

ДЖЕК ЛОНДОН

MICHAEL,
BROTHER OF
JERRY

Джек Лондон

Michael, Brother of Jerry

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Jack London

Michael, Brother of Jerry

FOREWORD

Very early in my life, possibly because of the insatiable curiosity that was born in me, I came to dislike the performances of trained animals. It was my curiosity that spoiled for me this form of amusement, for I was led to seek behind the performance in order to learn how the performance was achieved. And what I found behind the brave show and glitter of performance was not nice. It was a body of cruelty so horrible that I am confident no normal person exists who, once aware of it, could ever enjoy looking on at any trained-animal turn.

Now I am not a namby-pamby. By the book reviewers and the namby-pambys I am esteemed a sort of primitive beast that delights in the spilled blood of violence and horror. Without arguing this matter of my general reputation, accepting it at its current face value, let me add that I have indeed lived life in a very rough school and have seen more than the average man's share of inhumanity and cruelty, from the forecastle and the prison, the slum and the desert, the execution-chamber and the lazar-house, to the battlefield and the military hospital. I have seen horrible deaths and mutilations. I have seen imbeciles hanged, because, being imbeciles, they did not possess the hire of lawyers. I have seen the hearts and stamina of strong men broken, and I have seen other men, by ill-treatment, driven to permanent and howling madness. I have witnessed the deaths of old and young, and even infants, from sheer starvation. I have seen men and women beaten by whips and clubs and fists, and I have seen the rhinoceros-hide whips laid around the naked torsos of black boys so heartily that each stroke stripped away the skin in full circle. And yet, let me add finally, never have I been so appalled and shocked by the world's cruelty as have I been appalled and shocked in the midst of happy, laughing, and applauding audiences when trained-animal turns were being performed on the stage.

One with a strong stomach and a hard head may be able to tolerate much of the unconscious and undeliberate cruelty and torture of the world that is perpetrated in hot blood and stupidity. I have such a stomach and head. But what turns my head and makes my gorge rise, is the cold-blooded, conscious, deliberate cruelty and torment that is manifest behind ninety-nine of every hundred trained-animal turns. Cruelty, as a fine art, has attained its perfect flower in the trained-animal world.

Possessed myself of a strong stomach and a hard head, inured to hardship, cruelty, and brutality, nevertheless I found, as I came to manhood, that I unconsciously protected myself from the hurt of the trained-animal turn by getting up and leaving the theatre whenever such turns came on the stage. I say "unconsciously." By this I mean it never entered my mind that this was a programme by which the possible death-blow might be given to trained-animal turns. I was merely protecting myself from the pain of witnessing what it would hurt me to witness.

But of recent years my understanding of human nature has become such that I realize that no normal healthy human would tolerate such performances did he or she know the terrible cruelty that lies behind them and makes them possible. So I am emboldened to suggest, here and now, three things:

First, let all humans inform themselves of the inevitable and eternal cruelty by the means of which only can animals be compelled to perform before revenue-paying audiences. Second, I suggest that all men and women, and boys and girls, who have so acquainted themselves with the essentials of the fine art of animal-training, should become members of, and ally themselves with, the local and national organizations of humane societies and societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals.

And the third suggestion I cannot state until I have made a preamble. Like hundreds of thousands of others, I have worked in other fields, striving to organize the mass of mankind into movements for the purpose of ameliorating its own wretchedness and misery. Difficult as this is to

accomplish, it is still more difficult to persuade the human into any organised effort to alleviate the ill conditions of the lesser animals.

Practically all of us will weep red tears and sweat bloody sweats as we come to knowledge of the unavoidable cruelty and brutality on which the trained-animal world rests and has its being. But not one-tenth of one per cent. of us will join any organization for the prevention of cruelty to animals, and by our words and acts and contributions work to prevent the perpetration of cruelties on animals. This is a weakness of our own human nature. We must recognize it as we recognize heat and cold, the opaqueness of the non-transparent, and the everlasting down-pull of gravity.

And still for us, for the ninety-nine and nine-tenths per cent. of us, under the easy circumstance of our own weakness, remains another way most easily to express ourselves for the purpose of eliminating from the world the cruelty that is practised by some few of us, for the entertainment of the rest of us, on the trained animals, who, after all, are only lesser animals than we on the round world's surface. It is so easy. We will not have to think of dues or corresponding secretaries. We will not have to think of anything, save when, in any theatre or place of entertainment, a trained-animal turn is presented before us. Then, without premeditation, we may express our disapproval of such a turn by getting up from our seats and leaving the theatre for a promenade and a breath of fresh air outside, coming back, when the turn is over, to enjoy the rest of the programme. All we have to do is just that to eliminate the trained-animal turn from all public places of entertainment. Show the management that such turns are unpopular, and in a day, in an instant, the management will cease catering such turns to its audiences.

JACK LONDON

GLEN ELLEN, SONOMA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA,

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CHAPTER I

But Michael never sailed out of Tulagi, nigger-chaser on the *Eugénie*. Once in five weeks the steamer *Makambo* made Tulagi its port of call on the way from New Guinea and the Shortlands to Australia. And on the night of her belated arrival Captain Kellar forgot Michael on the beach. In itself, this was nothing, for, at midnight, Captain Kellar was back on the beach, himself climbing the high hill to the Commissioner's bungalow while the boat's crew vainly rummaged the landscape and canoe houses.

In fact, an hour earlier, as the *Makambo's* anchor was heaving out and while Captain Kellar was descending the port gang-plank, Michael was coming on board through a starboard port-hole. This was because Michael was inexperienced in the world, because he was expecting to meet Jerry on board this boat since the last he had seen of him was on a boat, and because he had made a friend.

Dag Daughtry was a steward on the *Makambo*, who should have known better and who would have known better and done better had he not been fascinated by his own particular and peculiar reputation. By luck of birth possessed of a genial but soft disposition and a splendid constitution, his reputation was that for twenty years he had never missed his day's work nor his six daily quarts of bottled beer, even, as he bragged, when in the German islands, where each bottle of beer carried ten grains of quinine in solution as a specific against malaria.

The captain of the *Makambo* (and, before that, the captains of the *Moresby*, the *Masena*, the *Sir Edward Grace*, and various others of the queerly named Burns Philp Company steamers had done the same) was used to pointing him out proudly to the passengers as a man-thing novel and unique in the annals of the sea. And at such times Dag Daughtry, below on the for'ard deck, feigning unawareness as he went about his work, would steal side-glances up at the bridge where the captain and his passengers stared down on him, and his breast would swell pridefully, because he knew that the captain was saying: "See him! that's Dag Daughtry, the human tank. Never's been drunk or sober in twenty years, and has never missed his six quarts of beer per diem. You wouldn't think it, to look at him, but I assure you it's so. I can't understand. Gets my admiration. Always does his time, his time-and-a-half and his double-time over time. Why, a single glass of beer would give me heartburn and spoil my next good meal. But he flourishes on it. Look at him! Look at him!"

And so, knowing his captain's speech, swollen with pride in his own prowess, Dag Daughtry would continue his ship-work with extra vigour and punish a seventh quart for the day in advertisement of his remarkable constitution. It was a queer sort of fame, as queer as some men are; and Dag Daughtry found in it his justification of existence.

Wherefore he devoted his energy and the soul of him to the maintenance of his reputation as a six-quart man. That was why he made, in odd moments of off-duty, turtle-shell combs and hair ornaments for profit, and was prettily crooked in such a matter as stealing another man's dog. Somebody had to pay for the six quarts, which, multiplied by thirty, amounted to a tidy sum in the course of the month; and, since that man was Dag Daughtry, he found it necessary to pass Michael inboard on the *Makambo* through a starboard port-hole.

On the beach, that night at Tulagi, vainly wondering what had become of the whaleboat, Michael had met the squat, thick, hair-grizzled ship's steward. The friendship between them was established almost instantly, for Michael, from a merry puppy, had matured into a merry dog. Far beyond Jerry, was he a sociable good fellow, and this, despite the fact that he had known very few white men. First, there had been Mister Haggin, Derby and Bob, of Meringe; next, Captain Kellar and Captain Kellar's mate of the *Eugénie*; and, finally, Harley Kennan and the officers of the *Ariel*. Without exception, he had found them all different, and delightfully different, from the hordes of blacks he had been taught to despise and to lord it over.

And Dag Daughtry had proved no exception from his first greeting of “Hello, you white man’s dog, what ’r’ you doin’ herein nigger country?” Michael had responded coyly with an assumption of dignified aloofness that was given the lie by the eager tilt of his ears and the good-humour that shone in his eyes. Nothing of this was missed by Dag Daughtry, who knew a dog when he saw one, as he studied Michael in the light of the lanterns held by black boys where the whaleboats were landing cargo.

Two estimates the steward quickly made of Michael: he was a likable dog, genial-natured on the face of it, and he was a valuable dog. Because of those estimates Dag Daughtry glanced about him quickly. No one was observing. For the moment, only blacks stood about, and their eyes were turned seaward where the sound of oars out of the darkness warned them to stand ready to receive the next cargo-laden boat. Off to the right, under another lantern, he could make out the Resident Commissioner’s clerk and the *Makambo*’s super-cargo heatedly discussing some error in the bill of lading.

The steward flung another quick glance over Michael and made up his mind. He turned away casually and strolled along the beach out of the circle of lantern light. A hundred yards away he sat down in the sand and waited.

“Worth twenty pounds if a penny,” he muttered to himself. “If I couldn’t get ten pounds for him, just like that, with a thank-you-ma’am, I’m a sucker that don’t know a terrier from a greyhound. – Sure, ten pounds, in any pub on Sydney beach.”

And ten pounds, metamorphosed into quart bottles of beer, reared an immense and radiant vision, very like a brewery, inside his head.

A scurry of feet in the sand, and low sniffings, stiffened him to alertness. It was as he had hoped. The dog had liked him from the start, and had followed him.

For Dag Daughtry had a way with him, as Michael was quickly to learn, when the man’s hand reached out and clutched him, half by the jowl, half by the slack of the neck under the ear. There was no threat in that reach, nothing tentative nor timorous. It was hearty, all-confident, and it produced confidence in Michael. It was roughness without hurt, assertion without threat, surety without seduction. To him it was the most natural thing in the world thus to be familiarly seized and shaken about by a total stranger, while a jovial voice muttered: “That’s right, dog. Stick around, stick around, and you’ll wear diamonds, maybe.”

Certainly, Michael had never met a man so immediately likable. Dag Daughtry knew, instinctively to be sure, how to get on with dogs. By nature there was no cruelty in him. He never exceeded in peremptoriness, nor in petting. He did not overbid for Michael’s friendliness. He did bid, but in a manner that conveyed no sense of bidding. Scarcely had he given Michael that introductory jowl-shake, when he released him and apparently forgot all about him.

He proceeded to light his pipe, using several matches as if the wind blew them out. But while they burned close up to his fingers, and while he made a simulation of prodigious puffing, his keen little blue eyes, under shaggy, grizzled brows, intently studied Michael. And Michael, ears cocked and eyes intent, gazed at this stranger who seemed never to have been a stranger at all.

If anything, it was disappointment Michael experienced, in that this delightful, two-legged god took no further notice of him. He even challenged him to closer acquaintance with an invitation to play, with an abrupt movement lifting his paws from the ground and striking them down, stretched out well before, his body bent down from the rump in such a curve that almost his chest touched the sand, his stump of a tail waving signals of good nature while he uttered a sharp, inviting bark. And the man was uninterested, pulling stolidly away at his pipe, in the darkness following upon the third match.

Never was there a more consummate love-making, with all the base intent of betrayal, than this cavalier seduction of Michael by the elderly, six-quart ship’s steward. When Michael, not entirely unwitting of the snub of the man’s lack of interest, stirred restlessly with a threat to depart, he had flung at him gruffly:

“Stick around, dog, stick around.”

Dag Daughtry chuckled to himself, as Michael, advancing, sniffed his trousers' legs long and earnestly. And the man took advantage of his nearness to study him some more, lighting his pipe and running over the dog's excellent lines.

“Some dog, some points,” he said aloud approvingly. “Say, dog, you could pull down ribbons like a candy-kid in any bench show anywheres. Only thing against you is that ear, and I could almost iron it out myself. A vet. could do it.”

Carelessly he dropped a hand to Michael's ear, and, with tips of fingers instinct with sensuous sympathy, began to manipulate the base of the ear where its roots bedded in the tightness of skin-stretch over the skull. And Michael liked it. Never had a man's hand been so intimate with his ear without hurting it. But these fingers were provocative only of physical pleasure so keen that he twisted and writhed his whole body in acknowledgment.

Next came a long, steady, upward pull of the ear, the ear slipping slowly through the fingers to the very tip of it while it tingled exquisitely down to its roots. Now to one ear, now to the other, this happened, and all the while the man uttered low words that Michael did not understand but which he accepted as addressed to him.

“Head all right, good 'n' flat,” Dag Daughtry murmured, first sliding his fingers over it, and then lighting a match. “An' no wrinkles, 'n' some jaw, good 'n' punishing, an' not a shade too full in the cheek or too empty.”

He ran his fingers inside Michael's mouth and noted the strength and evenness of the teeth, measured the breadth of shoulders and depth of chest, and picked up a foot. In the light of another match he examined all four feet.

“Black, all black, every nail of them,” said Daughtry, “an' as clean feet as ever a dog walked on, straight-out toes with the proper arch 'n' small 'n' not too small. I bet your daddy and your mother cantered away with the ribbons in their day.”

Michael was for growing restless at such searching examination, but Daughtry, in the midst of feeling out the lines and build of the thighs and hocks, paused and took Michael's tail in his magic fingers, exploring the muscles among which it rooted, pressing and prodding the adjacent spinal column from which it sprang, and twisting it about in a most daringly intimate way. And Michael was in an ecstasy, bracing his hindquarters to one side or the other against the caressing fingers. With open hands laid along his sides and partly under him, the man suddenly lifted him from the ground. But before he could feel alarm he was back on the ground again.

