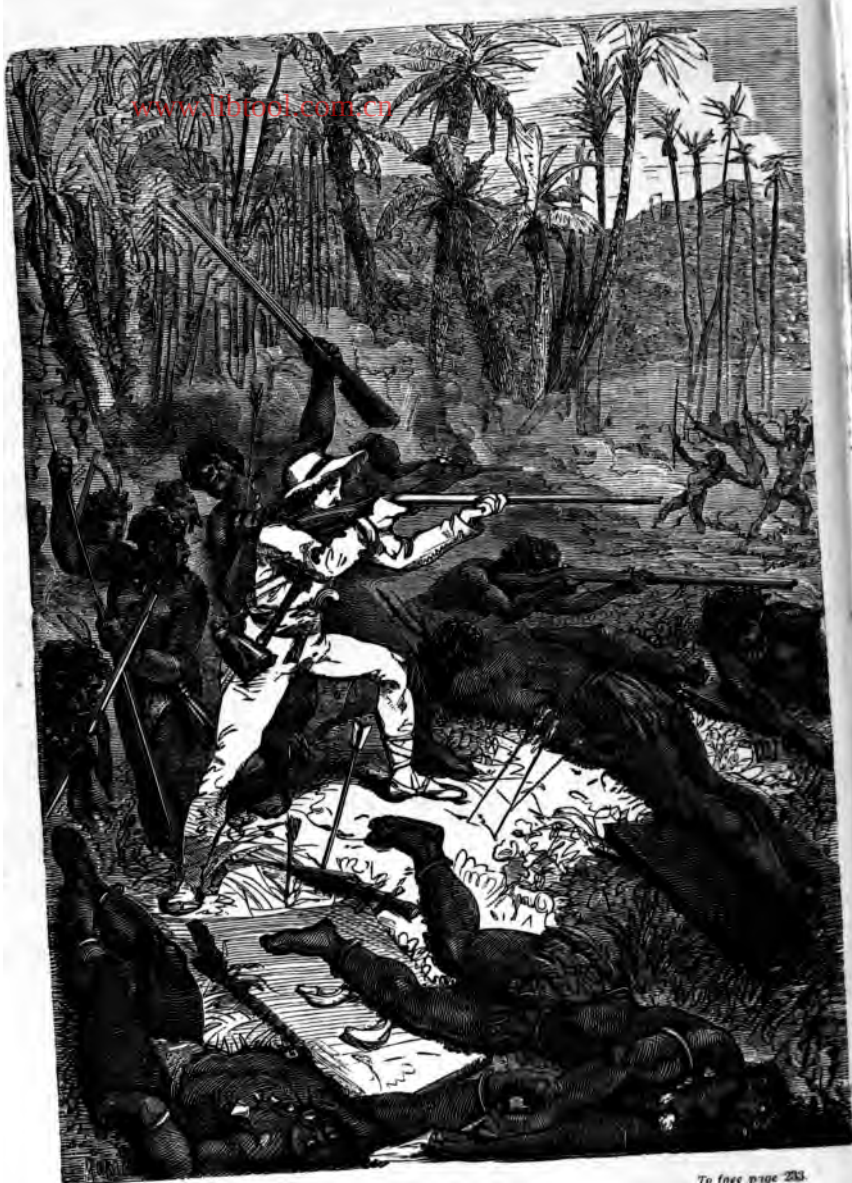
“Isébalé’s people retired into a sort of encampment fortified by palisades and earthworks, and which these savages used as a retreat in war time. The Batongas were much more numerous than their enemies, so they surrounded this entrenchment.

“Isébalé sent several messengers after me, and at last one of these succeeded in finding me, and took me, by a path unknown to all but himself, to my friend’s retreat. In spite of the Batongas’ strict watch, I succeeded in penetrating into the entrenchment. The king and his small garrison were in utter consternation. Besides being more numerous, the Batongas were better armed than my friends. Five or six of them had guns, but fortunately they had no ammunition, so their firearms were only for show. But Isébalé was ignorant of this fact, and was terrified beyond expression, as his men had only their arrows and javelins.

