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Chapter One

School was just over. The boys belonging to Arlingford College poured out into the playing fields, the juniors tumbling over one another in haste and confusion, as though the premises were on fire behind them; the seniors strolling leisurely out, or gathering in small groups near the school door, to arrange their plans for the afternoon. Dr Stansfield, the headmaster, still remained, in conversation with Reginald Margetts, a connection of his wife's, a young man of two-and-twenty, who was passing the Oxford long vacation at his house, and had come in with a message from Mrs Stansfield. One of the assistant masters also, George Rivers by name, sat at his desk, looking over some exercises of which he had not completed the revision. He was near about Margetts' age, a well-built young fellow with an intelligent and pleasant face.

"Well, that will do, Redgy," said the Doctor. "You may tell Mrs Stansfield that I do not know, and cannot conjecture who her visitor may have been; but if he is to return in half an hour, I shall be in the library ready to receive him. At present I must have a little talk with George Rivers here, before I leave the school."

"I am going to walk with Rivers presently, sir," said Margetts. "Shall you be long?"

"A quarter of an hour, I daresay. George will join you when we have done. George," he continued, as Margetts left the room, "I have looked over the papers you have sent me. I intended to have had this conversation, even if you had not invited it. It is time that some conclusion was come to. You have not, I fear, received any fresh information?"

"I am sorry to say I have not."

"I am sorry too; but I hardly expected anything else. You are, I think, more than one-and-twenty?"

"Two-and-twenty in a few months, sir."

"Indeed. Well, there ought to be no further delay in the arrangement of your plans for the future. Do you not think so?"

"Yes, sir; and I believe I have made up my mind."

"What have you resolved to do?"

"Before I go into that, Dr Stansfield, I ought to thank you for the great kindness you have shown me. I should be a pauper, or something like it, but for you."

"We need not speak of that. Go on."

"Well, sir, I feel that I ought not to remain longer in England. I have already trespassed too long on your bounty."

"If that is your reason for leaving England, you had better reconsider it. Whatever might have been the case three years and a half ago, you are not costing me anything now. Your assistant-mastership, small as the salary is, with what you have of your own, is enough to keep you, and you fully earn it. You have, I believe, once or twice expressed a wish to enter holy orders?"

"It has been my wish for some time past, sir."

"Very well. You could not be ordained for more than a year. Before that I think I could arrange with the Bishop for you to be ordained on your mastership here. There is not so much difficulty made about a title as used to be the case."

"You are most kind, sir. I hope you will not think me ungrateful; but I feel it to be my first duty to find my mother and sister, if I can."

"I cannot blame you. But I should like to know what steps you mean to take. I understood you to say you had obtained no further information."

"No; and I do not expect to obtain any information, so long as I am in England. But if I were out in Australia, it might be different."

"What do you propose to do, then?"

"Well, in the first place, to work my passage out to Australia – to Swan River, you know."

"Ay, to Dalby's Plot, to which it was ascertained that your mother went when she landed in Australia. But you doubtless remember that we ascertained, two years and a half ago, that she had left the colony, and had gone – some said to Tasmania, and others to Cape Town; but no one has ever given us a clue, by which we might discover the place to which she had really removed."

"That is so. But if I were on the spot I think I might be able to hunt out information, which no one, who was not as deeply interested as I am, would be able to obtain."

"You may be right in that. Well, suppose you went out, and succeeded in finding Mrs Rivers – what then?"

"Then I should like to buy land – a small farm. A little money goes a long way out there, you know, sir. Then, when I was getting on pretty well, I might be ordained by one of the colonial bishops, and do clerical work combined with farming. It isn't the same kind of thing out there, I am told, that it is in England. There are no large populations – except, of course, in the towns – which take up a man's whole time."

"You are right, I believe. A number of educated and zealous men supporting themselves by their own industry, and yet having the power of ministering to their neighbours, would be a great boon in the colonies. I would willingly lend you all the assistance in my power towards carrying out your scheme; but, as I have already said, I am afraid I see but little hope of learning what has become of your mother and sister."

"I do not see much more; but I think it my duty to make the trial."

"Be it so then. What money have you?"

"Enough to pay my passage to Australia, sir, – that is, as a third-class passenger, if I should prefer that to serving as a sailor on board one of the steamers, – and perhaps 100 pounds over."

"I think you must go as a passenger. It might prejudice your errand, when you get there, if you had been before the mast. We must contrive to get you a letter of introduction to one of the Australian bishops."

"I'll give him one!" exclaimed a voice. "I know two or three of them as well as I know my own brother."

Dr Stansfield started up in great surprise. "What, Rogers!" he exclaimed. "Are you the visitor whom Mrs Stansfield told me to expect? I knew you were coming to England, but not so soon as this."

"To be sure I am. I was told you would be out of school by a quarter past twelve at latest, and now it is half-past, and you are still there!"

"We had forgotten the lapse of time," said the Doctor. "But tell me what has brought you to England so much earlier than was expected."

"The rows with the Boers and the Zulus," said Mr Rogers. "I have come home – partly at the request of many of the leading men in Natal, partly because my own interests were deeply concerned – to try and induce the Government to put matters on some satisfactory footing."

"I had better leave you, sir, had I not?" said George, rising. "You can speak to me further at another time."

Both the gentlemen turned and looked at the speaker, whose presence perhaps they had forgotten.

"Oh yes," said Dr Stansfield; "I will bear what you have told me in mind, and speak to you about it in a day or two."

George bowed, and left the room.

"Who is that lad?" inquired Mr Rogers. "I don't suppose I can have seen him before; but his face seems strangely familiar to me."

"No; you can't have seen him before," rejoined the Doctor, smiling, "unless it was in a dream. He has never been in South Africa, and you, I think, have never left it since he was a child."

"No; I have never left the Transvaal, unless to visit Cape Town, or Zululand, or Natal, for twenty years. I wonder you knew me, Stansfield; but, to be sure, you were expecting me before long. But as regards this lad – has he any relatives in the Transvaal?"

"His mother and sister may be in the Transvaal for all I can tell. They left England some years ago, and the place where they are living is quite unknown."

"What is his name?" asked Mr Rogers.