“Twenty-six or – seven – you're over twenty-five right now, I'll bet you on it, shillings to ha'pennies, and you'll make thirty when you get your full weight,” Dag Daughtry told him. “But what of it? Lots of the judges fancy the thirty-mark. An' you could always train off a few ounces. You're all dog n' all correct conformation. You've got the racing build and the fighting weight, an' there ain't no feathers on your legs.”

“No, sir, Mr. Dog, your weight's to the good, and that ear can be ironed out by any respectable dog – doctor. I bet there's a hundred men in Sydney right now that would fork over twenty quid for the right of calling you his.”

And then, just that Michael should not make the mistake of thinking he was being much made over, Daughtry leaned back, relighted his pipe, and apparently forgot his existence. Instead of bidding for good will, he was bent on making Michael do the bidding.

And Michael did, bumping his flanks against Daughtry's knee; nudging his head against Daughtry's hand, in solicitation for more of the blissful ear-rubbing and tail-twisting. Daughtry caught him by the jowl instead and slowly moved his head back and forth as he addressed him:

“What man's dog are you? Maybe you're a nigger's dog, an' that ain't right. Maybe some nigger's stole you, an' that'd be awful. Think of the cruel fates that sometimes happens to dogs. It's a damn shame. No white man's stand for a nigger ownin' the likes of you, an' here's one white man that ain't

goin' to stand for it. The idea! A nigger ownin' you an' not knowin' how to train you. Of course a nigger stole you. If I laid eyes on him right now I'd up and knock seven bells and the Saint Paul chimes out of 'm. Sure thing I would. Just show 'm to me, that's all, an' see what I'd do to him. The idea of you takin' orders from a nigger an' fetchin' 'n' carryin' for him! No, sir, dog, you ain't goin' to do it any more. You're comin' along of me, an' I reckon I won't have to urge you."

Dag Daughtry stood up and turned carelessly along the beach. Michael looked after him, but did not follow. He was eager to, but had received no invitation. At last Daughtry made a low kissing sound with his lips. So low was it that he scarcely heard it himself and almost took it on faith, or on the testimony of his lips rather than of his ears, that he had made it. No human being could have heard it across the distance to Michael; but Michael heard it, and sprang away after in a great delighted rush.

CHAPTER II

Dag Daughtry strolled along the beach, Michael at his heels or running circles of delight around him at every repetition of that strange low lip-noise, and paused just outside the circle of lantern light where dusky forms laboured with landing cargo from the whaleboats and where the Commissioner's clerk and the *Makambo's* super-cargo still wrangled over the bill of lading. When Michael would have gone forward, the man withstrained him with the same inarticulate, almost inaudible kiss.

For Daughtry did not care to be seen on such dog-stealing enterprises and was planning how to get on board the steamer unobserved. He edged around outside the lantern shine and went on along the beach to the native village. As he had foreseen, all the able-bodied men were down at the boat-landing working cargo. The grass houses seemed lifeless, but at last, from one of them, came a challenge in the querulous, high-pitched tones of age:

"What name?"

"Me walk about plenty too much," he replied in the *bêche-de-mer* English of the west South Pacific. "Me belong along steamer. Suppose 'm you take 'm me along canoe, washee-washee, me give 'm you fella boy two stick tobacco."

"Suppose 'm you give 'm me ten stick, all right along me," came the reply.

"Me give 'm five stick," the six-quart steward bargained. "Suppose 'm you no like 'm five stick then you fella boy go to hell close up."

There was a silence.

"You like 'm five stick?" Daughtry insisted of the dark interior.

"Me like 'm," the darkness answered, and through the darkness the body that owned the voice approached with such strange sounds that the steward lighted a match to see.

A blear-eyed ancient stood before him, balancing on a single crutch. His eyes were half-filmed over by a growth of morbid membrane, and what was not yet covered shone red and irritated. His hair was mangy, standing out in isolated patches of wispy grey. His skin was scarred and wrinkled and mottled, and in colour was a purplish blue surfaced with a grey coating that might have been painted there had it not indubitably grown there and been part and parcel of him.

A blighted leper – was Daughtry's thought as his quick eyes leapt from hands to feet in quest of missing toe- and finger-joints. But in those items the ancient was intact, although one leg ceased midway between knee and thigh.

"My word! What place stop 'm that fella leg?" quoth Daughtry, pointing to the space which the member would have occupied had it not been absent.

"Big fella shark-fish, that fella leg stop 'm along him," the ancient grinned, exposing a horrible aperture of toothlessness for a mouth.

"Me old fella boy too much," the one-legged Methuselah quavered. "Long time too much no smoke 'm tobacco. Suppose 'm you big fella white marster give 'm me one fella stick, close up me washee-washee you that fella steamer."

"Suppose 'm me no give?" the steward impatiently temporized.

For reply, the old man half-turned, and, on his crutch, swinging his stump of leg in the air, began sidling hippity-hop into the grass hut.

"All right," Daughtry cried hastily. "Me give 'm you smoke 'm quick fella."

He dipped into a side coat-pocket for the mintage of the Solomons and stripped off a stick from the handful of pressed sticks. The old man was transfigured as he reached avidly for the stick and received it. He uttered little crooning noises, alternating with sharp cries akin to pain, half-ecstatic, half-petulant, as he drew a black clay pipe from a hole in his ear-lobe, and into the bowl of it, with trembling fingers, untwisted and crumbled the cheap leaf of spoiled Virginia crop.

Pressing down the contents of the full bowl with his thumb, he suddenly plumped upon the ground, the crutch beside him, the one limb under him so that he had the seeming of a legless torso. From a small bag of twisted coconut hanging from his neck upon his withered and sunken chest, he drew out flint and steel and tinder, and, even while the impatient steward was proffering him a box of matches, struck a spark, caught it in the tinder, blew it into strength and quantity, and lighted his pipe from it.

With the first full puff of the smoke he gave over his moans and yelps, the agitation began to fade out of him, and Daughtry, appreciatively waiting, saw the trembling go out of his hands, the pendulous lip-quivering cease, the saliva stop flowing from the corners of his mouth, and placidity come into the fiery remnants of his eyes.

What the old man visioned in the silence that fell, Daughtry did not try to guess. He was too occupied with his own vision, and vividly burned before him the sordid barrenness of a poor-house ward, where an ancient, very like what he himself would become, maundered and gibbered and drooled for a crumb of tobacco for his old clay pipe, and where, of all horrors, no sip of beer ever obtained, much less six quarts of it.

And Michael, by the dim glows of the pipe surveying the scene of the two old men, one squatted in the dark, the other standing, knew naught of the tragedy of age, and was only aware, and overwhelmingly aware, of the immense likableness of this two-legged white god, who, with fingers of magic, through ear-roots and tail-roots and spinal column, had won to the heart of him.

The clay pipe smoked utterly out, the old black, by aid of the crutch, with amazing celerity raised himself upstanding on his one leg and hobbled, with his hippity-hop, to the beach. Daughtry was compelled to lend his strength to the hauling down from the sand into the water of the tiny canoe. It was a dug-out, as ancient and dilapidated as its owner, and, in order to get into it without capsizing, Daughtry wet one leg to the ankle and the other leg to the knee. The old man contorted himself aboard, rolling his body across the gunwale so quickly, that, even while it started to capsize, his weight was across the danger-point and counterbalancing the canoe to its proper equilibrium.

Michael remained on the beach, waiting invitation, his mind not quite made up, but so nearly so that all that was required was that lip-noise. Dag Daughtry made the lip-noise so low that the old man did not hear, and Michael, springing clear from sand to canoe, was on board without wetting his feet. Using Daughtry's shoulder for a stepping-place, he passed over him and down into the bottom of the canoe. Daughtry kissed with his lips again, and Michael turned around so as to face him, sat down, and rested his head on the steward's knees.

"I reckon I can take my affydavvy on a stack of Bibles that the dog just up an' followed me," he grinned in Michael's ear.

"Washee-washee quick fella," he commanded.

The ancient obediently dipped his paddle and started pottering an erratic course in the general direction of the cluster of lights that marked the *Makambo*. But he was too feeble, panting and wheezing continually from the exertion and pausing to rest off strokes between strokes. The steward impatiently took the paddle away from him and bent to the work.

Half-way to the steamer the ancient ceased wheezing and spoke, nodding his head at Michael.

"That fella dog he belong big white marster along schooner.. You give 'm me ten stick tobacco," he added after due pause to let the information sink in.

"I give 'm you bang alongside head," Daughtry assured him cheerfully. "White marster along schooner plenty friend along me too much. Just now he stop 'm along *Makambo*. Me take 'm dog along him along *Makambo*."

There was no further conversation from the ancient, and though he lived long years after, he never mentioned the midnight passenger in the canoe who carried Michael away with him. When he saw and heard the confusion and uproar on the beach later that night when Captain Kellar turned Tulagi upside-down in his search for Michael, the old one-legged one remained discreetly silent. Who

was he to seek trouble with the strange ones, the white masters who came and went and roved and ruled?

In this the ancient was in nowise unlike the rest of his dark-skinned Melanesian race. The whites were possessed of unguessed and unthinkable ways and purposes. They constituted another world and were as a play of superior beings on an exalted stage where was no reality such as black men might know as reality, where, like the phantoms of a dream, the white men moved and were as shadows cast upon the vast and mysterious curtain of the Cosmos.

The gang-plank being on the port side, Dag Daughtry paddled around to the starboard and brought the canoe to a stop under a certain open port.

“Kwaque!” he called softly, once, and twice.

At the second call the light of the port was obscured apparently by a head that piped down in a thin squeak.

“Me stop ’m, marster.”

“One fella dog stop ’m along you,” the steward whispered up. “Keep ’m door shut. You wait along me. Stand by! Now!”

With a quick catch and lift, he passed Michael up and into unseen hands outstretched from the iron wall of the ship, and paddled ahead to an open cargo port. Dipping into his tobacco pocket, he thrust a loose handful of sticks into the ancient’s hand and shoved the canoe adrift with no thought of how its helpless occupant would ever reach shore.

The old man did not touch the paddle, and he was unregardless of the lofty-sided steamer as the canoe slipped down the length of it into the darkness astern. He was too occupied in counting the wealth of tobacco showered upon him. No easy task, his counting. Five was the limit of his numerals. When he had counted five, he began over again and counted a second five. Three fives he found in all, and two sticks over; and thus, at the end of it, he possessed as definite a knowledge of the number of sticks as would be possessed by the average white man by means of the single number *seventeen*.

More it was, far more, than his avarice had demanded. Yet he was unsurprised. Nothing white men did could surprise. Had it been two sticks instead of seventeen, he would have been equally unsurprised. Since all acts of white men were surprises, the only surprise of action they could achieve for a black man would be the doing of an unsurprising thing.

Paddling, wheezing, resting, oblivious of the shadow-world of the white men, knowing only the reality of Tulagi Mountain cutting its crest-line blackly across the dim radiance of the star-sprinkled sky, the reality of the sea and of the canoe he so feebly urged across it, and the reality of his fading strength and of the death into which he would surely end, the ancient black man slowly made his shoreward way.

CHAPTER III

In the meanwhile, Michael. Lifted through the air, exchanged into invisible hands that drew him through a narrow diameter of brass into a lighted room, Michael looked about him in expectancy of Jerry. But Jerry, at that moment, lay cuddled beside Villa Kennan's sleeping-cot on the slant deck of the *Ariel*, as that trim craft, the Shortlands astern and New Guinea dead ahead, heeled her scuppers a-whisper and garrulous to the sea-welter alongside as she logged her eleven knots under the press of the freshening trades. Instead of Jerry, from whom he had last parted on board a boat, Michael saw Kwaque.

Kwaque? Well, Kwaque was Kwaque, an individual, more unlike all other men than most men are unlike one another. No queerer estray ever drifted along the stream of life. Seventeen years old he was, as men measure time; but a century was measured in his lean-lined face, his wrinkled forehead, his hollowed temples, and his deep-sunk eyes. From his thin legs, fragile-looking as windstraws, the bones of which were sheathed in withered skin with apparently no muscle padding in between – from such frail stems sprouted the torso of a fat man. The huge and protuberant stomach was amply supported by wide and massive hips, and the shoulders were broad as those of a Hercules. But, beheld sidewise, there was no depth to those shoulders and the top of the chest. Almost, at that part of his anatomy, he seemed builded in two dimensions. Thin his arms were as his legs, and, as Michael first beheld him, he had all the seeming of a big-bellied black spider.

He proceeded to dress, a matter of moments, slipping into duck trousers and blouse, dirty and frayed from long usage. Two fingers of his left hand were doubled into a permanent bend, and, to an expert, would have advertised that he was a leper. Although he belonged to Dag Daughtry just as much as if the steward possessed a chattel bill of sale of him, his owner did not know that his anæsthetic twist of ravaged nerves tokened the dread disease.

The manner of the ownership was simple. At King William Island, in the Admiralties, Kwaque had made, in the parlance of the South Pacific, a pier-head jump. So to speak, leprosy and all, he had jumped into Dag Daughtry's arms. Strolling along the native runways in the fringe of jungle just beyond the beach, as was his custom, to see whatever he might pick up, the steward had picked up Kwaque. And he had picked him up in extremity.

Pursued by two very active young men armed with fire-hardened spears, tottering along with incredible swiftness on his two spindle legs, Kwaque had fallen exhausted at Daughtry's feet and looked up at him with the beseeching eyes of a deer fleeing from the hounds. Daughtry had inquired into the matter, and the inquiry was violent; for he had a wholesome fear of germs and bacilli, and when the two active young men tried to run him through with their filth-corroded spears, he caught the spear of one young man under his arm and put the other young man to sleep with a left hook to the jaw. A moment later the young man whose spear he held had joined the other in slumber.