“Isébalé explained his exact condition to me, and told me that he had only two days’ provisions remaining. A Batonga, whom the Bosjesmans had taken prisoner, told us reinforcements had been sent for, and that his people had sworn to destroy Isébalé’s tribe to the last man.

“‘No one but you can save us, Jean,’ said the king. ‘Ex-

www.libtool.com.cn



To face page 23.

BATTLE AMONG THE CAFFRES.

www.libtool.com.cn

www.libtool.com.cn

tricate me from this difficulty, and I will grant anything you like to ask me.'

"'Even my freedom?' said I.

"'Do you wish, then, to leave me, you ungrateful fellow?' rejoined the king. 'Ah! if you would but marry my daughter, you should succeed to my kingdom.'

"'I wish for nothing but my liberty,' I replied; 'swear to grant me this, and I will save you and your people.'

"'Well, then, if it must be so, I swear,' said the king.

"I made him repeat his oath, with all the formalities usual amongst savages; and then I began to reflect how I should save these Bosjesmans, in whom I felt a sincere interest.

"First, I selected twenty of the most intelligent of the savages, and one dark night made a sortie with them, and succeeded in obtaining five or six guns. I had sufficient ammunition by me for about two hundred shots. With my seven guns I should, therefore, be able to strike terror into the enemy's camp. Towards the middle of the day, the Batongas again assailed us with arrows and javelins; and at first they had an advantage over us. Our guns, however, soon told on them.

"I took advantage of all the Batongas charging us simultaneously, to fire several successive charges; and the firearms took such an effect, that between twenty and thirty of our enemies were soon stretched dead at our feet. Amongst the slain lay their chief. Superstitious, as all savages are, they were seized with a sudden panic; and, on seeing their king fall, they lost all presence of mind, and fled in every direction. Two more discharges completed their defeat. Isébalé made more than fifty prisoners, whom they would have sacrificed with savage torture had I not succeeded in obtaining their pardon.

"I need not describe Isébalé's joy and gratitude. He faithfully kept his promise, and set me free. Moroever, he loaded me

with presents, and had me escorted to Natal by a party of his subjects. Some of these very savages had already conducted Landry ; and, as my death had been announced, the English authorities took me at first for an impostor. But truth has always an unmistakeable accent, and their doubts vanished before my explanations.

"The presents of Isébalé were very valuable, and I disposed of them as quickly and as advantageously as I could at Port Natal. Hearing how you had all returned to France, the foreign land became unendurable to me ; it seemed to burn my feet ; and I believe I would almost have sacrificed my whole fortune to avoid a week's delay. I took a passage in the first ship bound for Europe ; and you see—thanks be to God !—here I am, dear friends, at last !"

"Let us drink Jean Belin's health," said Père Caillaud, holding out his glass, which Suzette filled, but with a gentle hint to be moderate.

"Long live my dear friend Jean !" repeated Victor.

And every one congratulated our hero anew.

The evening passed swiftly and merrily to every one except Landry ; but, perhaps, Fortuné felt a shade of sorrow across his joy, for he saw, with no small amount of jealousy, Fanny's silent but significant happiness.

It was in vain that Jean tried to spare his perfidious companion ; the traitor was found out, and every one looked coldly on the young foreman. His position in the factory became henceforth intolerable to him, and he soon expressed a wish to leave M. Pearson's service.

M. Pearson could never forget that it was through Landry's instrumentality that he had discovered his family, and he gave him a pension for life, that he might never come to want. But the Pearson family had nothing more to do with this unworthy young man.

Though Fortuné wished to marry his cousin Fanny, and really loved her as much as such a selfish creature could love any one, he continued to lead an idle and dissipated life. One day he heard that Jean had had an interview with his uncle and asked for Fanny's hand. Incensed at this intelligence, which he listened to with a satirical smile, Fortuné hastened to M. Pearson's office. He found his uncle engaged in friendly conversation with Jean, whose hand he was holding, the other hand being clasped at the same moment by Victor.

Disconcerted by the appearance of the trio, Fortuné protested strongly against Fanny's marrying any one but himself.

"Wait a minute, my son," said M. Pearson to Victor, who, as in former years, was on the point of defending his friend Jean. "So you think, Fortuné, that you have a better claim to Fanny's hand than Jean has? Explain yourself, and we shall hear whose claim is the best."