"Rivers," answered the headmaster, – "George Rivers." Mr Rogers shook his head. "I know no person of that name," he said. "It must be a mere chance resemblance. But I should like to know his history; for some reason or other he interests me."

"Well, I can tell it you now," said the Doctor. "Sophia will not expect us until luncheon-time, and that is not for another half-hour yet. Sit down in that chair, and you shall hear it.

"George's father was a country doctor; he lived in this neighbourhood, and was a very estimable man, and skilful in his profession, but very poor. He married Farmer Wylie's daughter, a well-to-do man, and able to give his daughter Agnes a very comfortable portion, particularly as she was his only child. But he set himself against the marriage, forbade it for several years, and at last only agreed because he saw nothing could change his daughter's mind. But he would give her nothing more than a hundred pounds, to buy her wedding clothes and help furnish the house. A country doctor's practice is not very profitable, and Mr Rivers, though not an extravagant, was not a saving man. They found it hard work to live, still harder when their children began to grow up. George was born to them two years after their marriage, and Thyrza two years after that."

"Thyrza, did you say?" interposed Mr Rogers suddenly.

"Yes, Thyrza," said the Doctor. "It was an unusual name, but I believe it was her father's fancy. Well, Mr and Mrs Rivers got poorer and poorer. He had sent George to the college here. The lad was clever and hard-working, and he obtained a scholarship, which went a long way towards paying his schooling. But Mr Rivers called upon me one day, when George was between sixteen and seventeen, and told me that he could not longer afford to pay even the slight cost of his son's education. He had had an interview with his son, he said, and had told him the truth. I was interested in the lad, and told Mr Rivers that whatever school fees there were would be remitted in the case of his son. The poor man was very grateful; but when he reached home with the good news, he found it had come too late. The boy had disappeared, no one knew whither. It was not for nearly a month afterwards that a letter arrived, saying that he had resolved he would no longer be a charge upon his parents' scanty means. He had therefore gone on board a ship bound for Australia. He meant to work his passage out there before the mast, and when out there hoped to be able to find employment enough to keep himself. As soon as he reached his destination, they should hear from him again. Mrs Rivers brought me this letter, in the hope that I might be able to assist her. She was wrapt up in this boy, and his departure had nearly broken her heart.

"'We could bear anything,' she said to me, 'if he was only with us.'

"I promised that I would write to the owners of the ship in which he had sailed, and make arrangements for his return to England on the earliest opportunity. But a series of misfortunes ensued, which I have often wondered that she survived. First of all, there was a terrible fire, by which Mr Rivers' house was burnt to the ground. No life was lost, but there was heavy loss, and, what was worse, Mrs Rivers was severely burned. One arm was so much injured that it was thought for a long time she would lose the use of it, and the scars on her wrist and thumb will never be erased."

Mr Rogers again started, and was on the point of speaking. But he checked himself, and allowed the Doctor to go on.

"Before she had recovered from her wounds came the news that the *Boomerang*, in which George had sailed, had been wrecked. The crew had taken to the boats, some of which had landed safe on the Australian coast; but others, it was feared, were lost. Mr Rivers could not bear up against this continual current of misfortune. He took to his bed, lingered some weeks, and then died. That his widow did not speedily follow him has, as I have already intimated, always been a matter of wonder to me. I think the necessity of living for the sake of her daughter was the only thing that bore her up. She was left, of course, quite penniless. I had the not very pleasant task of calling upon old Farmer Wylie to inform him of his daughter's destitute condition. The old man had turned more and more against the match, as it became evident that the Riverses were not thriving in the world. Mr Rivers had felt hurt and affronted at the language used by his father-in-law; and for the last few years all intercourse had been broken off. But it was now necessary to apply to him. I rode over accordingly, but found I had gone on a bootless errand. Old Wylie himself was dangerously ill, and died within a few days, never having recovered consciousness. When his will was opened, it was found that his whole property had been bequeathed to the county hospital. There was a small sum which had belonged to his wife, which it was agreed might be made over to his daughter. It was enough to pay her husband's debts, and leave her about a couple of hundred pounds. She resolved with this to emigrate to Australia."

"That was a strange resolution, was it not, under the circumstances?" remarked Mr Rogers.

"I think it was, but she had a reason for it. She fancied that her uncle Christopher, who had gone thither many years before, might still be living there. I believe, too, that the sight of the familiar scenes around her, associated as they were in her mind with her husband and son, were more than she could endure. At all events she went, and arrived safely in the colony. She wrote to apprise me of it, but I never heard from her again. Nor have I ever been able to discover what became of her, except that she left Australia soon afterwards."

"And what of George, then?" asked Mr Rogers, who had become interested in the narrative.

"He returned to England about six months after his mother's departure. The boat in which he had left the *Boomerang* had been driven out of its course, and had at last reached the Island of Timor. Thence George had obtained a passage to Singapore, and thence again home. He came to me in great distress. His father's death and his mother's departure from England had been terrible shocks to him. His first thought, of course, was of immediately joining his mother, wherever she might be. But I pointed out to him that it would be better for him to wait until we could learn more of her movements. All that I had heard at that time was that she had left Australia soon after her arrival there, her uncle, Mr Christopher Wylie, having gone somewhere else, though no one seemed to know where. Probably, however, she would write home again. Meanwhile, inquiry might continue to be made. George, who was now nearly eighteen, had better re-enter the college for a year. A small legacy left him by a relative would enable him to pay for his board, and the school fees we remitted. He agreed to this, and continued in the school for a year and a half, after which I found him some employment as an extra junior master. He has continued his studies, and is now a very tolerable scholar."

"And he has never discovered his mother's present residence?"

"Never. A friend in Swan River, to whom I wrote, made every inquiry, but could only learn what I have already told you, that Mrs Rivers went away soon after her arrival. She had discovered some clue, it was thought, to her uncle's new place of abode. But even that is conjecture."

"And what does the lad propose to do with himself?" asked Mr Rogers. "He will not, I suppose, remain here much longer."

"No. He will go away at midsummer. He wanted to go at once, but I urged his remaining until the end of the half-year. Indeed, there are preparations which must be made before undertaking a long voyage."

"He is going to Australia, then?"