The elderly steward was not satisfied with the mere spears. While the rescued Kwaque continued to moan and slubber thankfulness at his feet, he proceeded to strip them that were naked. Nothing they wore in the way of clothing, but from around each of their necks he removed a necklace of porpoise teeth that was worth a gold sovereign in mere exchange value. From the kinky locks of one of the naked young men he drew a hand-carved, fine-toothed comb, the lofty back of which was inlaid with mother-of-pearl, which he later sold in Sydney to a curio shop for eight shillings. Nose and ear ornaments of bone and turtle-shell he also rifled, as well as a chest-crescent of pearl shell, fourteen inches across, worth fifteen shillings anywhere. The two spears ultimately fetched him five shillings each from the tourists at Port Moresby. Not lightly may a ship steward undertake to maintain a six-quart reputation.

When he turned to depart from the active young men, who, back to consciousness, were observing him with bright, quick, wild-animal eyes, Kwaque followed so close at his heels as to step

upon them and make him stumble. Whereupon he loaded Kwaque with his trove and put him in front to lead along the runway to the beach. And for the rest of the way to the steamer, Dag Daughtry grinned and chuckled at sight of his plunder and at sight of Kwaque, who fantastically titubated and ambled along, barrel-like, on his pipe-stems.

On board the steamer, which happened to be the *Cockspur*, Daughtry persuaded the captain to enter Kwaque on the ship's articles as steward's helper with a rating of ten shillings a month. Also, he learned Kwaque's story.

It was all an account of a pig. The two active young men were brothers who lived in the next village to his, and the pig had been theirs – so Kwaque narrated in atrocious bêche-de-mer English. He, Kwaque, had never seen the pig. He had never known of its existence until after it was dead. The two young men had loved the pig. But what of that? It did not concern Kwaque, who was as unaware of their love for the pig as he was unaware of the pig itself.

The first he knew, he averred, was the gossip of the village that the pig was dead, and that somebody would have to die for it. It was all right, he said, in reply to a query from the steward. It was the custom. Whenever a loved pig died its owners were in custom bound to go out and kill somebody, anybody. Of course, it was better if they killed the one whose magic had made the pig sick. But, failing that one, any one would do. Hence Kwaque was selected for the blood-atonement.

Dag Daughtry drank a seventh quart as he listened, so carried away was he by the sombre sense of romance of this dark jungle event wherein men killed even strangers because a pig was dead.

Scouts out on the runways, Kwaque continued, brought word of the coming of the two bereaved pig-owners, and the village had fled into the jungle and climbed trees – all except Kwaque, who was unable to climb trees.

“My word,” Kwaque concluded, “me no make ’m that fella pig sick.”

“My word,” quoth Dag Daughtry, “you devil-devil along that fella pig too much. You look ’m like hell. You make ’m any fella thing sick look along you. You make ’m me sick too much.”

It became quite a custom for the steward, as he finished his sixth bottle before turning in, to call upon Kwaque for his story. It carried him back to his boyhood when he had been excited by tales of wild cannibals in far lands and dreamed some day to see them for himself. And here he was, he would chuckle to himself, with a real true cannibal for a slave.

A slave Kwaque was, as much as if Daughtry had bought him on the auction-block. Whenever the steward transferred from ship to ship of the Burns Philp fleet, he always stipulated that Kwaque should accompany him and be duly rated at ten shillings. Kwaque had no say in the matter. Even had he desired to escape in Australian ports, there was no need for Daughtry to watch him. Australia, with her “all-white” policy, attended to that. No dark-skinned human, whether Malay, Japanese, or Polynesian, could land on her shore without putting into the Government's hand a cash security of one hundred pounds.

Nor at the other islands visited by the *Makambo* had Kwaque any desire to cut and run for it. King William Island, which was the only land he had ever trod, was his yard-stick by which he measured all other islands. And since King William Island was cannibalistic, he could only conclude that the other islands were given to similar dietary practice.

As for King William Island, the *Makambo*, on the former run of the *Cockspur*, stopped there every ten weeks; but the direst threat Daughtry ever held over him was the putting ashore of him at the place where the two active young men still mourned their pig. In fact, it was their regular programme, each trip, to paddle out and around the *Makambo* and make ferocious grimaces up at Kwaque, who grimaced back at them from over the rail. Daughtry even encouraged this exchange of facial amenities for the purpose of deterring him from ever hoping to win ashore to the village of his birth.

For that matter, Kwaque had little desire to leave his master, who, after all, was kindly and just, and never lifted a hand to him. Having survived sea-sickness at the first, and never setting foot upon the land so that he never again knew sea-sickness, Kwaque was certain he lived in an earthly paradise.

He never had to regret his inability to climb trees, because danger never threatened him. He had food regularly, and all he wanted, and it was such food! No one in his village could have dreamed of any delicacy of the many delicacies which he consumed all the time. Because of these matters he even pulled through a light attack of home-sickness, and was as contented a human as ever sailed the seas.

And Kwaque it was who pulled Michael through the port-hole into Dag Daughtry's stateroom and waited for that worthy to arrive by the roundabout way of the door. After a quick look around the room and a sniff of the bunk and under the bunk which informed him that Jerry was not present, Michael turned his attention to Kwaque.

Kwaque tried to be friendly. He uttered a clucking noise in advertisement of his friendliness, and Michael snarled at this black who had dared to lay hands upon him – a contamination, according to Michael's training – and who now dared to address him who associated only with white gods.

Kwaque passed off the rebuff with a silly gibbering laugh and started to step nearer the door to be in readiness to open it at his master's coming. But at first lift of his leg, Michael flew at it. Kwaque immediately put it down, and Michael subsided, though he kept a watchful guard. What did he know of this strange black, save that he was a black and that, in the absence of a white master, all blacks required watching? Kwaque tried slowly sliding his foot along the floor, but Michael knew the trick and with bristle and growl put a stop to it.

It was upon this tableau that Daughtry entered, and, while he admired Michael much under the bright electric light, he realized the situation.

"Kwaque, you make 'm walk about leg belong you," he commanded, in order to make sure.

Kwaque's glance of apprehension at Michael was convincing enough, but the steward insisted. Kwaque gingerly obeyed, but scarcely had his foot moved an inch when Michael's was upon him. The foot and leg petrified, while Michael stiff-leggedly drew a half-circle of intimidation about him.

"Got you nailed to the floor, eh?" Daughtry chuckled. "Some nigger-chaser, my word, any amount."

"Hey, you, Kwaque, go fetch 'm two fella bottle of beer stop 'm along icy-chestis," he commanded in his most peremptory manner.

Kwaque looked beseechingly, but did not stir. Nor did he stir at a harsher repetition of the order.

"My word!" the steward bullied. "Suppose 'm you no fetch 'm beer close up, I knock 'm eight bells 'n 'a dog-watch onta you. Suppose 'm you no fetch 'm close up, me make 'm you go ashore 'n' walk about along King William Island."

"No can," Kwaque murmured timidly. "Eye belong dog look along me too much. Me no like 'm dog kai-kai along me."

"You fright along dog?" his master demanded.

"My word, me fright along dog any amount."

Dag Daughtry was delighted. Also, he was thirsty from his trip ashore and did not prolong the situation.

"Hey, you, dog," he addressed Michael. "This fella boy he all right. Savvee? He all right."

Michael bobbed his tail and flattened his ears in token that he was trying to understand. When the steward patted the black on the shoulder, Michael advanced and sniffed both the legs he had kept nailed to the floor.

"Walk about," Daughtry commanded. "Walk about slow fella," he cautioned, though there was little need.

Michael bristled, but permitted the first timid step. At the second he glanced up at Daughtry to make certain.

"That's right," he was reassured. "That fella boy belong me. He all right, you bet."

Michael smiled with his eyes that he understood, and turned casually aside to investigate an open box on the floor which contained plates of turtle-shell, hack-saws, and emery paper.

* * * * *

“And now,” Dag Daughtry muttered weightily aloud, as, bottle in hand, he leaned back in his arm-chair while Kwaque knelt at his feet to unlace his shoes, “now to consider a name for you, Mister Dog, that will be just to your breeding and fair to my powers of invention.”

CHAPTER IV

Irish terriers, when they have gained maturity, are notable, not alone for their courage, fidelity, and capacity for love, but for their cool-headedness and power of self-control and restraint. They are less easily excited off their balance; they can recognize and obey their master's voice in the scuffle and rage of battle; and they never fly into nervous hysterics such as are common, say, with fox-terriers.

Michael possessed no trace of hysteria, though he was more temperamentally excitable and explosive than his blood-brother Jerry, while his father and mother were a sedate old couple indeed compared with him. Far more than mature Jerry, was mature Michael playful and rowdyish. His ebullient spirits were always on tap to spill over on the slightest provocation, and, as he was afterwards to demonstrate, he could weary a puppy with play. In short, Michael was a merry soul.

"Soul" is used advisedly. Whatever the human soul may be – informing spirit, identity, personality, consciousness – that intangible thing Michael certainly possessed. His soul, differing only in degree, partook of the same attributes as the human soul. He knew love, sorrow, joy, wrath, pride, self-consciousness, humour. Three cardinal attributes of the human soul are memory, will, and understanding; and memory, will, and understanding were Michael's.

Just like a human, with his five senses he contacted with the world exterior to him. Just like a human, the results to him of these contacts were sensations. Just like a human, these sensations on occasion culminated in emotions. Still further, like a human, he could and did perceive, and such perceptions did flower in his brain as concepts, certainly not so wide and deep and recondite as those of humans, but concepts nevertheless.

Perhaps, to let the human down a trifle from such disgraceful identity of the highest life-attributes, it would be well to admit that Michael's sensations were not quite so poignant, say in the matter of a needle-thrust through his foot as compared with a needle-thrust through the palm of a hand. Also, it is admitted, when consciousness suffused his brain with a thought, that the thought was dimmer, vaguer than a similar thought in a human brain. Furthermore, it is admitted that never, never, in a million lifetimes, could Michael have demonstrated a proposition in Euclid or solved a quadratic equation. Yet he was capable of knowing beyond all peradventure of a doubt that three bones are more than two bones, and that ten dogs compose a more redoubtable host than do two dogs.

One admission, however, will not be made, namely, that Michael could not love as devotedly, as wholeheartedly, unselfishly, madly, self-sacrificingly as a human. He did so love – not because he was Michael, but because he was a dog.

Michael had loved Captain Kellar more than he loved his own life. No more than Jerry for Skipper, would he have hesitated to risk his life for Captain Kellar. And he was destined, as time went by and the conviction that Captain Kellar had passed into the inevitable nothingness along with Meringe and the Solomons, to love just as absolutely this six-quart steward with the understanding ways and the fascinating lip-caress. Kwaque, no; for Kwaque was black. Kwaque he merely accepted, as an appurtenance, as a part of the human landscape, as a chattel of Dag Daughtry.

But he did not know this new god as Dag Daughtry. Kwaque called him "marster"; but Michael heard other white men so addressed by the blacks. Many blacks had he heard call Captain Kellar "marster." It was Captain Duncan who called the steward "Steward." Michael came to hear him, and his officers, and all the passengers, so call him; and thus, to Michael, his god's name was Steward, and for ever after he was to know him and think of him as Steward.

There was the question of his own name. The next evening after he came on board, Dag Daughtry talked it over with him. Michael sat on his haunches, the length of his lower jaw resting on Daughtry's knee, the while his eyes dilated, contracted and glowed, his ears ever pricking and repriming to listen, his stump tail thumping ecstatically on the floor.

“It’s this way, son,” the steward told him. “Your father and mother were Irish. Now don’t be denying it, you rascal – ”

This, as Michael, encouraged by the unmistakable geniality and kindness in the voice, wriggled his whole body and thumped double knocks of delight with his tail. Not that he understood a word of it, but that he did understand the something behind the speech that informed the string of sounds with all the mysterious likeableness that white gods possessed.

“Never be ashamed of your ancestry. An’ remember, God loves the Irish – Kwaque! Go fetch ’m two bottle beer fella stop ’m along icy-chestis! – Why, the very mug of you, my lad, sticks out Irish all over it.” (Michael’s tail beat a tattoo.) “Now don’t be blarneyin’ me. ’Tis well I’m wise to your insidious, snugglin’, heart-stealin’ ways. I’ll have ye know my heart’s impervious. ’Tis soaked too long this many a day in beer. I stole you to sell you, not to be lovin’ you. I could’ve loved you once; but that was before me and beer was introduced. I’d sell you for twenty quid right now, coin down, if the chance offered. An’ I ain’t goin’ to love you, so you can put that in your pipe ’n’ smoke it.”

“But as I was about to say when so rudely interrupted by your ’fectionate ways – ”

Here he broke off to tilt to his mouth the opened bottle Kwaque handed him. He sighed, wiped his lips with the back of his hand, and proceeded.

“’Tis a strange thing, son, this silly matter of beer. Kwaque, the Methusalem-faced ape grinnin’ there, belongs to me. But by my faith do I belong to beer, bottles ’n’ bottles of it ’n’ mountains of bottles of it enough to sink the ship. Dog, truly I envy you, settin’ there comfortable-like inside your body that’s untainted of alcohol. I may own you, and the man that gives me twenty quid will own you, but never will a mountain of bottles own you. You’re a freer man than I am, Mister Dog, though I don’t know your name. Which reminds me – ”

He drained the bottle, tossed it to Kwaque, and made signs for him to open the remaining one.

“The namin’ of you, son, is not lightly to be considered. Irish, of course, but what shall it be? Paddy? Well may you shake your head. There’s no smack of distinction to it. Who’d mistake you for a hod-carrier? Ballymena might do, but it sounds much like a lady, my boy. Ay, boy you are. ’Tis an idea. Boy! Let’s see. Banshee Boy? Rotten. Lad of Erin!”

He nodded approbation and reached for the second bottle. He drank and meditated, and drank again.

“I’ve got you,” he announced solemnly. “Killeny is a lovely name, and it’s Killeny Boy for you. How’s that strike your honourableness? – high-soundin’, dignified as a earl or.. or a retired brewer. Many’s the one of that gentry I’ve helped to retire in my day.”