"In the first place, I love her," exclaimed Fortuné.

"And do you suppose that I don't love her?" said Jean.

"What have you each done to prove your love for her? Come, let me hear what you have to say for yourselves: you speak first, Fortuné," said M. Pearson.

"Well, uncle, I—I—"

"Shall I tell you? Whilst you were at Providence, Jean risked his life more than twenty times for her, for my wife and my son, for your sister, and even for you yourself. It was Jean who, at the peril of his life, undertook the expedition to the success of which you all owe the happiness of being in France at this moment; and it was Jean, again, who passed through captivity and every sort of trial for the sake of his friends. But you, on the contrary, have not even had the courage to conquer your indolence, and abandon, for Fanny's sake, the dissipated life you have led since your return to France, even though you knew that your idleness and love of

pleasure have made me hesitate to give my consent to your marriage with my child. There is one point settled : now we will pass on to the next—”

“I will reform, uncle,” said Fortuné ; “and besides, you know I am rich.”

“You have one hundred and twenty thousand francs.”

“Well, you see then, uncle, and Jean has nothing—”

“You are mistaken there, my boy ; besides his excellent qualities, which are riches in themselves, Jean has about double that sum !”

“He ?” said Fortuné.

“Yes, there is no denying the fact ; with some of the money which the sale of the elephants’ teeth, which Isébalé gave him, brought him, Jean bought a cargo of valuable woods, which he has resold at Havre, and he has at this moment a fortune of more than two hundred thousand francs.”

“But, uncle,” said Fortuné, stunned by this unexpected news, and indignant at being thus beaten on all points, “Jean is a man of low family. His father was—”

“Fortuné !” exclaimed Victor.

“Silence !” cried M. Pearson. “Jean’s father was an honest carpenter, Fortuné, and it is most likely that he was as generous and brave as his son is, for he died of an injury sustained in trying to save some people at the time of a great fire. Your grandfather was a mason ; what difference, pray, do you see between these two trades ? But it is not worth while to argue this point, I only wished to prove to you how much you are accustomed to overrate your own advantages and underrate those of other people. Jean is a brave, intelligent, active, and unselfish man, and his education is very superior to yours. Besides, more than all the rest, Fanny learned long ago to appreciate his good qualities ; she has loved him for a long time past, and she never promised to be your wife. For

my own part, I am very glad to have it in my power to show Jean how grateful I am to him for the innumerable services he has rendered to us all; and also, I am delighted at the acquisition of such a desirable partner in my business, one who will help me in my affairs and live happily amongst us."

Fortuné took up his hat and walked away in a furious temper. He started almost immediately for England, and returned the following year with whiskers more voluminous, and a hat smaller than ever. All the workmen took him for a foreigner, and laughed at his eye-glass, his pompous walk, and his large collar. This success consoled him in some measure for Fanny's marriage, which, with that of Victor and Maria, had taken place during his absence.

Fortuné drew his money out of the manufactory, to speculate with it in the funds, and managed so ill that he lost it all, and had to live on an allowance made him by Jean and his brother-in-law.

Misfortunes, however, failed to correct his faults, for he continued as indolent as ever; but it opened his eyes a little, and he was not quite so self-sufficient as formerly.

He said to Fanny one day, in the presence of her husband, "You were right to marry Jean after all, for he is a better fellow than I am."

This sensible remark, though made rather late in the day, will be reckoned, it is to be hoped, in his favour.

Father Caillaud became the bailiff at M. Pearson's country seat. Thanks to Jean's liberality, he lives like a gentleman, and is fond of relating this story to any one whom he can find to listen to it.

www.libtool.com.cn

LONDON :
R. CLAY, SON, AND TAYLOR, PRINTERS,
BREAD STREET HILL.

MESSRS. BELL AND DALDY'S PUBLICATIONS.



HE Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe. By Daniel Defoe. With 100 Illustrations by E. H. Wehnert. Uniform with "Andersen's Tales." Small 8vo. Cloth, gilt edges, 7s. 6d.