"Yes. He thinks that, although Mr Welstead's inquiries failed to elicit the required information, he himself might be more successful. I don't agree with him; but it would be hard to discourage him."

"And if he finds his mother and sister?"

"Then he would buy a little land with what remains of his cousin's legacy, and settle in the colony with his relatives, combining farming with a clergyman's work."

"A clergyman's work? Has he any fancy for that?"

"Yes, a very decided one. He is one of those who are anxious to do good, but who combine with it an impatience of settled habits of life, and a thirst for novelty and adventure. I do not know how to blame him. He has all the qualities that would fit him for the course on which he desires to enter. He is resolute, intelligent, and ready; capital at all field sports and outdoor exercises; capable of bearing considerable fatigue and hardships without murmuring; and withal extremely affectionate and right-minded. Whatever purpose he might conceive, he would be pretty sure to carry out, and, unless under very exceptional circumstances, successfully."

"Indeed!" said Mr Rogers. "Then he is certainly the man for the colonies. Well, Stansfield, I have not interrupted you, because I wanted particularly to hear the whole of this story; but you will be surprised, I think, to hear that I not only know the place where young Rivers' mother and sister are living, but am myself personally acquainted with them."

"With Mrs Rivers and her daughter!" exclaimed the headmaster in surprise. "I thought you said just now that you knew no one of that name?"

"Nor do I," said Mr Rogers; "but I do know a Mrs Mansen, the wife of a Dutch farmer, who lives at one of my farms, only a short distance from my station. She has a daughter named Thyrza Rivers, whose age corresponds nearly with that of the Thyrza of your story."

"It is an uncommon name," said the headmaster. "Still there might be two persons so called."

"No doubt. But you said the mother had been disfigured in the hand by a severe burn. Mrs Mansen is a handsome woman past forty; but she has just such a scar as you describe on her wrist. But did I understand you to say her Christian name was Agnes?"

"Yes," said Dr Stansfield; "I am pretty sure it is. But anyway it will be in the School Register. Yes," he added, taking a book down; "here it is: 'September 24, 18 – . George, son of George and Agnes Rivers, admitted.'"

"Then I think there can be no doubt of the identity," said Mr Rogers. "Mrs Mansen's name is certainly Agnes. She had occasion to sign her name before me, as a magistrate, a twelvemonth ago, and I remember it perfectly. Mrs Mansen, too, had lost, or rather, believed she had lost her only son, at sea. Well, this simplifies matters, I think, considerably. I conclude this young fellow will give up all idea of proceeding to Australia, and betake himself to Mansen's place – 'Spielman's Vley,' as it is called – instead?"

"Spielman's Vley," repeated the Doctor. "Is that in Natal or in Zululand?"

"It is in neither. My station – Umvalosa – is just on the very borders of the three countries, Zululand, Natal, and the Transvaal; and Spielman's Vley lies a short distance only to the north-west, in the Transvaal. It is one of the places which my chaplain, – as I call him, – Lambert, continually visits."

"Ay; his visitations are rather different, I expect, from those of our parochial clergy?"

"Very different. There are at least a dozen places round Umvalosa, which, but for him, would be wholly without spiritual care. He visits these in regular order, as well as he can; but some of them only get a service once in two months or so. Unless there is some special reason, such as some one on his deathbed wanting him, he is unable to visit them oftener."

"That must cause a good deal of spiritual deadness," observed Dr Stansfield. "They must soon forget all about his visits."

"Ah, so you in England fancy; but nothing can be further from the fact. If the parson's visits were looked for in England as they are in my neighbourhood, the English Church would be in a very different position. Our people never forget the day when Mr Lambert is due. They will come a long distance, and in all weathers, to be present at the services. But that is human nature after all. What a man can have for the asking, he cares little about, let it be ever so valuable; what he can only get

by taking much trouble and incurring great risk, that he appreciates. But this has nothing to do with young Rivers. I think I ought to see him, and tell him my conjectures – or rather, I think I may say, my decided convictions – as to the identity of his mother with Mrs Mansen."

"Of course," returned the Doctor. "He must judge for himself; but it appears to me to be a clear case."

"Well, but there is something further. If he is convinced that I am right, he will, I conclude, set out shortly – not for Australia, but for South Africa."

"No doubt of that," assented the headmaster.

"In that case I shall make him an offer, which I hope he will accept. I told you it was the political aspect of things that had brought me home a month or two sooner than I had originally intended; but I had other reasons besides. I wanted to get one or two young men, who would take situations as schoolmasters and readers, and who might ultimately be ordained, and serve churches out there, which I believe I can contrive to get built. Now this lad seems to be the very person I am looking after. I could put him into a small farm, which he could cultivate with the help of some natives, and there would be a salary enough to keep him until the farm began to pay. That it would soon do if he was capable and painstaking, as by your account he is."

"He is all that, I can answer for it. If any young fellow is more likely than another to succeed in such a position, it is George Rivers."

"Very good. If he engages with me, I shall undertake to provide his outfit, and pay his passage to Durban and from thence to Umvalosa. But he must make up his mind at once. I must leave this place for London to-morrow."

"You had better see him without loss of time. He was to go out for a short walk with his friend, Reginald Margetts; but he will be back by dinner-time. I think he will probably accept your offer. I should certainly advise him to do so."

Dr Stansfield proved to be right in his anticipations. George was at first inclined to be somewhat sceptical as to the identity of his mother with Mrs Mansen, and also made many inquiries as to the man who, according to Mr Rogers' theory, was her second husband. He was told that Ludwig Mansen was a very worthy man, well educated, and much respected. George would find him a very desirable relative. He was not rich, but in good circumstances. He and Mrs Mansen were generally thought to live very happily together. As regards himself, Mr Rogers knew that his mother had never ceased to deplore his death, which she supposed had certainly occurred, and that his reappearance would be like new life to her. If George had had no other reason for accepting Mr Rogers' offer, this would have been sufficient to induce him to do so; in fact, the desire of meeting her again grew so greatly on him, that it was with difficulty that he could bring himself to consent to the delay of five or six weeks, which Mr Rogers had declared to be necessary for making the required arrangements. His passage was taken in the *Zulu Queen*, – Captain Ranken, commander, – a large vessel carrying a cargo to Durban, and taking a few first-class passengers at a lower rate than was usually charged by the great steam companies.