He finished his bottle, caught Michael suddenly by both jowls, and, leaning forward, rubbed noses with him. As suddenly released, with thumping tail and dancing eyes, Michael gazed up into the god’s face. A definite soul, or entity, or spirit-thing glimmered behind his dog’s eyes, already fond with affection for this hair-grizzled god who talked with him he knew not what, but whose very talking carried delicious and unguessable messages to his heart.

“Hey! Kwaque, you!”

Kwaque, squatted on the floor, his hams on his heels, paused from the rough-polishing of a shell comb designed and cut out by his master, and looked up, eager to receive command and serve.

“Kwaque, you fella this time now savvee name stop along this fella dog. His name belong ’m him, Killeny Boy. You make ’m name stop ’m inside head belong you. All the time you speak ’m this fella dog, you speak ’m Killeny Boy. Savvee? Suppose ’m you no savvee, I knock ’m block off belong you. Killeny Boy, savvee! Killeny Boy. Killeny Boy.”

As Kwaque removed his shoes and helped him undress, Daughtry regarded Michael with sleepy eyes.

“I’ve got you, laddy,” he announced, as he stood up and swayed toward bed. “I’ve got your name, an’ here’s your number – I got that, too: *high-strung but reasonable*. It fits you like the paper on the wall.

“High-strung but reasonable, that’s what you are, Killeny Boy, high-strung but reasonable,” he continued to mumble as Kwaque helped to roll him into his bunk.

Kwaque returned to his polishing. His lips stammered and halted in the making of noiseless whispers, as, with corrugated brows of puzzlement, he addressed the steward:

“Marster, what name stop ’m along that fella dog?”

“Killeny Boy, you kinky-head man-eater, Killeny Boy, Killeny Boy,” Dag Daughtry murmured drowsily. “Kwaque, you black blood-drinker, run n’ fetch ’m one fella bottle stop ’m along icy-chestis.”

“No stop ’m, marster,” the black quavered, with eyes alert for something to be thrown at him. “Six fella bottle he finish altogether.”

The steward’s sole reply was a snore.

The black, with the twisted hand of leprosy and with a barely perceptible infiltration of the same disease thickening the skin of the forehead between the eyes, bent over his polishing, and ever his lips moved, repeating over and over, “Killeny Boy.”

CHAPTER V

For a number of days Michael saw only Steward and Kwaque. This was because he was confined to the steward's stateroom. Nobody else knew that he was on board, and Dag Daughtry, thoroughly aware that he had stolen a white man's dog, hoped to keep his presence secret and smuggle him ashore when the *Makambo* docked in Sydney.

Quickly the steward learned Michael's pre-eminent teachableness. In the course of his careful feeding of him, he gave him an occasional chicken bone. Two lessons, which would scarcely be called lessons, since both of them occurred within five minutes and each was not over half a minute in duration, sufficed to teach Michael that only on the floor of the room in the corner nearest the door could he chew chicken bones. Thereafter, without prompting, as a matter of course when handed a bone, he carried it to the corner.

And why not? He had the wit to grasp what Steward desired of him; he had the heart that made it a happiness for him to serve. Steward was a god who was kind, who loved him with voice and lip, who loved him with touch of hand, rub of nose, or enfolding arm. As all service flourishes in the soil of love, so with Michael. Had Steward commanded him to forego the chicken bone after it was in the corner, he would have served him by foregoing. Which is the way of the dog, the only animal that will cheerfully and gladly, with leaping body of joy, leave its food uneaten in order to accompany or to serve its human master.

Practically all his waking time off duty, Dag Daughtry spent with the imprisoned Michael, who, at command, had quickly learned to refrain from whining and barking. And during these hours of companionship Michael learned many things. Daughtry found that he already understood and obeyed simple things such as "no," "yes," "get up," and "lie down," and he improved on them, teaching him, "Go into the bunk and lie down," "Go under the bunk," "Bring one shoe," "Bring two shoes." And almost without any work at all, he taught him to roll over, to say his prayers, to play dead, to sit up and smoke a pipe with a hat on his head, and not merely to stand up on his hind legs but to walk on them.

Then, too, was the trick of "no can and can do." Placing a savoury, nose-tantalising bit of meat or cheese on the edge of the bunk on a level with Michael's nose, Daughtry would simply say, "No can." Nor would Michael touch the food till he received the welcome, "Can do." Daughtry, with the "no can" still in force, would leave the stateroom, and, though he remained away half an hour or half a dozen hours, on his return he would find the food untouched and Michael, perhaps, asleep in the corner at the head of the bunk which had been allotted him for a bed. Early in this trick once when the steward had left the room and Michael's eager nose was within an inch of the prohibited morsel, Kwaque, playfully inclined, reached for the morsel himself and received a lacerated hand from the quick flash and clip of Michael's jaws.

None of the tricks that he was ever eager to do for Steward, would Michael do for Kwaque, despite the fact that Kwaque had no touch of meanness or viciousness in him. The point was that Michael had been trained, from his first dawn of consciousness, to differentiate between black men and white men. Black men were always the servants of white men – or such had been his experience; and always they were objects of suspicion, ever bent on wreaking mischief and requiring careful watching. The cardinal duty of a dog was to serve his white god by keeping a vigilant eye on all blacks that came about.

Yet Michael permitted Kwaque to serve him in matters of food, water, and other offices, at first in the absence of Steward attending to his ship duties, and, later, at any time. For he realized, without thinking about it at all, that whatever Kwaque did for him, whatever food Kwaque spread for him, really proceeded, not from Kwaque, but from Kwaque's master who was also his master. Yet Kwaque bore no grudge against Michael, and was himself so interested in his lord's welfare and comfort – this lord who had saved his life that terrible day on King William Island from the two grief-

stricken pig-owners – that he cherished Michael for his lord's sake. Seeing the dog growing into his master's affection, Kwaque himself developed a genuine affection for Michael – much in the same way that he worshipped anything of the steward's, whether the shoes he polished for him, the clothes he brushed and cleaned for him, or the six bottles of beer he put into the ice-chest each day for him.

In truth, there was nothing of the master-quality in Kwaque, while Michael was a natural aristocrat. Michael, out of love, would serve Steward, but Michael lorded it over the kinky-head. Kwaque possessed overwhelmingly the slave-nature, while in Michael there was little more of the slave-nature than was found in the North American Indians when the vain attempt was made to make them into slaves on the plantations of Cuba. All of which was no personal vice of Kwaque or virtue of Michael. Michael's heredity, rigidly selected for ages by man, was chiefly composed of fierceness and faithfulness. And fierceness and faithfulness, together, invariably produce pride. And pride cannot exist without honour, nor can honour without poise.

Michael's crowning achievement, under Daughtry's tutelage, in the first days in the stateroom, was to learn to count up to five. Many hours of work were required, however, in spite of his unusual high endowment of intelligence. For he had to learn, first, the spoken numerals; second, to see with his eyes and in his brain differentiate between one object, and all other groups of objects up to and including the group of five; and, third, in his mind, to relate an object, or any group of objects, with its numerical name as uttered by Steward.

In the training Dag Daughtry used balls of paper tied about with twine. He would toss the five balls under the bunk and tell Michael to fetch three, and neither two, nor four, but three would Michael bring forth and deliver into his hand. When Daughtry threw three under the bunk and demanded four, Michael would deliver the three, search about vainly for the fourth, then dance pleadingly with bobs of tail and half-leaps about Steward, and finally leap into the bed and secure the fourth from under the pillow or among the blankets.

It was the same with other known objects. Up to five, whether shoes or shirts or pillow-slips, Michael would fetch the number requested. And between the mathematical mind of Michael, who counted to five, and the mind of the ancient black at Tulagi, who counted sticks of tobacco in units of five, was a distance shorter than that between Michael and Dag Daughtry who could do multiplication and long division. In the same manner, up the same ladder of mathematical ability, a still greater distance separated Dag Daughtry from Captain Duncan, who by mathematics navigated the *Makambo*. Greatest mathematical distance of all was that between Captain Duncan's mind and the mind of an astronomer who charted the heavens and navigated a thousand million miles away among the stars and who tossed, a mere morsel of his mathematical knowledge, the few shreds of information to Captain Duncan that enabled him to know from day to day the place of the *Makambo* on the sea.

In one thing only could Kwaque rule Michael. Kwaque possessed a jews' harp, and, whenever the world of the *Makambo* and the servitude to the steward grew wearisome, he could transport himself to King William Island by thrusting the primitive instrument between his jaws and fanning weird rhythms from it with his hand, and when he thus crossed space and time, Michael sang – or howled, rather, though his howl possessed the same soft mellowness as Jerry's. Michael did not want to howl, but the chemistry of his being was such that he reacted to music as compulsively as elements react on one another in the laboratory.

While he lay perdu in Steward's stateroom, his voice was the one thing that was not to be heard, so Kwaque was forced to seek the solace of his jews' harp in the sweltering heat of the gratings over the fire-room. But this did not continue long, for, either according to blind chance, or to the lines of fate written in the book of life ere ever the foundations of the world were laid, Michael was scheduled for an adventure that was profoundly to affect, not alone his own destiny, but the destinies of Kwaque and Dag Daughtry and determine the very place of their death and burial.

CHAPTER VI

The adventure that was so to alter the future occurred when Michael, in no uncertain manner, announced to all and sundry his presence on the *Makambo*. It was due to Kwaque's carelessness, to commence with, for Kwaque left the stateroom without tight-closing the door. As the *Makambo* rolled on an easy sea the door swung back and forth, remaining wide open for intervals and banging shut but not banging hard enough to latch itself.

Michael crossed the high threshold with the innocent intention of exploring no farther than the immediate vicinity. But scarcely was he through, when a heavier roll slammed the door and latched it. And immediately Michael wanted to get back. Obedience was strong in him, for it was his heart's desire to serve his lord's will, and from the few days' confinement he sensed, or guessed, or divined, without thinking about it, that it was Steward's will for him to stay in the stateroom.

For a long time he sat down before the closed door, regarding it wistfully but being too wise to bark or speak to such inanimate object. It had been part of his early puppyhood education to learn that only live things could be moved by plea or threat, and that while things not alive did move, as the door had moved, they never moved of themselves, and were deaf to anything life might have to say to them. Occasionally he trotted down the short cross-hall upon which the stateroom opened, and gazed up and down the long hall that ran fore and aft.

For the better part of an hour he did this, returning always to the door that would not open. Then he achieved a definite idea. Since the door would not open, and since Steward and Kwaque did not return, he would go in search of them. Once with this concept of action clear in his brain, without timidities of hesitation and irresolution, he trotted aft down the long hall. Going around the right angle in which it ended, he encountered a narrow flight of steps. Among many scents, he recognized those of Kwaque and Steward and knew they had passed that way.

Up the stairs and on the main deck, he began to meet passengers. Being white gods, he did not resent their addresses to him, though he did not linger and went out on the open deck where more of the favoured gods reclined in steamer-chairs. Still no Kwaque or Steward. Another flight of narrow, steep stairs invited, and he came out on the boat-deck. Here, under the wide awnings, were many more of the gods – many times more than he had that far seen in his life.

The for'ard end of the boat-deck terminated in the bridge, which, instead of being raised above it, was part of it. Trotting around the wheel-house to the shady lee-side of it, he came upon his fate; for be it known that Captain Duncan possessed on board in addition to two fox-terriers, a big Persian cat, and that cat possessed a litter of kittens. Her chosen nursery was the wheel-house, and Captain Duncan had humoured her, giving her a box for her kittens and threatening the quartermasters with all manner of dire fates did they so much as step on one of the kittens.

But Michael knew nothing of this. And the big Persian knew of his existence before he did of hers. In fact, the first he knew was when she launched herself upon him out of the open wheel-house doorway. Even as he glimpsed this abrupt danger, and before he could know what it was, he leaped sideways and saved himself. From his point of view, the assault was unprovoked. He was staring at her with bristling hair, recognizing her for what she was, a cat, when she sprang again, her tail the size of a large man's arm, all claws and spitting fury and vindictiveness.

This was too much for a self-respecting Irish terrier. His wrath was immediate with her second leap, and he sprang to the side to avoid her claws, and in from the side to meet her, his jaws clamping together on her spinal column with a jerk while she was still in mid-air. The next moment she lay sprawling and struggling on the deck with a broken back.

But for Michael this was only the beginning. A shrill yelling, rather than yelping, of more enemies made him whirl half about, but not quick enough. Struck in flank by two full-grown fox-terriers, he was slashed and rolled on the deck. The two, by the way, had long before made their

first appearance on the *Makambo* as little puppies in Dag Daughtry's coat pockets – Daughtry, in his usual fashion, having appropriated them ashore in Sydney and sold them to Captain Duncan for a guinea apiece.

By this time, scrambling to his feet, Michael was really angry. In truth, it was raining cats and dogs, such belligerent shower all unprovoked by him who had picked no quarrels nor even been aware of his enemies until they assailed him. Brave the fox-terriers were, despite the hysterical rage they were in, and they were upon him as he got his legs under him. The fangs of one clashed with his, cutting the lips of both of them, and the lighter dog recoiled from the impact. The other succeeded in taking Michael in flank, fetching blood and hurt with his teeth. With an instant curve, that was almost spasmodic, of his body, Michael flung his flank clear, leaving the other's mouth full of his hair, and at the same moment drove his teeth through an ear till they met. The fox-terrier, with a shrill yelp of pain, sprang back so impetuously as to ribbon its ear as Michael's teeth combed through it.

The first terrier was back upon him, and he was whirling to meet it, when a new and equally unprovoked assault was made upon him. This time it was Captain Duncan, in a rage at sight of his slain cat. The instep of his foot caught Michael squarely under the chest, half knocking the breath out of him and wholly lifting him into the air, so that he fell heavily on his side. The two terriers were upon him, filling their mouths with his straight, wiry hair as they sank their teeth in. Still on his side, as he was beginning to struggle to his feet, he clipped his jaws together on a leg of one, who screamed with pain and retreated on three legs, holding up the fourth, a fore leg, the bone of which Michael's teeth had all but crushed.