Andersen's Tales for Children. Translated by A. Wehnert. With 105 Illustrations by E. H. Wehnert, W. Thomas, and others. Small 8vo. Cloth, gilt edges, 7s. 6d.

Among the Tartar Tents; or, the Lost Fathers. A Tale. By Anne Bowman, Author of "Esperanza," "The Boy Voyagers," &c. With Illustrations. Crown 8vo. 5s.

Katie; or, the Simple Heart. By D. Richmond, Author of "Annie Maitland." Illustrated by M. I. Booth. Crown 8vo. 6s.

Mildred's Last Night; or, the Franklyns. By the Author of "Aggesden Vicarage." Fcap. 8vo. 4s. 6d.

Glimpses into Petland. By the Rev. J. G. Wood, M.A. With a Frontispiece by Crane. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d.

Charades, Enigmas, and Riddles. Collected by a Cantab. Fourth Edition, enlarged. Illustrated. Fcap. 8vo. 2s. 6d.

Cavaliers and Roundheads. By J. G. Edgar, Author of "Sea Kings and Naval Heroes." Illustrated by Amy Butts. Fcap. 8vo. 5s.

Sea Kings and Naval Heroes. A Book for Boys. By J. G. Edgar. With Illustrations by C. K. Johnson and C. Keene. Fcap. 8vo. 5s.

Guessing Stories; or, the Surprising Adventures of the Man with the Extra Pair of Eyes. A Book for Young People. By a Country Parson. Imperial 16mo. Cloth, gilt edges, 3s.

Little Maggie and her Brother. By Mrs. G. Hooper, Author of "Recollections of Mrs. Anderson's School," "Arbell," &c. With a Frontispiece. Fcap. 8vo. 2s. 6d.

The Life of Christopher Columbus, in Short Words. By Sarah Crompton. Crown 8vo. 2s. 6d. Also an Edition for Schools, 1s.

The Life of Martin Luther, in Short Words. By the same Author. Crown 8vo. 1s. 6d. Stiff cover, 1s.

MESSRS. BELL AND DALDY'S PUBLICATIONS.



AUNT Judy's Tales. By Mrs. Gatty. Illustrated by Clara S. Lane. Fcap. 8vo. Third Edition. 3s. 6d.

Aunt Judy's Letters. By Mrs. Gatty. Illustrated by Clara S. Lane. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d.

Melchior's Dream, and other Tales. By J. H. G. Edited by Mrs. Gatty. Illustrated. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d.

The White Lady and Undine, translated from the German by the Hon. C. L. Lyttelton. With numerous Illustrations. Fcap. 8vo. 5s. Or, separately, 2s. 6d. each.

Karl and the Six Little Dwarfs. By Julia Goddard. Illustrated. 16mo. 2s. 6d.

Nursery Tales. By Mrs. Motherly. With Illustrations by C. S. Lane. Imperial 16mo. 2s. 6d. Coloured, gilt edges, 3s. 6d.

Nursery Poetry. By Mrs. Motherly. With Eight Illustrations by C. S. Lane. Imperial 16mo. 2s. 6d. Coloured, gilt edges, 3s. 6d.

Nursery Carols. Illustrated with 120 Pictures. By Ludwig Richter and Oscar Pletsch. Imperial 16mo. Ornamental Binding, 3s. 6d. Coloured, 6s.

Poetry for Play-Hours. By Gerda Fay. With Eight large Illustrations. Imperial 16mo. 3s. 6d. Coloured, gilt edges, 4s. 6d.

Very Little Tales for Very Little Children. In single Syllables of Four and Five Letters. New Edition. Illustrated. 2 vols. 16mo. 1s. 6d. each, or in 1 vol. 3s.

Progressive Tales for Little Children. In words of One and Two Syllables. Forming the sequel to "Very Little Tales." New Edition. Illustrated. 2 vols. 16mo. 1s. 6d. each, or in 1 vol. 3s.

A Poetry Book for Children. Illustrated with Thirty-seven highly-finished Engravings, by C. W. Cope, R.A., Helmsley, Palmer, Skill, Thomas, and H. Weir. New Edition. Crown 8vo. 2s. 6d.

www.libtool.com.cn

www.libtool.com.cn