About a week after Mr Rogers' departure for London, Redgy Margetts came to Rivers with a letter, which he had that morning received from his father.

"All right," he said, "old fellow! The governor has given his consent, like a brick, as he is!"

"Given his consent to what, Redgy?" inquired George with surprise.

"To my sailing with you for Durban in the *Zulu Queen*" answered Margetts. "I hoped from the first that he would; but I said nothing about it till I was sure."

"You go to the Transvaal, Redgy!" exclaimed Rivers. "What should take you there?"

"Oh, I have always intended to go out to one of the colonies. There is nothing for any one to do in England, you know; and it will be very jolly having you for my messmate and fellow-settler."

"It will be very jolly for *me* anyway," said Rivers, shaking him heartily by the hand. "I really think the thing is quite perfect now."

Chapter Two

The *Zulu Queen* had cleared the Channel and the Bay of Biscay, and was somewhere about abreast of Lisbon, when Redgy Margetts came on deck to join his friend Rivers. The latter was a good sailor, and had some considerable experience of the sea. Even the Channel and the Bay, though they had been more than usually rough, had not discomposed him. But the other passengers, of whom there were not more than seven or eight on board, had had a bad time of it. Two Dutch gentlemen, whose names he had discovered to be Vander Heyden and Moritz, had not left their cabin, and Rivers had heard their groans very distinctly through the thin partition of the cabin. Redgy, whose berth was immediately under his own, had been almost as bad, and had only been comforted by George's assurances that when they were well south of Cape Finisterre, his troubles would be at an end.

The prophecy seemed likely now to be fulfilled. The ship had ceased to pitch and roll, and the bright sky and warm sun were delightful after the confined gloom of the cabin. It was a grand sight indeed that met Redgy's eyes as he stepped on deck. There was the vast blue dome above, hardly flecked by a single cloud. There was the illimitable ocean below, the waves dancing gaily in the sunshine, and in the distance the coast of Portugal, lying like a soft cloud, through which some shadowy outlines of the mountains were visible.

"Well, this is jolly enough!" exclaimed Margetts, as he seated himself by his friend's side. "If the voyage is going to be like this, there won't be so much to complain of."

"It *will* be like this, only a little warmer – a good deal warmer – when we get in the tropics," said Rivers. "But otherwise the appearance of things won't be greatly different from this for a good many weeks to come. How are the Dutchmen, Redgy? Have they ceased groaning?"

"I haven't heard them this morning," returned Margetts. "I fancy they are getting up. The lady has been the worst, I believe."

"Lady! I didn't know there was a lady on board. What, is she the big Dutchman's wife?"

"No, sister. I heard the second biggest Dutchman call to the other, and tell him his sister wanted him!"

"Do you know their names, Redgy? I only saw them for a few minutes when they came aboard at Plymouth. I didn't see the lady at all. I suppose she must have gone straight down into her cabin."

"I know nothing but their Christian names," returned Redgy. "The big one is called Henryk, and the other Frank, or, as they pronounced it, Vrank. The lady, I think, is Annchen. That's their way of pronouncing the name."

"Well, I hope they'll make themselves agreeable. As they are to be our companions for four or five weeks at least, it will make a considerable difference to us whether they are pleasant or not."

"I too should like to know something about them," said Margetts. "Here's the skipper. Perhaps he'll be able to tell us something. Good morning, Captain Ranken," he added, as the captain came up.

"Good morning, gentlemen. Good morning, Mr Margetts," said the skipper; "glad to see you've got over it. Mr Rivers here is an old salt, and doesn't mind even the Bay of Biscay."

"We want you to tell us something about our fellow-passengers," said George.

"Fellow-passengers! We've very few – two Englishmen, besides yourselves. One is Mr Whittaker, a clerk in a house at Pieter Maritzburg, the other Mr Walters, who has some Government appointment in the colony. There's a Portuguese too. He's in the wine trade, I fancy, but he goes no farther than Madeira. And there's a Dutch officer and his sister – Mynheer Vander Heyden and his friend Moritz. They all three hail from the Transvaal. I never had so few passengers on board before."

"Well, you know the old proverb," said Margetts: "the fewer the better cheer. We must try to make that good."

"All right, Mr Margetts! Nothing is pleasanter than these voyages, when the passengers are on good terms with one another. I will do my best, I promise you, to make things pleasant. Here they

come," he added a moment afterwards, as the head and shoulders of a tall man came up the hatchway. "Come with me, and I will introduce you."

The two Dutchmen looked round them as they mounted the companion ladder, with the air of persons who were familiar with what they saw. They were both somewhat heavily built, but rather fine-looking men. The taller of the two might be eight or nine-and-twenty. His figure showed great muscular strength, and there was an alacrity in his movements which betokened one well accustomed to bodily exertion. His features were rather handsome, though there was an expression to be traced on them which indicated an imperious, and somewhat irascible, temper. His friend Moritz was of a slighter build, but still wiry and strong. His features were not so regular, but he looked more good-natured than his companion. It may be added that their demeanour accorded with these impressions.

"Mynheer Vander Heyden, Mynheer Moritz, let me introduce you to Mr Rivers and Mr Margetts. You will have much in common with them, I fancy, as their destination is only a few hundred miles short of your own."

Vander Heyden bowed distantly. "English settlers, I suppose," he said. "Do you propose to establish yourselves, gentlemen, in Natal, or Zululand?"

"In neither," replied Rivers a little stiffly, for he did not like the tone in which Vander Heyden spoke. "The place to which I am proceeding is in the Transvaal."

"I thought as much," muttered Vander Heyden. Rivers only half caught the words, but there could be no mistake as to Vander Heyden's demeanour. Some unpleasant altercation might have ensued, if Moritz had not stept forward and said pleasantly, "The Transvaal! that is our country, and it is a very fine one to settle in. May I ask what is the name of your station?"

"Dykeman's Hollow," replied Rivers. "It lies, I am told, some twenty miles from the Zulu frontier."

"Yes, at Umvalosa," assented Moritz. "I know where it is, and have often been by it, though I have never visited there. I believe the land is very good in that neighbourhood."