Twice Michael slashed the other four-footed foe and then pursued him in a circle with Captain Duncan pursuing him in turn. Shortening the distance by leaping across a chord of the arc of the other's flight, Michael closed his jaws on the back and side of the neck. Such abrupt arrest in mid-flight by the heavier dog brought the fox-terrier down on deck with, a heavy thump. Simultaneous with this, Captain Duncan's second kick landed, communicating such propulsion to Michael as to tear his clenched teeth through the flesh and out of the flesh of the fox-terrier.

And Michael turned on the Captain. What if he were a white god? In his rage at so many assaults of so many enemies, Michael, who had been peacefully looking for Kwaque and Steward, did not stop to reckon. Besides, it was a strange white god upon whom he had never before laid eyes.

At the beginning he had snarled and growled. But it was a more serious affair to attack a god, and no sound came from him as he leaped to meet the leg flying toward him in another kick. As with the cat, he did not leap straight at it. To the side to avoid, and in with a curve of body as it passed, was his way. He had learned the trick with many blacks at Meringe and on board the *Eugénie*, so that as often he succeeded as failed at it. His teeth came together in the slack of the white duck trousers. The consequent jerk on Captain Duncan's leg made that infuriated mariner lose his balance. Almost he fell forward on his face, part recovered himself with a violent effort, stumbled over Michael who was in for another bite, tottered wildly around, and sat down on the deck.

How long he might have sat there to recover his breath is problematical, for he rose as rapidly as his stoutness would permit, spurred on by Michael's teeth already sunk into the fleshy part of his shoulder. Michael missed his calf as he uprose, but tore the other leg of the trousers to shreds and received a kick that lifted him a yard above the deck in a half-somersault and landed him on his back on deck.

Up to this time the Captain had been on the ferocious offensive, and he was in the act of following up the kick when Michael regained his feet and soared up in the air, not for leg or thigh, but for the throat. Too high it was for him to reach it, but his teeth closed on the flowing black scarf and tore it to tatters as his weight drew him back to deck.

It was not this so much that turned Captain Duncan to the pure defensive and started him retreating backward, as it was the silence of Michael. Ominous as death it was. There were no snarls nor throat-threats. With eyes straight-looking and unblinking, he sprang and sprang again. Neither

did he growl when he attacked nor yelp when he was kicked. Fear of the blow was not in him. As Tom Haggin had so often bragged of Biddy and Terrence, they bred true in Jerry and Michael in the matter of not wincing at a blow. Always – they were so made – they sprang to meet the blow and to encounter the creature who delivered the blow. With a silence that was invested with the seriousness of death, they were wont to attack and to continue to attack.

And so Michael. As the Captain retreated kicking, he attacked, leaping and slashing. What saved Captain Duncan was a sailor with a deck mop on the end of a stick. Intervening, he managed to thrust it into Michael's mouth and shove him away. This first time his teeth closed automatically upon it. But, spitting it out, he declined thereafter to bite it, knowing it for what it was, an inanimate thing upon which his teeth could inflict no hurt.

Nor, beyond trying to avoid him, was he interested in the sailor. It was Captain Duncan, leaning his back against the rail, breathing heavily, and wiping the streaming sweat from his face, who was Michael's meat. Long as it has taken to tell the battle, beginning with the slaying of the Persian cat to the thrusting of the mop into Michael's jaws, so swift had been the rush of events that the passengers, springing from their deck-chairs and hurrying to the scene, were just arriving when Michael eluded the mop of the sailor by a successful dodge and plunged in on Captain Duncan, this time sinking his teeth so savagely into a rotund calf as to cause its owner to splutter an incoherent curse and howl of wrathful surprise.

A fortunate kick hurled Michael away and enabled the sailor to intervene once again with the mop. And upon the scene came Dag Daughtry, to behold his captain, frayed and bleeding and breathing apoplectically, Michael raging in ghastly silence at the end of a mop, and a large Persian mother-cat writhing with a broken back.

"Killeny Boy!" the steward cried imperatively.

Through no matter what indignation and rage that possessed him, his lord's voice penetrated his consciousness, so that, cooling almost instantly, Michael's ears flattened, his bristling hair lay down, and his lips covered his fangs as he turned his head to look acknowledgment.

"Come here, Killeny!"

Michael obeyed – not crouching cringingly, but trotting eagerly, gladly, to Steward's feet.

"Lie down, Boy."

He turned half around as he flumped himself down with a sigh of relief, and, with a red flash of tongue, kissed Steward's foot.

"Your dog, Steward?" Captain Duncan demanded in a smothered voice wherein struggled anger and shortness of breath.

"Yes, sir. My dog. What's he been up to, sir?"

The totality of what Michael had been up to choked the Captain completely. He could only gesture around from the dying cat to his torn clothes and bleeding wounds and the fox-terriers licking their injuries and whimpering at his feet.

"It's too bad, sir.. " Daughtry began.

"Too bad, hell!" the captain shut him off. "Bo's'n! Throw that dog overboard."

"Throw the dog overboard, sir, yes, sir," the boatswain repeated, but hesitated.

Dag Daughtry's face hardened unconsciously with the stiffening of his will to dogged opposition, which, in its own slow quiet way, would go to any length to have its way. But he answered respectfully enough, his features, by a shrewd effort, relaxing into a seeming of his customary good-nature.

"He's a good dog, sir, and an unoffending dog. I can't imagine what could a-made 'm break loose this way. He must a-had cause, sir – "

"He had," one of the passengers, a coconut planter from the Shortlands, interjected.

The steward threw him a grateful glance and continued.

“He’s a good dog, sir, a most obedient dog, sir – look at the way he minded me right in the thick of the scrap an’ come ’n’ lay down. He’s smart as chain-lightnin’, sir; do anything I tell him. I’ll make him make friends. See..”

Stepping over to the two hysterical terriers, Daughtry called Michael to him.

“He’s all right, savvee, Killeny, he all right,” he crooned, at the same time resting one hand on a terrier and the other on Michael.

The terrier whimpered and backed solidly against Captain Duncan’s legs, but Michael, with a slow bob of tail and unbelligerent ears, advanced to him, looked up to Steward to make sure, then sniffed his late antagonist, and even ran out his tongue in a caress to the side of the other’s ear.

“See, sir, no bad feelings,” Daughtry exulted. “He plays the game, sir. He’s a proper dog, he’s a man-dog. – Here, Killeny! The other one. He all right. Kiss and make up. That’s the stuff.”

The other fox-terrier, the one with the injured foreleg, endured Michael’s sniff with no more than hysterical growls deep in the throat; but the flipping out of Michael’s tongue was too much. The wounded terrier exploded in a futile snap at Michael’s tongue and nose.

“He all right, Killeny, he all right, sure,” Steward warned quickly.

With a bob of his tail in token of understanding, without a shade of resentment, Michael lifted a paw and with a playful casual stroke, dab-like, brought its weight on the other’s neck and rolled him, head-downward, over on the deck. Though he snarled wrathily, Michael turned away composedly and looked up into Steward’s face for approval.

A roar of laughter from the passengers greeted the capsizing of the fox-terrier and the good-natured gravity of Michael. But not alone at this did they laugh, for at the moment of the snap and the turning over, Captain Duncan’s unstrung nerves had exploded, causing him to jump as he tensed his whole body.

“Why, sir,” the steward went on with growing confidence, “I bet I can make him friends with you, too, by this time to-morrow..”

“By this time five minutes he’ll be overboard,” the captain answered. “Bo’s’n! Over with him!”

The boatswain advanced a tentative step, while murmurs of protest arose from the passengers.

“Look at my cat, and look at me,” Captain Duncan defended his action.

The boatswain made another step, and Dag Daughtry glared a threat at him.

“Go on!” the Captain commanded.

“Hold on!” spoke up the Shortlands planter. “Give the dog a square deal. I saw the whole thing. He wasn’t looking for trouble. First the cat jumped him. She had to jump twice before he turned loose. She’d have scratched his eyes out. Then the two dogs jumped him. He hadn’t bothered them. Then you jumped him. He hadn’t bothered you. And then came that sailor with the mop. And now you want the bo’s’n to jump him and throw him overboard. Give him a square deal. He’s only been defending himself. What do you expect any dog that is a dog to do? – lie down and be walked over by every strange dog and cat that comes along? Play the game, Skipper. You gave him some mighty hard kicks. He only defended himself.”

“He’s some defender,” Captain Duncan grinned, with a hint of the return of his ordinary geniality, at the same time tenderly pressing his bleeding shoulder and looking woefully down at his tattered duck trousers. “All right, Steward. If you can make him friends with me in five minutes, he stays on board. But you’ll have to make it up to me with a new pair of trousers.”

“And gladly, sir, thank you, sir,” Daughtry cried. “And I’ll make it up with a new cat as well, sir – Come on, Killeny Boy. This big fella marster he all right, you bet.”

And Michael listened. Not with the smouldering, smothering, choking hysteria that still worked in the fox-terriers did he listen, nor with quivering of muscles and jumps of over-wrought nerves, but coolly, composedly, as if no battle royal had just taken place and no ribs of teeth and kicks of feet still burned and ached his body.

He could not help bristling, however, when first he sniffed a trousers' leg into which his teeth had so recently torn.

“Put your hand down on him, sir,” Daughtry begged.

And Captain Duncan, his own good self once more, bent and rested a firm, unhesitating hand on Michael's head. Nay, more; he even caressed the ears and rubbed about the roots of them. And Michael the merry-hearted, who fought like a lion and forgave and forgot like a man, laid his neck hair smoothly down, wagged his stump tail, smiled with his eyes and ears and mouth, and kissed with his tongue the hand with which a short time before he had been at war.

CHAPTER VII

For the rest of the voyage Michael had the run of the ship. Friendly to all, he reserved his love for Steward alone, though he was not above many an undignified romp with the fox-terriers.

“The most playful-minded dog, without being silly, I ever saw,” was Dag Daughtry’s verdict to the Shortlands planter, to whom he had just sold one of his turtle-shell combs. “You see, some dogs never get over the play-idea, an’ they’re never good for anything else. But not Killeny Boy. He can come down to seriousness in a second. I’ll show you, and I’ll show you he’s got a brain that counts to five an’ knows wireless telegraphy. You just watch.”

At the moment the steward made his faint lip-noise – so faint that he could not hear it himself and was almost for wondering whether or not he had made it; so faint that the Shortlands planter did not dream that he was making it. At that moment Michael was lying squirming on his back a dozen feet away, his legs straight up in the air, both fox-terriers worrying with well-stimulated ferociousness. With a quick out-thrust of his four legs, he rolled over on his side and with questioning eyes and pricked ears looked and listened. Again Daughtry made the lip-noise; again the Shortlands planter did not hear nor guess; and Michael bounded to his feet and to his lord’s side.

“Some dog, eh?” the steward boasted.

“But how did he know you wanted him?” the planter queried. “You never called him.”

“Mental telepathy, the affinity of souls pitched in the same whatever-you-call-it harmony,” the steward mystified. “You see, Killeny an’ me are made of the same kind of stuff, only run into different moulds. He might a-been my full brother, or me his, only for some mistake in the creation factory somewhere. Now I’ll show you he knows his bit of arithmetic.”

And, drawing the paper balls from his pocket, Dag Daughtry demonstrated to the amazement and satisfaction of the ring of passengers Michael’s ability to count to five.

“Why, sir,” Daughtry concluded the performance, “if I was to order four glasses of beer in a public-house ashore, an’ if I was absent-minded an’ didn’t notice the waiter ’d only brought three, Killeny Boy there ’d raise a row instanter.”

Kwaque was no longer compelled to enjoy his jews’ harp on the gratings over the fire-room, now that Michael’s presence on the *Makambo* was known, and, in the stateroom, on stolen occasions, he made experiments of his own with Michael. Once the jews’ harp began emitting its barbaric rhythms, Michael was helpless. He needs must open his mouth and pour forth an unwilling, gushing howl. But, as with Jerry, it was not mere howl. It was more akin to a mellow singing; and it was not long before Kwaque could lead his voice up and down, in rough time and tune, within a definite register.

Michael never liked these lessons, for, looking down upon Kwaque, he hated in any way to be under the black’s compulsion. But all this was changed when Dag Daughtry surprised them at a singing lesson. He resurrected the harmonica with which it was his wont, ashore in public-houses, to while away the time between bottles. The quickest way to start Michael singing, he discovered, was with minors; and, once started, he would sing on and on for as long as the music played. Also, in the absence of an instrument, Michael would sing to the prompting and accompaniment of Steward’s voice, who would begin by wailing “kow-kow” long and sadly, and then branch out on some old song or ballad. Michael had hated to sing with Kwaque, but he loved to do it with Steward, even when Steward brought him on deck to perform before the laughter-shrieking passengers.

Two serious conversations were held by the steward toward the close of the voyage: one with Captain Duncan and one with Michael.

“It’s this way, Killeny,” Daughtry began, one evening, Michael’s head resting on his lord’s knees as he gazed adoringly up into his lord’s face, understanding no whit of what was spoken but loving the intimacy the sounds betokened. “I stole you for beer money, an’ when I saw you there on the beach

that night I knew you'd bring ten quid anywheres. Ten quid's a horrible lot of money. Fifty dollars in the way the Yankees reckon it, an' a hundred Mex in China fashion.

"Now, fifty dollars gold 'd buy beer to beat the band – enough to drown me if I fell in head first. Yet I want to ask you one question. Can you see me takin' ten quid for you?.. Go on. Speak up. Can you?"

And Michael, with thumps of tail to the floor and a high sharp bark, showed that he was in entire agreement with whatever had been propounded.

"Or say twenty quid, now. That's a fair offer. Would I? Eh! Would I? Not on your life. What d'ye say to fifty quid? That might begin to interest me, but a hundred quid would interest me more. Why, a hundred quid all in beer 'd come pretty close to floatin' this old hooker. But who in Sam Hill'd offer a hundred quid? I'd like to clap eyes on him once, that's all, just once. D'ye want to know what for? All right. I'll whisper it. So as I could tell him to go to hell. Sure, Killeny Boy, just like that – oh, most polite, of course, just a kindly directin' of his steps where he'd never suffer from frigid extremities."