"Is the hunting good there?" asked Redgy; "are there plenty of wild animals about there?"

"More than perhaps you would desire," returned Moritz, smiling. "The lions and the elephants are not often to be seen; they never continue long in any neighbourhood in which Europeans have settled. Still, in the northern parts of the Transvaal you will meet with them – occasionally, at all events. But of the tigers – or rather the leopards, for that is what they really are – and of the hyenas, there are plenty. There is also no lack of snakes – cobras, ondaras, and puff-adders; there is no dearth of any of them."

"I shall enjoy the lion-hunting, at all events," said Redgy.

"I hardly think you will," observed Vander Heyden with something of a sneer. "You will find that a different matter from what you in England are pleased to call sport – hunting a hare or a fox, or shooting at a bird. Hunting in the Transvaal requires both skill and courage."

"No doubt, Mr Vander Heyden," said George shortly; "but there is no reason, I suppose, why an Englishman may not possess both."

"It is possible that he may," returned the Dutchman coldly.

Captain Ranken looked uncomfortable. He foresaw altercations in the distance, if not open quarrels, and these on board ship were especially to be deprecated. He saw that though George apparently was good-tempered, he was not disposed to submit to insolence; and Vander Heyden evidently entertained the strong dislike to the English for which so many of his countrymen were notorious. Nothing, however, had been said as yet which required his interference. He was looking about for some means of diverting the conversation into another channel, when the arrival of a new person on the scene effected his purpose for him. A delicate white hand appeared on the top of the companion, and immediately after a female figure issued forth. The captain stepped forward to offer his hand.

"I am rejoiced, Miss Vander Heyden, to welcome you on deck. This is a charming morning for your first appearance. It is quite warm, though there is a pleasant breeze."

The young lady untied the woollen scarf she had wrapped round her head, and requited the captain's civility by a bow. The latter would have proceeded to present her to the two Englishmen, but her brother stepped stiffly forward, and, offering his arm, led her to a seat near the taffrail Moritz followed, and the captain turned off to give some directions to the mate.

"I don't like that fellow, George," said Margetts. "He seems inclined to be insolent. I'm afraid we shall have a row with him before long."

"I don't know about a row, Redgy," said Rivers; "that is, if you mean an open quarrel. I don't mean to quarrel with him, or with any one else. But he must be more civil, if we are to be on friendly terms. The other seems inclined to be more sociable."

"And his sister too," observed Redgy. "She looks good-natured enough, and only look how handsome she is! Don't you think so, George?"

"She is not bad-looking," assented Rivers; "I shouldn't call her regularly handsome, but she is certainly both pretty and sweet-looking."

"Her society will make the voyage pleasanter," said Redgy.

"I should doubt that," returned George. "If I don't mistake, this Dutchman doesn't mean us to make her acquaintance."

"She may have something to say to that," observed Margetts. "He isn't either her father or her husband, you know."

"No," said Rivers; "he couldn't prevent our knowing her, if she desired it herself. But I shall take my cue from him, and stand aloof if he shows that he wishes it. But here come two more – and Englishmen evidently. I don't think the Portuguese will show on deck to-day, from what the steward told me. I suppose we needn't stand on ceremony here. Mr Whittaker and Mr Walters, I believe," he added, taking off his hat. "My name is Rivers, and my friend's here is Margetts. As we are to be fellow-voyagers for some weeks, we had better make acquaintance."

"My name is Whittaker," said the elder of the two travellers, a pleasant-looking man of about thirty, "and I am happy to be introduced to you, Mr Rivers. This is Mr Walters. He lands at East London, but all the rest of us, I believe, are going on to Durban."

"I believe so," assented Rivers. "Do you reside in Durban, may I ask?"

"No. I am the chief clerk in the Colonial Bank at Pieter Maritzburg. I have been home on business connected with the bank, and am now returning."

"Do you know these Dutchmen?" asked Margetts, looking as he spoke at the group of three who were still seated by the taffrail.

Mr Whittaker looked in the direction indicated.

"Yes," he said, "I do know them; and I am not particularly glad to have them for my fellow-passengers. I have seen them once or twice in Natal, and I met them at the house of one of our correspondents a week or two ago in London."

"What do you know about them?" inquired Redgy. "I know that they have an especial dislike to Englishmen," said Whittaker; "that is, Vander Heyden has; I don't know about the other. If you knew the colony as well as I do, Mr Rivers, you would be aware that there is a great difference observable among the Dutch settlers. Some of them are kind and friendly enough with all white men – "

"All *white* men?" interposed Redgy. "Not with blacks, then?"

"No, Mr Margetts," returned the other gravely. "A man can know very little about the colony not to be aware that every Dutchman regards the natives as being of little more account than dogs or horses – of a good deal less account than many horses."

"So I have heard. But what about their relationship with other whites?"

"As I was saying, some of them will receive kindly and hospitably all Europeans; but others entertain a rooted dislike to all but their own countrymen. Englishmen in particular they regard as

their natural enemies. They will not do them the slightest service, or exchange the most ordinary civilities with them. I have known some Boers refuse even a glass of cold water to an Englishman when he was almost perishing with thirst."

"And this Vander Heyden is one of that sort, hey?" asked Margetts. "By the way, did not Captain Ranken say he was an officer?"

"He has been some years in the Dutch service. He left the Transvaal when his father died; but he is now returning to marry, and live on his property with his wife and sister. Some years ago, when visiting a friend at Maritzburg who is a merchant there, there was a quarrel with an English officer, which attracted a good deal of attention, and made Vander Heyden, for the time at all events, very notorious. That was caused by his manner of dealing with the natives."

"What were the particulars?" asked Mr Walters.