Michael's love for Steward was so profound as almost to be a mad but enduring infatuation. What the steward's regard for Michael was coming to be was best evidenced by his conversation with Captain Duncan.

"Sure, sir, he must 've followed me on board," Daughtry finished his unveracious recital. "An' I never knew it. Last I seen of 'm was on the beach. Next I seen of 'm there, he was fast asleep in my bunk. Now how'd he get there, sir? How'd he pick out my room? I leave it to you, sir. I call it marvellous, just plain marvellous."

"With a quartermaster at the head of the gangway!" Captain Duncan snorted. "As if I didn't know your tricks, Steward. There's nothing marvellous about it. Just a plain case of steal. Followed you on board? That dog never came over the side. He came through a port-hole, and he never came through by himself. That nigger of yours, I'll wager, had a hand in the helping. But let's have done with beating about the bush. Give me the dog, and I'll say no more about the cat."

"Seein' you believe what you believe, then you'd be for compoundin' the felony," Daughtry retorted, the habitual obstinate tightening of his brows showing which way his will set. "Me, sir, I'm only a ship's steward, an' it wouldn't mean nothin' at all bein' arrested for dog-stealin'; but you, sir, a captain of a fine steamer, how'd it sound for you, sir? No, sir; it'd be much wiser for me to keep the dog that followed me aboard."

"I'll give ten pounds in the bargain," the captain proffered.

"No, it wouldn't do, it wouldn't do at all, sir, an' you a captain," the steward continued to reiterate, rolling his head sombrely. "Besides, I know where's a peach of an Angora in Sydney. The owner is gone to the country an' has no further use of it, an' it'd be a kindness to the cat, air to give it a good regular home like the *Makambo*."

CHAPTER VIII

Another trick Dag Daughtry succeeded in teaching Michael so enhanced him in Captain Duncan's eyes as to impel him to offer fifty pounds, "and never mind the cat." At first, Daughtry practised the trick in private with the chief engineer and the Shortlands planter. Not until thoroughly satisfied did he make a public performance of it.

"Now just suppose you're policemen, or detectives," Daughtry told the first and third officers, "an' suppose I'm guilty of some horrible crime. An' suppose Killeny is the only clue, an' you've got Killeny. When he recognizes his master – me, of course – you've got your man. You go down the deck with him, leadin' by the rope. Then you come back this way with him, makin' believe this is the street, an' when he recognizes me you arrest me. But if he don't realize me, you can't arrest me. See?"

The two officers led Michael away, and after several minutes returned along the deck, Michael stretched out ahead on the taut rope seeking Steward.

"What'll you take for the dog?" Daughtry demanded, as they drew near – this the cue he had trained Michael to know.

And Michael, straining at the rope, went by, without so much as a wag of tail to Steward or a glance of eye. The officers stopped before Daughtry and drew Michael back into the group.

"He's a lost dog," said the first officer.

"We're trying to find his owner," supplemented the third.

"Some dog that – what'll you take for 'm?" Daughtry asked, studying Michael with critical eyes of interest. "What kind of a temper's he got?"

"Try him," was the answer.

The steward put out his hand to pat him on the head, but withdrew it hastily as Michael, with bristle and growl, viciously bared his teeth.

"Go on, go on, he won't hurt you," the delighted passengers urged.

This time the steward's hand was barely missed by a snap, and he leaped back as Michael ferociously sprang the length of the rope at him.

"Take 'm away!" Dag Daughtry roared angrily. "The treacherous beast! I wouldn't take 'm for gift!"

And as they obeyed, Michael strained backward in a paroxysm of rage, making fierce short jumps to the end of the tether as he snarled and growled with utmost fierceness at the steward.

"Eh? Who'd say he ever seen me in his life?" Daughtry demanded triumphantly. "It's a trick I never seen played myself, but I've heard tell about it. The old-time poachers in England used to do it with their lurcher dogs. If they did get the dog of a strange poacher, no gamekeeper or constable could identify 'm by the dog – mum was the word."

"Tell you what, he knows things, that Killeny. He knows English. Right now, in my room, with the door open, an' so as he can find 'm, is shoes, slippers, cap, towel, hair-brush, an' tobacco pouch. What'll it be? Name it an' he'll fetch it."

So immediately and variously did the passengers respond that every article was called for.

"Just one of you choose," the steward advised. "The rest of you pick 'm out."

"Slipper," said Captain Duncan, selected by acclamation.

"One or both?" Daughtry asked.

"Both."

"Come here, Killeny," Daughtry began, bending toward him but leaping back from the snap of jaws that clipped together close to his nose.

"My mistake," he apologized. "I ain't told him the other game was over. Now just listen an, watch. 'n' see if you can catch on to the tip I'm goin' to give 'm."

No one saw anything, heard anything, yet Michael, with a whine of eagerness and joy, with laughing mouth and wriggling body, was upon the steward, licking his hands madly, squirming and twisting in the embrace of the loved hands he had so recently threatened, making attempts at short upward leaps as he flashed his tongue upward toward his lord's face. For hard it was on Michael, a nerve and mental strain of the severest for him so to control himself as to play-act anger and threat of hurt to his beloved Steward.

"Takes him a little time to get over a thing like that," Daughtry explained, as he soothed Michael down.

"Now, Killeny! Go fetch 'm slipper! Wait! Fetch 'm *one* slipper. Fetch 'm *two* slipper."

Michael looked up with pricked ears, and with eyes filled with query as all his intelligent consciousness suffused them.

"*Two* slipper! Fetch 'm quick!"

He was off and away in a scurry of speed that seemed to flatten him close to the deck, and that, as he turned the corner of the deck-house to the stairs, made his hind feet slip and slide across the smooth planks.

Almost in a trice he was back, both slippers in his mouth, which he deposited at the steward's feet.

"The more I know dogs the more amazin' marvellous they are to me," Dag Daughtry, after he had compassed his fourth bottle, confided in monologue to the Shortlands planter that night just before bedtime. "Take Killeny Boy. He don't do things for me mechanically, just because he's learned to do 'm. There's more to it. He does 'm because he likes me. I can't give you the hang of it, but I feel it, I *know* it.

"Maybe, this is what I'm drivin' at. Killeny can't talk, as you 'n' me talk, I mean; so he can't tell me how he loves me, an' he's all love, every last hair of 'm. An' actions speakin' louder 'n' words, he tells me how he loves me by doin' these things for me. Tricks? Sure. But they make human speeches of eloquence cheaper 'n dirt. Sure it's speech. Dog-talk that's tongue-tied. Don't I know? Sure as I'm a livin' man born to trouble as the sparks fly upward, just as sure am I that it makes 'm happy to do tricks for me.. just as it makes a man happy to lend a hand to a pal in a ticklish place, or a lover happy to put his coat around the girl he loves to keep her warm. I tell you.. "

Here, Dag Daughtry broke down from inability to express the concepts fluttering in his beer-excited, beer-sodden brain, and, with a stutter or two, made a fresh start.

"You know, it's all in the matter of talkin', an' Killeny can't talk. He's got thoughts inside that head of his – you can see 'm shinin' in his lovely brown eyes – but he can't get 'em across to me. Why, I see 'm tryin' to tell me sometimes so hard that he almost busts. There's a big hole between him an' me, an' language is about the only bridge, and he can't get over the hole, though he's got all kinds of ideas an' feelings just like mine.

"But, say! The time we get closest together is when I play the harmonica an' he yow-yows. Music comes closest to makin' the bridge. It's a regular song without words. And.. I can't explain how.. but just the same, when we've finished our song, I know we've passed a lot over to each other that don't need words for the passin'."

"Why, d'ye know, when I'm playin' an' he's singin', it's a regular duet of what the sky-pilots 'd call religion an' knowin' God. Sure, when we sing together I'm absorbin' religion an' gettin' pretty close up to God. An' it's big, I tell you. Big as the earth an' ocean an' sky an' all the stars. I just seem to get hold of a sense that we're all the same stuff after all – you, me, Killeny Boy, mountains, sand, salt water, worms, mosquitoes, suns, an' shootin' stars an' blazin comets.. "

Day Daughtry left his flight as beyond his own grasp of speech, and concluded, his half embarrassment masked by braggadocio over Michael:

“Oh, believe me, they don’t make dogs like him every day in the week. Sure, I stole ’m. He looked good to me. An’ if I had it over, knowin’ as I do known ’m now, I’d steal ’m again if I lost a leg doin’ it. That’s the kind of a dog *he* is.”

CHAPTER IX

The morning the *Makambo* entered Sydney harbour, Captain Duncan had another try for Michael. The port doctor's launch was coming alongside, when he nodded up to Daughtry, who was passing along the deck:

"Steward, I'll give you twenty pounds."

"No, sir, thank you, sir," was Dag Daughtry's answer. "I couldn't bear to part with him."

"Twenty-five pounds, then. I can't go beyond that. Besides, there are plenty more Irish terriers in the world."

"That's what I'm thinkin', sir. An' I'll get one for you. Right here in Sydney. An' it won't cost you a penny, sir."

"But I want Killeny Boy," the captain persisted.

"An' so do I, which is the worst of it, sir. Besides, I got him first."

"Twenty-five sovereigns is a lot of money.. for a dog," Captain Duncan said.

"An' Killeny Boy's a lot of dog.. for the money," the steward retorted. "Why, sir, cuttin' out all sentiment, his tricks is worth more 'n that. Him not recognizing me when I don't want 'm to is worth fifty pounds of itself. An' there's his countin' an' his singin', an' all the rest of his tricks. Now, no matter how I got him, he didn't have them tricks. Them tricks are mine. I taught him them. He ain't the dog he was when he come on board. He's a whole lot of me now, an' sellin' him would be like sellin' a piece of myself."

"Thirty pounds," said the captain with finality.

"No, sir, thankin' you just the same, sir," was Daughtry's refusal.

And Captain Duncan was forced to turn away in order to greet the port doctor coming over the side.

Scarcely had the *Makambo* passed quarantine, and while on her way up harbour to dock, when a trim man-of-war launch darted in to her side and a trim lieutenant mounted the *Makambo's* boarding-ladder. His mission was quickly explained. The *Albatross*, British cruiser of the second class, of which he was fourth lieutenant, had called in at Tulagi with dispatches from the High Commissioner of the English South Seas. A scant twelve hours having intervened between her arrival and the *Makambo's* departure, the Commissioner of the Solomons and Captain Kellar had been of the opinion that the missing dog had been carried away on the steamer. Knowing that the *Albatross* would beat her to Sydney, the captain of the *Albatross* had undertaken to look up the dog. Was the dog, an Irish terrier answering to the name of Michael, on board?

Captain Duncan truthfully admitted that it was, though he most unveraciously shielded Dag Daughtry by repeating his yarn of the dog coming on board of itself. How to return the dog to Captain Kellar? – was the next question; for the *Albatross* was bound on to New Zealand. Captain Duncan settled the matter.

"The *Makambo* will be back in Tulagi in eight weeks," he told the lieutenant, "and I'll undertake personally to deliver the dog to its owner. In the meantime we'll take good care of it. Our steward has sort of adopted it, so it will be in good hands."

* * * * *

"Seems we don't either of us get the dog," Daughtry commented resignedly, when Captain Duncan had explained the situation.

But when Daughtry turned his back and started off along the deck, his constitutional obstinacy tightened his brows so that the Shortlands planter, observing it, wondered what the captain had been rowing him about.

* * * * *

Despite his six quarts a day and all his easy-goingness of disposition, Dag Daughtry possessed certain integrities. Though he could steal a dog, or a cat, without a twinge of conscience, he could not but be faithful to his salt, being so made. He could not draw wages for being a ship steward without faithfully performing the functions of ship steward. Though his mind was firmly made up, during the several days of the *Makambo* in Sydney, lying alongside the Burns Philp Dock, he saw to every detail of the cleaning up after the last crowd of outgoing passengers, and to every detail of preparation for the next crowd of incoming passengers who had tickets bought for the passage far away to the coral seas and the cannibal isles.

In the midst of this devotion to his duty, he took a night off and part of two afternoons. The night off was devoted to the public-houses which sailors frequent, and where can be learned the latest gossip and news of ships and of men who sail upon the sea. Such information did he gather, over many bottles of beer, that the next afternoon, hiring a small launch at a cost of ten shillings, he journeyed up the harbour to Jackson Bay, where lay the lofty-poled, sweet-lined, three-topmast American schooner, the *Mary Turner*.

Once on board, explaining his errand, he was taken below into the main cabin, where he interviewed, and was interviewed by, a quartette of men whom Daughtry qualified to himself as “a rum bunch.”

It was because he had talked long with the steward who had left the ship, that Dag Daughtry recognized and identified each of the four men. That, surely, was the “Ancient Mariner,” sitting back and apart with washed eyes of such palest blue that they seemed a faded white. Long thin wisps of silvery, unkempt hair framed his face like an aureole. He was slender to emaciation, cavernously checked, roll after roll of skin, no longer encasing flesh or muscle, hanging grotesquely down his neck and swathing the Adam’s apple so that only occasionally, with queer swallowing motions, did it peep out of the mummy-wrappings of skin and sink back again from view.

A proper ancient mariner, thought Daughtry. Might be seventy-five, might just as well be a hundred and five, or a hundred and seventy-five.

Beginning at the right temple, a ghastly scar split the cheek-bone, sank into the depths of the hollow cheek, notched across the lower jaw, and plunged to disappearance among the prodigious skin-folds of the neck. The withered lobes of both ears were perforated by tiny gypsy-like circles of gold. On the skeleton fingers of his right hand were no less than five rings – not men’s rings, nor women’s, but foppish rings – “that would fetch a price,” Daughtry adjudged. On the left hand were no rings, for there were no fingers to wear them. Only was there a thumb; and, for that matter, most of the hand was missing as well, as if it had been cut off by the same slicing edge that had cleaved him from temple to jaw and heaven alone knew how far down that skin-draped neck.

The Ancient Mariner’s washed eyes seemed to bore right through Daughtry (or at least so Daughtry felt), and rendered him so uncomfortable as to make him casually step to the side for the matter of a yard. This was possible, because, a servant seeking a servant’s billet, he was expected to stand and face the four seated ones as if they were judges on the bench and he the felon in the dock. Nevertheless, the gaze of the ancient one pursued him, until, studying it more closely, he decided that it did not reach to him at all. He got the impression that those washed pale eyes were filmed with dreams, and that the intelligence, the *thing*, that dwelt within the skull, fluttered and beat against the dream-films and no farther.

"How much would you expect?" the captain was asking, – a most unsealike captain, in Daughtry's opinion; rather, a spick-and-span, brisk little business-man or floor-walker just out of a bandbox.

"He shall not share," spoke up another of the four, huge, raw-boned, middle-aged, whom Daughtry identified by his ham-like hands as the California wheat-farmer described by the departed steward.

"Plenty for all," the Ancient Mariner startled Daughtry by cackling shrilly. "Oodles and oodles of it, my gentlemen, in cask and chest, in cask and chest, a fathom under the sand."

"Share —*what*, sir?" Daughtry queried, though well he knew, the other steward having cursed to him the day he sailed from San Francisco on a blind lay instead of straight wages. "Not that it matters, sir," he hastened to add. "I spent a whalin' voyage once, three years of it, an' paid off with a dollar. Wages for mine, an' sixty gold a month, seein' there's only four of you."

"And a mate," the captain added.

"And a mate," Daughtry repeated. "Very good, sir. An' no share."

"But yourself?" spoke up the fourth man, a huge-bulking, colossal-bodied, greasy-seeming grossness of flesh – the Armenian Jew and San Francisco pawnbroker the previous steward had warned Daughtry about. "Have you papers – letters of recommendation, the documents you receive when you are paid off before the shipping commissioners?"

"I might ask, sir," Dag Daughtry brazened it, "for your own papers. This ain't no regular cargo-carrier or passenger-carrier, no more than you gentlemen are a regular company of ship-owners, with regular offices, doin' business in a regular way. How do I know if you own the ship even, or that the charter ain't busted long ago, or that you're being libelled ashore right now, or that you won't dump me on any old beach anywheres without a soo-markee of what's comin' to me? Howsoever" – he anticipated by a bluff of his own the show of wrath from the Jew that he knew would be wind and bluff – "howsoever, here's my papers.. "

With a swift dip of his hand into his inside coat-pocket he scattered out in a wealth of profusion on the cabin table all the papers, sealed and stamped, that he had collected in forty-five years of voyaging, the latest date of which was five years back.

"I don't ask your papers," he went on. "What I ask is, cash payment in full the first of each month, sixty dollars a month gold – "

"Oodles and oodles of it, gold and gold and better than gold, in cask and chest, in cask and chest, a fathom under the sand," the Ancient Mariner assured him in beneficent cackles. "Kings, principalities and powers! – all of us, the least of us. And plenty more, my gentlemen, plenty more. The latitude and longitude are mine, and the bearings from the oak ribs on the shoal to Lion's Head, and the cross-bearings from the points unnamable, I only know. I only still live of all that brave, mad, scallywag ship's company.. "

"Will you sign the articles to that?" the Jew demanded, cutting in on the ancient's maunderings.

"What port do you wind up the cruise in?" Daughtry asked.

"San Francisco."

"I'll sign the articles that I'm to sign off in San Francisco then."

The Jew, the captain, and the farmer nodded.

"But there's several other things to be agreed upon," Daughtry continued. "In the first place, I want my six quarts a day. I'm used to it, and I'm too old a stager to change my habits."

"Of spirits, I suppose?" the Jew asked sarcastically.

"No; of beer, good English beer. It must be understood beforehand, no matter what long stretches we may be at sea, that a sufficient supply is taken along."

"Anything else?" the captain queried.

"Yes, sir," Daughtry answered. "I got a dog that must come along."

"Anything else? – a wife or family maybe?" the farmer asked.

"No wife or family, sir. But I got a nigger, a perfectly good nigger, that's got to come along. He can sign on for ten dollars a month if he works for the ship all his time. But if he works for me all the time, I'll let him sign on for two an' a half a month."

"Eighteen days in the longboat," the Ancient Mariner shrilled, to Daughtry's startlement. "Eighteen days in the longboat, eighteen days of scorching hell."

"My word," quoth Daughtry, "the old gentleman'd give one the jumps. There'll sure have to be plenty of beer."

"Sea stewards put on some style, I must say," commented the wheat-farmer, oblivious to the Ancient Mariner, who still declaimed of the heat of the longboat.

"Suppose we don't see our way to signing on a steward who travels in such style?" the Jew asked, mopping the inside of his collar-band with a coloured silk handkerchief.

"Then you'll never know what a good steward you've missed, sir," Daughtry responded airily.

"I guess there's plenty more stewards on Sydney beach," the captain said briskly. "And I guess I haven't forgotten old days, when I hired them like so much dirt, yes, by Jinks, so much dirt, there were so many of them."

"Thank you, Mr. Steward, for looking us up," the Jew took up the idea with insulting oiliness. "We very much regret our inability to meet your wishes in the matter –"

"And I saw it go under the sand, a fathom under the sand, on cross-bearings unnamable, where the mangroves fade away, and the coconuts grow, and the rise of land lifts from the beach to the Lion's Head."

"Hold your horses," the wheat-farmer said, with a flare of irritation, directed, not at the Ancient Mariner, but at the captain and the Jew. "Who's putting up for this expedition? Don't I get no say so? Ain't my opinion ever to be asked? I like this steward. Strikes me he's the real goods. I notice he's as polite as all get-out, and I can see he can take an order without arguing. And he ain't no fool by a long shot."

"That's the very point, Grimshaw," the Jew answered soothingly. "Considering the unusualness of our.. of the expedition, we'd be better served by a steward who is more of a fool. Another point, which I'd esteem a real favour from you, is not to forget that you haven't put a red copper more into this trip than I have –"

"And where'd either of you be, if it wasn't for me with my knowledge of the sea?" the captain demanded aggrievedly. "To say nothing of the mortgage on my house and on the nicest little best paying flat building in San Francisco since the earthquake."

"But who's still putting up? – all of you, I ask you." The wheat-farmer leaned forward, resting the heels of his hands on his knees so that the fingers hung down his long shins, in Daughtry's appraisal, half-way to his feet. "You, Captain Doane, can't raise another penny on your properties. My land still grows the wheat that brings the ready. You, Simon Nishikanta, won't put up another penny – yet your loan-shark offices are doing business at the same old stands at God knows what per cent. to drunken sailors. And you hang the expedition up here in this hole-in-the-wall waiting for my agent to cable more wheat-money. Well, I guess we'll just sign on this steward at sixty a month and all he asks, or I'll just naturally quit you cold on the next fast steamer to San Francisco."

He stood up abruptly, towering to such height that Daughtry looked to see the crown of his head collide with the deck above.

"I'm sick and tired of you all, yes, I am," he continued. "Get busy! Well, let's get busy. My money's coming. It'll be here by to-morrow. Let's be ready to start by hiring a steward that is a steward. I don't care if he brings two families along."

"I guess you're right, Grimshaw," Simon Nishikanta said appeasingly. "The trip is beginning to get on all our nerves. Forget it if I fly off the handle. Of course we'll take this steward if you want him. I thought he was too stylish for you."

He turned to Daughtry.

“Naturally, the least said ashore about us the better.”

“That’s all right, sir. I can keep my mouth shut, though I might as well tell you there’s some pretty tales about you drifting around the beach right now.”

“The object of our expedition?” the Jew queried quickly.

Daughtry nodded.

“Is that why you want to come?” was demanded equally quickly.

Daughtry shook his head.

“As long as you give me my beer each day, sir, I ain’t goin’ to be interested in your treasure-huntin’. It ain’t no new tale to me. The South Seas is populous with treasure-hunters – ” Almost could Daughtry have sworn that he had seen a flash of anxiety break through the dream-films that bleared the Ancient Mariner’s eyes. “And I must say, sir,” he went on easily, though saying what he would not have said had it not been for what he was almost certain he sensed of the ancient’s anxiousness, “that the South Seas is just naturally lousy with buried treasure. There’s Keeling-Cocos, millions ’n’ millions of it, pounds sterling, I mean, waiting for the lucky one with the right steer.”

This time Daughtry could have sworn to having sensed a change toward relief in the Ancient Mariner, whose eyes were again filmy with dreams.

“But I ain’t interested in treasure, sir,” Daughtry concluded. “It’s beer I’m interested in. You can chase your treasure, an’ I don’t care how long, just as long as I’ve got six quarts to open each day. But I give you fair warning, sir, before I sign on: if the beer dries up, I’m goin’ to get interested in what you’re after. Fair play is my motto.”

“Do you expect us to pay for your beer in addition?” Simon Nishikanta demanded.

To Daughtry it was too good to be true. Here, with the Jew healing the breach with the wheat-farmer whose agents still cabled money, was the time to take advantage.

“Sure, it’s one of our agreements, sir. What time would it suit you, sir, to-morrow afternoon, for me to sign on at the shipping commissioner’s?”

“Casks and chests of it, casks and chests of it, oodles and oodles, a fathom under the sand,” chattered the Ancient Mariner.

“You’re all touched up under the roof,” Daughtry grinned. “Which ain’t got nothing to do with me as long as you furnish the beer, pay me due an’ proper what’s comin’ to me the first of each an’ every month, an’ pay me off final in San Francisco. As long as you keep up your end, I’ll sail with you to the Pit ’n’ back an’ watch you sweatin’ the casks ’n’ chests out of the sand. What I want is to sail with you if you want me to sail with you enough to satisfy me.”

Simon Nishikanta glanced about. Grimshaw and Captain Doane nodded.

“At three o’clock to-morrow afternoon, at the shipping commissioner’s,” the Jew agreed. “When will you report for duty?”

“When will you sail, sir?” Daughtry countered.

“Bright and early next morning.”

“Then I’ll be on board and on duty some time to-morrow night, sir.”

And as he went up the cabin companion, he could hear the Ancient Mariner maundering: “Eighteen days in the longboat, eighteen days of scorching hell.. ”

CHAPTER X

Michael left the *Makambo* as he had come on board, through a port-hole. Likewise, the affair occurred at night, and it was Kwaque's hands that received him. It had been quick work, and daring, in the dark of early evening. From the boat-deck, with a bowline under Kwaque's arms and a turn of the rope around a pin, Dag Daughtry had lowered his leprous servitor into the waiting launch.

On his way below, he encountered Captain Duncan, who saw fit to warn him:

"No shannigan with Killeny Boy, Steward. He must go back to Tulagi with us."

"Yes, sir," the steward agreed. "An' I'm keepin' him tight in my room to make safe. Want to see him, sir?"

The very frankness of the invitation made the captain suspicious, and the thought flashed through his mind that perhaps Killeny Boy was already hidden ashore somewhere by the dog-stealing steward.

"Yes, indeed I'd like to say how-do-you-do to him," Captain Duncan answered.

And his was genuine surprise, on entering the steward's room, to behold Michael just rousing from his curled-up sleep on the floor. But when he left, his surprise would have been shocking could he have seen through the closed door what immediately began to take place. Out through the open port-hole, in a steady stream, Daughtry was passing the contents of the room. Everything went that belonged to him, including the turtle-shell and the photographs and calendars on the wall. Michael, with the command of silence laid upon him, went last. Remained only a sea-chest and two suit-cases, themselves too large for the port-hole but bare of contents.

When Daughtry sauntered along the main deck a few minutes later and paused for a gossip with the customs officer and a quartermaster at the head of the gang-plank, Captain Duncan little dreamed that his casual glance was resting on his steward for the last time. He watched him go down the gang-plank empty-handed, with no dog at his heels, and stroll off along the wharf under the electric lights.

Ten minutes after Captain Duncan saw the last of his broad back, Daughtry, in the launch with his belongings and heading for Jackson Bay, was hunched over Michael and caressing him, while Kwaque, crooning with joy under his breath that he was with all that was precious to him in the world, felt once again in the side-pocket of his flimsy coat to make sure that his beloved jews' harp had not been left behind.

Dag Daughtry was paying for Michael, and paying well. Among other things, he had not cared to arouse suspicion by drawing his wages from Burns Philp. The twenty pounds due him he had abandoned, and this was the very sum, that night on the beach at Tulagi, he had decided he could realize from the sale of Michael. He had stolen him to sell. He was paying for him the sales price that had tempted him.

For, as one has well said: the horse abases the base, ennobles the noble. Likewise the dog. The theft of a dog to sell for a price had been the abasement worked by Michael on Dag Daughtry. To pay the price out of sheer heart-love that could recognize no price too great to pay, had been the ennoblement of Dag Daughtry which Michael had worked. And as the launch chug-chugged across the quiet harbour under the southern stars, Dag Daughtry would have risked and tossed his life into the bargain in a battle to continue to have and to hold the dog he had originally conceived of as being interchangeable for so many dozens of beer.

* * * * *

The *Mary Turner*, towed out by a tug, sailed shortly after daybreak, and Daughtry, Kwaque, and Michael looked their last for ever on Sydney Harbour.

“Once again these old eyes have seen this fair haven,” the Ancient Mariner, beside them gazing, babbled; and Daughtry could not help but notice the way the wheat-farmer and the pawnbroker pricked their ears to listen and glanced each to the other with scant eyes. “It was in ’52, in 1852, on such a day as this, all drinking and singing along the decks, we cleared from Sydney in the *Wide Awake*. A pretty craft, oh sirs, a most clever and pretty craft. A crew, a brave crew, all youngsters, all of us, fore and aft, no man was forty, a mad, gay crew. The captain was an elderly gentleman of twenty-eight, the third officer another of eighteen, the down, untouched of steel, like so much young velvet on his cheek. He, too, died in the longboat. And the captain gasped out his last under the palm trees of the isle unnamable while the brown maidens wept about him and fanned the air to his parching lungs.”