"He was on his way to Maritzburg," said Whittaker, "and on the road he met a servant of Captain Tarleton's, who was taking two horses belonging to his master to Rorke's Drift. The spot where they met was at a small spring in the middle of a long dry tract of country. They arrived nearly about the same time; but Tarleton's servant got there first, and was proceeding to water the horses, when Vander Heyden ordered him imperiously to desist, and wait until his party had watered their cattle. He took the captain's servant for a native, – a Kaffir or Zulu; but the man really was a Sikh, and as bold and fierce as Vander Heyden himself. He angrily refused; and, when the Dutchman thrust him violently on one side, he drew his knife, and would have stabbed his assailant, if the others of the party had not seized him. While the altercation was going on, Captain Tarleton himself rode up, and, having heard the particulars from the bystanders, took up the quarrel. The result was a challenge; and there would have been a duel in Maritzburg a day or two afterwards, if the matter had not reached the ears of one of the local magistrates. He sent for the parties, convicted Vander Heyden of an assault, and required him to find securities to keep the peace, or leave the colony. The Dutchman chose the latter course. But the affair, I take it, has not increased his affection for us English."

"Well, he must keep the peace here," remarked the captain, who had again joined them; "and I shall take care that he does. But I agree with Mr Whittaker that he is not very likely to be over cordial with us English. I have already seen some indications of his feelings towards us."

"The other man – Moritz his name is, I think," observed Redgy – "appears to be more amiably disposed."

"The young lady too seems pleasant," said Mr Whittaker; "but I suppose she will be in a great measure under her brother's orders."

"No doubt," said Rivers. "Well, of course, it rests with herself whether we are to be friendly with her or not."

Several days passed on. Madeira was reached; and then the ship's course was set for Saint Helena, where there was to be a delay of at least twenty-four hours. The anticipations expressed as to Vander Heyden's demeanour were fully verified. He stood aloof himself from all the passengers except Moritz and the Portuguese, Martinez; and it was tolerably plain that he only sought his society as a means of keeping the others at a distance. At the meals, which took place in the principal cabin, he seated his sister at the end of the table, on the captain's right. He himself sat next to her, with Moritz immediately opposite, and Martinez next to him. As he never addressed a single word to the Englishmen, and the Portuguese could not speak English, all conversation with Annchen became almost impossible; indeed, as none of them had been introduced to her, they could hardly under such circumstances presume to address her. Indeed, they felt too much offended at the haughty dislike which Vander Heyden made no show of concealing, to have any desire to do so; and the voyage to the Cape might have been accomplished without the interchange of a word between the young lady and her English fellow-passengers, if it had not been for an occurrence which took place when they were some days' voyage south of Madeira, and approaching the equator.

All the party were on deck. Annchen, dressed entirely in white, and wearing a large hat of the same colour, – the crown being thickened as a defence against the sun, – was sitting on a low stool under the shade of the companion. Rivers, Redgy, and Mr Walters were lying on the deck under an awning which they had constructed with the help of an old sail. A sharp wind had been blowing since daybreak, which threatened to rise to a gale at sundown. Presently one of the sailors, carrying a load of potatoes to the coop, came up the hatchway. He had evidently been drinking, and was extremely unsteady on his legs. A gust of wind caught him as he stepped on deck. He reeled, and struck against Vander Heyden, upsetting him, and knocking him against Annchen, who was standing close by. She lost her balance, and the wind, catching her hat, swept it across the deck. It would have been carried into the sea, if it had not been caught in the rigging. Rivers started up, skimmed nimbly up the ropes, recovered the hat, and, descending, presented it to its owner. Annchen coloured, and glanced hurriedly round at her brother, expecting him to acknowledge the civility.

But Vander Heyden was differently employed. He had regained his feet, and was on the point of angrily reproving the sailor for his clumsiness, when he suddenly exclaimed, —

"Ha! you here, you English scoundrel! What has brought you into this ship? How dare you intrude yourself on me?"

"I want to have nothing to do with you," retorted the man sullenly. "I couldn't help the wind blowing, could I? As for my being an English scoundrel, a Dutch coward is worse any day!"

"Insolent hound!" cried Vander Heyden, striking him a heavy blow as he spoke; "I will teach you to insult a Hollander."

The man reeled and fell on the deck, knocking over another sailor, named Van Ryk, who was passing at the moment. Their dislike of the Boer seemed to be as great as his of them. They leaped up and rushed together on Vander Heyden, and an angry fray would have ensued, if Wyndham, the first mate, had not interfered. He had seen what had occurred, and desired the combatants to desist.

"Mr Vander Heyden," he said, "this cannot be allowed. Bostock has had more than his allowance of grog, and I shall see that he is punished for that; but I am pretty sure he did not mean to annoy you – "

"Whom do you call Bostock?" interrupted the Dutchman, – "that schelm, Cargill? I know him better than you do, I fancy."

"I know him by the name in which he entered this ship," returned the mate. "But it does not matter what his name is. You had no right to strike him, and should beg his pardon."

"Beg his pardon!" exclaimed the other haughtily; "you do not think I shall do that! He has hurt me a good deal. I believe I have sprained my ankle badly. But, anyway, I am not to be subjected to his drunken insolence. If he intrudes himself on me again, he will suffer sharply for it. Help me down below, Frank," he continued; "I must get my shoe off, and bandage my ankle. The surgeon had better come to me."

"Stop, sir," said the mate. "I shall send for the captain, and inform him of what has passed. You will be pleased to wait till he comes on deck."

Captain Ranken accordingly was summoned, and, having heard Wyndham's statement, asked Vander Heyden whether the matter had been correctly reported; but the latter made no reply.

"I must assume, then, that the thing really occurred as reported. I beg to tell you, sir, that I command this ship; and any one who interferes with its discipline is accountable to me. You will beg this man's pardon, as the mate has most properly required, and give your undertaking not to repeat your violence, or I shall confine you to your cabin. Any repetition of your offence will be punished by your being put into irons."

"I shall give no promise," said Vander Heyden angrily. "Frank, help me to my cabin, and send the surgeon to me. I suppose he will not be forbidden to attend me."

"Certainly not, sir," said Captain Ranken; "I did not know that you had been hurt. Perhaps when below you will think better of this, and give the promise I require. I hope you will forgive

me, Miss Vander Heyden," he continued, as the Dutchman was helped down the companion. "I am extremely sorry for what has occurred; but it is necessary for the comfort of the whole ship, that I should maintain strict discipline."

Annchen bowed silently, and, taking her hat from George, who was still standing by, holding it in his hand, thanked him very civilly. She then expressed her intention of going down to her brother, to see if she could render him any help.