Dag Daughtry heard no more, for he turned below to take up his new routine of duty. But while he made up bunks with fresh linen and directed Kwaque’s efforts to cleaning long-neglected floors, he shook his head to himself and muttered, “He’s a keen ’un. He’s a keen ’un. All ain’t fools that look it.”

The fine lines of the *Mary Turner* were explained by the fact that she had been built for seal-hunting; and for the same reason on board of her was room and to spare. The forecastle with bunk-space for twelve, bedded but eight Scandinavian seamen. The five staterooms of the cabin accommodated the three treasure-hunters, the Ancient Mariner, and the mate – the latter a large-bodied, gentle-souled Russian-Finn, known as Mr. Jackson through inability of his shipmates to pronounce the name he had signed on the ship’s articles.

Remained the steerage, just for’ard of the cabin, separated from it by a stout bulkhead and entered by a companionway on the main deck. On this deck, between the break of the poop and the steerage companion, stood the galley. In the steerage itself, which possessed a far larger living-space than the cabin, were six capacious bunks, each double the width of the forecastle bunks, and each curtained and with no bunk above it.

“Some fella glory-hole, eh, Kwaque?” Daughtry told his seventeen-years-old brown-skinned Papuan with the withered ancient face of a centenarian, the legs of a living skeleton, and the huge-stomached torso of an elderly Japanese wrestler. “Eh, Kwaque! What you fella think?”

And Kwaque, too awed by the spaciousness to speak, eloquently rolled his eyes in agreement.

“You likee this piecee bunk?” the cook, a little old Chinaman, asked the steward with eager humility, inviting the white man’s acceptance of his own bunk with a wave of arm.

Daughtry shook his head. He had early learned that it was wise to get along well with sea-cooks, since sea-cocks were notoriously given to going suddenly lunatic and slicing and hacking up their shipmates with butcher knives and meat cleavers on the slightest remembered provocation. Besides, there was an equally good bunk all the way across the width of the steerage from the Chinaman’s. The bunk next on the port side to the cook’s and abaft of it Daughtry allotted to Kwaque. Thus he retained for himself and Michael the entire starboard side with its three bunks. The next one abaft of his own he named “Killeny Boy’s,” and called on Kwaque and the cook to take notice. Daughtry had a sense that the cook, whose name had been quickly volunteered as Ah Moy, was not entirely satisfied with the arrangement; but it affected him no more than a momentary curiosity about a Chinaman who drew the line at a dog taking a bunk in the same apartment with him.

Half an hour later, returning, from setting the cabin aright, to the steerage for Kwaque to serve him with a bottle of beer, Daughtry observed that Ah Moy had moved his entire bunk belongings across the steerage to the third bunk on the starboard side. This had put him with Daughtry and Michael and left Kwaque with half the steerage to himself. Daughtry’s curiosity recrudesced.

“What name along that fella Chink?” he demanded of Kwaque. “He no like ’m you fella boy stop ’m along same fella side along him. What for? My word! What name? That fella Chink make ’m me cross along him too much!”

“Suppose ’m that fella Chink maybe he think ’m me kai-kai along him,” Kwaque grinned in one of his rare jokes.

“All right,” the steward concluded. “We find out. You move ’m along my bunk, I move ’m along that fella Chink’s bunk.”

This accomplished, so that Kwaque, Michael, and Ah Moy occupied the starboard side and Daughtry alone bunked on the port side, he went on deck and aft to his duties. On his next return he found Ah Moy had transferred back to the port side, but this time into the last bunk aft.

“Seems the beggar’s taken a fancy to me,” the steward smiled to himself.

Nor was he capable of guessing Ah Moy’s reason for bunking always on the opposite side from Kwaque.

“I changee,” the little old cook explained, with anxious eyes to please and placate, in response to Daughtry’s direct question. “All the time like that, changee, plentee changee. You savvee?”

Daughtry did not savvee, and shook his head, while Ah Moy’s slant eyes betrayed none of the anxiety and fear with which he privily gazed on Kwaque’s two permanently bent fingers of the left hand and on Kwaque’s forehead, between the eyes, where the skin appeared a shade darker, a trifle thicker, and was marked by the first beginning of three short vertical lines or creases that were already giving him the lion-like appearance, the leonine face so named by the experts and technicians of the fell disease.

As the days passed, the steward took facetious occasions, when he had drunk five quarts of his daily allowance, to shift his and Kwaque’s bunks about. And invariably Ah Moy shifted, though Daughtry failed to notice that he never shifted into a bunk which Kwaque had occupied. Nor did he notice that it was when the time came that Kwaque had variously occupied all the six bunks that Ah Moy made himself a canvas hammock, suspended it from the deck beams above and thereafter swung clear in space and unmolested.

Daughtry dismissed the matter from his thoughts as no more than a thing in keeping with the general inscrutability of the Chinese mind. He did notice, however, that Kwaque was never permitted to enter the galley. Another thing he noticed, which, expressed in his own words, was: “That’s the all-dangdest cleanest Chink I’ve ever clapped my lamps on. Clean in galley, clean in steerage, clean in everything. He’s always washing the dishes in boiling water, when he isn’t washing himself or his clothes or bedding. My word, he actually boils his blankets once a week!”

For there were other things to occupy the steward’s mind. Getting acquainted with the five men aft in the cabin, and lining up the whole situation and the relations of each of the five to that situation and to one another, consumed much time. Then there was the path of the *Mary Turner* across the sea. No old sailor breathes who does not desire to know the casual course of his ship and the next port-of-call.

“We ought to be moving along a line that’ll cross somewhere northard of New Zealand,” Daughtry guessed to himself, after a hundred stolen glances into the binnacle. But that was all the information concerning the ship’s navigation he could steal; for Captain Doane took the observations and worked them out, to the exclusion of the mate, and Captain Doane always methodically locked up his chart and log. That there were heated discussions in the cabin, in which terms of latitude and longitude were bandied back and forth, Daughtry did know; but more than that he could not know, because it was early impressed upon him that the one place for him never to be, at such times of council, was the cabin. Also, he could not but conclude that these councils were real battles wherein Messrs. Doane, Nishikanta, and Grimahaw screamed at each other and pounded the table at each other, when they were not patiently and most politely interrogating the Ancient Mariner.

“He’s got their goat,” the steward early concluded to himself; but, thereafter, try as he would, he failed to get the Ancient Mariner’s goat.

Charles Stough Greenleaf was the Ancient Mariner’s name. This, Daughtry got from him, and nothing else did he get save maunderings and ravings about the heat of the longboat and the treasure a fathom deep under the sand.

“There’s some of us plays games, an’ some of us as looks on an’ admires the games they see,” the steward made his bid one day. “And I’m sure these days lookin’ on at a pretty game. The more I see it the more I got to admire.”

The Ancient Mariner dreamed back into the steward’s eyes with a blank, unseeing gaze.

“On the *Wide Awake* all the stewards were young, mere boys,” he murmured.

“Yes, sir,” Daughtry agreed pleasantly. “From all you say, the *Wide Awake*, with all its youngsters, was sure some craft. Not like the crowd of old ’uns on this here hooker. But I doubt, sir, that them youngsters ever played as clever games as is being played aboard us right now. I just got to admire the fine way it’s being done, sir.”

“I’ll tell you something,” the Ancient Mariner replied, with such confidential air that almost Daughtry leaned to hear. “No steward on the *Wide Awake* could mix a highball in just the way I like, as well as you. We didn’t know cocktails in those days, but we had sherry and bitters. A good appetizer, too, a most excellent appetizer.”

“I’ll tell you something more,” he continued, just as it seemed he had finished, and just in time to interrupt Daughtry away from his third attempt to ferret out the true inwardness of the situation on the *Mary Turner* and of the Ancient Mariner’s part in it. “It is mighty nigh five bells, and I should be very pleased to have one of your delicious cocktails ere I go down to dine.”

More suspicious than ever of him was Daughtry after this episode. But, as the days went by, he came more and more to the conclusion that Charles Stough Greenleaf was a senile old man who sincerely believed in the abiding of a buried treasure somewhere in the South Seas.

Once, polishing the brass-work on the hand-rails of the cabin companionway, Daughtry overheard the ancient one explaining his terrible scar and missing fingers to Grimshaw and the Armenian Jew. The pair of them had plied him with extra drinks in the hope of getting more out of him by way of his loosened tongue.

“It was in the longboat,” the aged voice cackled up the companion. “On the eleventh day it was that the mutiny broke. We in the sternsheets stood together against them. It was all a madness. We were starved sore, but we were mad for water. It was over the water it began. For, see you, it was our custom to lick the dew from the oar-blades, the gunwales, the thwarts, and the inside planking. And each man of us had developed property in the dew-collecting surfaces. Thus, the tiller and the rudder-head and half of the plank of the starboard stern-sheet had become the property of the second officer. No one of us lacked the honour to respect his property. The third officer was a lad, only eighteen, a brave and charming boy. He shared with the second officer the starboard stern-sheet plank. They drew a line to mark the division, and neither, lapping up what scant moisture fell during the night-hours, ever dreamed of trespassing across the line. They were too honourable.

“But the sailors – no. They squabbled amongst themselves over the dew-surfaces, and only the night before one of them was knifed because he so stole. But on this night, waiting for the dew, a little of it, to become more, on the surfaces that were mine, I heard the noises of a dew-lapper moving aft along the port-gunwale – which was my property aft of the stroke-thwart clear to the stern. I emerged from a nightmare dream of crystal springs and swollen rivers to listen to this night-drinker that I feared might encroach upon what was mine.

“Nearer he came to the line of my property, and I could hear him making little moaning, whimpering noises as he licked the damp wood. It was like listening to an animal grazing pasture-grass at night and ever grazing nearer.

“It chanced I was holding a boat-stretcher in my hand – to catch what little dew might fall upon it. I did not know who it was, but when he lapped across the line and moaned and whimpered as he licked up my precious drops of dew, I struck out. The boat-stretcher caught him fairly on the nose – it was the bo’s’n – and the mutiny began. It was the bo’s’n’s knife that sliced down my face and sliced away my fingers. The third officer, the eighteen-year-old lad, fought well beside me, and saved me, so that, just before I fainted, he and I, between us, hove the bo’s’n’s carcass overside.”

A shifting of feet and changing of positions of those in the cabin plunged Daughtry back into his polishing, which he had for the time forgotten. And, as he rubbed the brass-work, he told himself under his breath: "The old party's sure been through the mill. Such things just got to happen."

"No," the Ancient Mariner was continuing, in his thin falsetto, in reply to a query. "It wasn't the wounds that made me faint. It was the exertion I made in the struggle. I was too weak. No; so little moisture was there in my system that I didn't bleed much. And the amazing thing, under the circumstances, was the quickness with which I healed. The second officer sewed me up next day with a needle he'd made out of an ivory toothpick and with twine he twisted out of the threads from a frayed tarpaulin."

"Might I ask, Mr. Greenleaf, if there were rings at the time on the fingers that were cut off?" Daughtry heard Simon Nishikanta ask.

"Yes, and one beauty. I found it afterward in the boat bottom and presented it to the sandalwood trader who rescued me. It was a large diamond. I paid one hundred and eighty guineas for it to an English sailor in the Barbadoes. He'd stolen it, and of course it was worth more. It was a beautiful gem. The sandalwood man did not merely save my life for it. In addition, he spent fully a hundred pounds in outfitting me and buying me a passage from Thursday Island to Shanghai."

* * * * *

"There's no getting away from them rings he wears," Daughtry overheard Simon Nishikanta that evening telling Grimshaw in the dark on the weather poop. "You don't see that kind nowadays. They're old, real old. They're not men's rings so much as what you'd call, in the old-fashioned days, gentlemen's rings. Real gentlemen, I mean, grand gentlemen, wore rings like them. I wish collateral like them came into my loan offices these days. They're worth big money."

* * * * *

"I just want to tell you, Killeny Boy, that maybe I'll be wishin' before the voyage is over that I'd gone on a lay of the treasure instead of straight wages," Dag Daughtry confided to Michael that night at turning-in time as Kwaque removed his shoes and as he paused midway in the draining of his sixth bottle. "Take it from me, Killeny, that old gentleman knows what he's talkin' about, an' has been some hummer in his days. Men don't lose the fingers off their hands and get their faces chopped open just for nothing – nor sport rings that makes a Jew pawnbroker's mouth water."

CHAPTER XI

Before the voyage of the *Mary Turner* came to an end, Dag Daughtry, sitting down between the rows of water-casks in the main-hold, with a great laugh rechristened the schooner “the Ship of Fools.” But that was some weeks after. In the meantime he so fulfilled his duties that not even Captain Doane could conjure a shadow of complaint.

Especially did the steward attend upon the Ancient Mariner, for whom he had come to conceive a strong admiration, if not affection. The old fellow was different from his cabin-mates. They were money-lovers; everything in them had narrowed down to the pursuit of dollars. Daughtry, himself moulded on generously careless lines, could not but appreciate the spaciousness of the Ancient Mariner, who had evidently lived spaciouly and who was ever for sharing the treasure they sought.

“You’ll get your whack, steward, if it comes out of my share,” he frequently assured Daughtry at times of special kindness on the latter’s part. “There’s oodles of it, and oodles of it, and, without kith or kin, I have so little time longer to live that I shall not need it much or much of it.”

And so the Ship of Fools sailed on, all aft fooling and befouling, from the guileless-eyed, gentle-souled Finnish mate, who, with the scent of treasure pungent in his nostrils, with a duplicate key stole the ship’s daily position from Captain Doane’s locked desk, to Ah Moy, the cook, who kept Kwaque at a distance and never whispered warning to the others of the risk they ran from continual contact with the carrier of the terrible disease.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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