"I think you had better not," said George. "The surgeon has just gone to him, and will do all that is necessary. Mr Moritz, too, is with him, and there is hardly room for more in the cabin. But I will go down and inquire."

He went below accordingly, and presently returned with the information that the surgeon said there was a severe sprain. But he had bandaged and fomented the ankle, and it would be better for the patient to remain for the present quite quiet. Moritz also returned on deck with the same report, at the same time thanking Rivers with much courtesy for his services. George replied; and a conversation ensued, which altogether dispelled the awkwardness which had hitherto prevailed. Vander Heyden's sprain was found to be worse than it was at first apprehended. It became evident that for a week at least he would be a prisoner in his cabin, thus rendering the captain's sentence altogether needless. His absence from the deck and the daily meals, made an entire alteration in the relation of the passengers to one another. Annchen passed a considerable part of her time in her brother's cabin, but she was still frequently on deck, and when there showed no disposition to repel the civilities of her fellow-passengers, and the whole party soon became extremely friendly with one another.

One evening Captain Ranken announced that they were now within a day's sail of Saint Helena, and that he intended to make up a party, which he hoped all the passengers would join, to visit Longwood and Napoleon's grave.

"I am afraid your brother will still be a prisoner, Miss Annchen," he said. "But that need not deprive us of your and Mr Moritz's company."

Annchen made no reply, unless a slight tinge of colour which overspread her cheek might be regarded as one. She knew that her brother would in all likelihood insist on her remaining in the ship; but that she was very unwilling to do. She was very fond of him, and always sided with him, so far as she was able; but she was not blind to his faults, and knew that in the quarrel which had recently taken place he was almost entirely to blame. She had saved him from the indignity of giving the promise required by Captain Ranken, by assuring the captain privately that her brother would not repeat the offence, though he was too proud to say so; and Captain Ranken, taking into consideration the confinement which Vander Heyden had already undergone, and influenced doubtless, as all men are apt to be, by appeals from bright eyes and arguments from rosy lips, had agreed to make no further mention of the matter. But she was not disposed to submit to her brother's dictation respecting her fellow-passengers, whom she had found extremely agreeable and friendly; against whom, too, there seemed to be no other objection than that they were Englishmen. George Rivers in particular was a very agreeable companion, and she was greatly diverted with the humorous sallies of Redgy Margetts and young Walters, who kept the whole party in a state of continual amusement. Mr Whittaker, again, was an agreeable fellow-passenger, though graver and less communicative than the others. She was more frank and easy with the young men, because it was generally known that there was an engagement between her and Mynheer Moritz, – one of those family compacts, with which both parties seemed to be satisfied, though there was no display of ardent affection on either side. On the whole, the party in the cabin and on the deck was a pleasant one, Moritz appearing to enjoy it as well as herself. But Annchen felt sure that if her brother should be told of the proposed expedition to visit the interior of Saint Helena, he would object to her joining it; and she was not disposed to forego the pleasure she promised herself, to gratify his fancy. She therefore said nothing on the subject until the captain's boat, which was to convey the party on shore, had been made ready. Then she told Captain Ranken that she had resolved to go on the party with the others.

"Delighted to hear it, Miss Vander Heyden?" answered the captain; "and I think I can promise you that you will not regret your determination. I have already sent a message on shore to order a carriage, which will take us to Longwood. Now then for the detested residence, and the empty grave, of the *ci-devant* conqueror of Europe!"

Chapter Three

"Nature must have intended this island for a prison," remarked Miss Vander Heyden, as she looked up at the inaccessible precipices by which Saint Helena is environed. "Nothing but a bird could make its way into the interior, except by the landing-places, and the narrow paths which lead up the mountain-sides from them."

"True," asserted the captain; "and there are only four landing-places which it is possible for a boat to approach, and three of them are more or less dangerous. This one which we are now drawing near to is the only one in the island which deserves the name of a landing-place."

"And it would be difficult for an enemy to assail that," remarked Rivers, as he glanced at the fortified lines, bristling with cannon, which commanded the quay. "It would take a great many ships of the line to silence those batteries. Even then, from the tops of those cliffs, any force that attempted a landing might be destroyed without the possibility of retaliation. Yes, I agree with you, Miss Vander Heyden; Napoleon's heart, if he ever really contemplated an escape from his captivity, must have died within him when he came within sight of these precipices."

"You are right, sir," said Captain Ranken. "That was his real ground of complaint against Saint Helena. He talked of the unhealthiness of the climate, and the badness of his accommodation, and the rudeness of the officials in charge of him. But the true grievance was that escape was impossible."

"Ay," said Mr Moritz; "your countrymen made better jailors than those who had charge of him at Elba. Small blame to you, too. If he had been shut up in any place, which he could have got out of, he would have lived long enough to turn Europe upside down once more."

"Is the climate unhealthy?" inquired Mr Walters.

"Unhealthy! no, not a bit of it," replied the captain. "I resided here once for two years, as one of the Company's agents. I should say it was a particularly healthy country for Europeans. It is both mild and uniform in its temperature, never excessively hot, and never very cold. An English August and an English January would both of them astonish the natives of Saint Helena. The trade wind gives a succession of steady and equable breezes, and tropical storms are almost unknown."

"It is very bare and ungenial in its appearance, any way," remarked Annchen.

"Ah, Miss Annchen, that comes of trusting to first appearances," said Captain Ranken. "You will find it greatly improve on nearer acquaintance. But here we are, and here are our conveyances waiting for us."

They landed accordingly, and, after crossing the drawbridge, passed under the arched gateway, and entered the principal street of the town. This was not very long, not containing more than fifty or sixty houses, but these were mostly of a handsome appearance, resembling English houses for the most part, two storeys in height, and whitewashed. The population seemed to be almost entirely negro; but a bronzed old soldier, who told them that he had in his youth kept guard at Napoleon's grave, offered himself as their guide, and his services were accepted. Under his guidance they began their ascent, which had been constructed with enormous labour along the side of the almost perpendicular precipices, and which tried the nerves of some of the party, who were not accustomed to climbing. For a long way the ascent exhibited nothing but the spectacle of naked and barren rocks, but after the first two miles were passed, the eyes of the travellers were relieved by the sudden sight of wooded heights, diversified by picturesque villas and cultivated gardens. Trees which were quite new to some of the party grew on either side of the pathway. The Indian banyan and bamboo, the mimosa, the aloe, and the prickly pear of Southern Africa, were to be found side by side with Australian gum trees, and the mulberries of Southern Europe. There appeared also to be a variety of tropical fruits; figs, limes, mangoes, guavas, citrons, bananas, and pomegranates grew and throve, apparently, in the gardens which they passed. The temperature altered sensibly as they approached Longwood, which indeed is nearly eighteen hundred feet above the level of the sea.

"This seems a comfortable house enough," remarked Redgy, as they entered the grounds, – "not an imperial palace, to be sure, but that was hardly to be expected."

"He was comfortable enough, I expect," said Captain Ranken, – "as comfortable as he would have been anywhere. Indeed, he wouldn't go into the big house which the English Ministry had built for him. No, it was the being shut up at all that he didn't like."

"You are right, sir," remarked the old sergeant with a smile. "If they had taken the palace of Versailles over for him, he wouldn't have liked it any better."

"Did you ever see him?" inquired Rivers.

"No, sir; I didn't come to the island till just before his death; but my father-in-law, who died a few years ago, was a soldier under Sir Hudson Lowe's command; and he told me that he had often been set as one of the sentries round Longwood, and had seen Buonaparte again and again. It was a troublesome duty keeping guard on him."

"How so?" asked Walters.

"Why, sir, they were obliged – one of them, that is, was obliged – to see Bony with his own eyes once in every twenty-four hours – to make sure of him, you see, sir. There was always a fancy that he was trying to make his escape to America."

"There was some ground for that, if what I have read is true," remarked Rivers.

"Maybe, sir," said Sergeant Thorpe. "Anyhow, Sir Hudson always acted as though he believed it; and he insisted that one of the men should see Bony every day, and make sure he was there; and nothing that he did made Bony so angry. He would take every means of preventing it that he could. He would shut himself up sometimes for a whole day, and allow no one to enter his room but his own servants. They were all in the same mind as himself about it; and even if they hadn't been, they durstn't for the life of them let any one go into the room where he was. Some of our chaps hung about the entrance for an hour or two, or longer than that, before they could get a sight of him. My father-in-law told me that one day, when he had waited for ever so long without being able to see Buonaparte, he hid himself behind one of the curtains in the hall and stayed there till bed-time. About ten o'clock Bony came out on his way to bed. My father-in-law got a clear sight of him, but Bony caught a glimpse of the end of his shoe sticking out from under the curtain. My father-in-law was hauled out, and had to explain what brought him there. A complaint was sent to Sir Hudson – and to the Government, I believe, too – that an attempt had been made to assassinate him! But there were so many stories of the same kind, none of which had any foundation, that very little attention was paid to it."

"No," said Captain Ranken. "The Government would have had little else to do, if they had attended to all his complaints. So this is the house where the great emperor lived, is it?"

"Lived and died, sir," said Sergeant Thorpe. "This is the room where he used to sit and dictate, and this the bedroom where he died. There was a terrible storm on the day of his death, the 4th of May 1821. I can just remember it, having come here when I was a young boy, a few weeks before. The people in the island say there has never been such a storm known before or since. All the trees about the place were torn up, and among them the willow, under which was his favourite seat."

"Were you present at his burial?" inquired Margetts.

"No, sir, I was too young to be taken. I was left at home with my nurse and little sister, but almost every one in the island was there. We will go down and look at it now, if you please. It lies in a small valley. The spot was a favourite resort of his, and there he had asked to be buried."

The party accordingly quitted Longwood, and followed the sergeant down to the spot he indicated. It was a lovely place, but very little attempt had been made further to beautify it. A mound of about three hundred feet in circumference, overgrown with grass, had been surrounded with a simple palisade. About the middle of this there was a tomb constructed of stone enclosed by an iron railing. There was neither inscription nor monument, the coffin having been deposited in a vault beneath, and the roof cemented over.

"I have stood here sentinel many a day, gentlemen," said the sergeant, "when I was a young man. There used to be a many visitors who came to see it – mostly old soldiers who had fought under him."

"Do you remember the removal of the body to France?" inquired Rivers.

"Yes, sir, I saw that myself," replied Thorpe; "it was nearly twenty years after his burial. The son of the king of France, that then was, came to take the body to Europe. It was a grand sight. I was one of the soldiers on duty that day. The earth was dug away until they came to the vault, which had been overlaid with cement, but this was found to be so hard that the workmen's tools broke one after another, and it was a long time before they could make the slightest impression upon it. At last they did make their way through it, and lifted up the large white stone, and exposed the coffin. When the lid was taken off there lay the great emperor, not the least changed, it appeared, by all the twenty years he had lain there. The features were not even shrunk, and there were the orders on his breast, and the cocked hat by his side, scarcely tarnished. After the coffin had been removed they replaced the stones as they were before. A good many people still visit this place, but not nearly so many, of course, as formerly."

The party now took leave of Sergeant Thorpe, and returned to Jamestown.

"Why didn't Whittaker make one of our party?" asked Margetts of Walters, as they rode side by side down the precipitous path.

"I don't quite know," said Walters. "For some reason or other, he is very unwilling to be absent from his cabin for any long time together. I have noticed that almost every hour he goes down to it. I suppose he has something valuable there, which he thinks it necessary to keep an eye upon."

"I don't know but what he's right," remarked Rivers. "One or two of the crew strike me as being by no means the most desirable shipmates. That fellow Bostock, and Van Ryk, the boatswain's mate, and one or two others, if they are honest fellows, don't look it. I spoke to the captain about it a day or two ago, and he agreed with what I said. But he told me that he and Wyndham kept a sharp look-out upon them, and when the ship reached Port Elizabeth, he meant to get rid of them. It is only a few of whom he has any suspicion; the rest are all right."

The next day the voyage was resumed, and after rather more than a week's run, Cape Town was reached. Here there was a delay of several days. Vander Heyden went ashore with his sister to the house of a friend, with whom he resided during the whole of the ship's stay in harbour.

He had been very angry with his friend and sister for joining the English party to Longwood, and would have broken off all acquaintance with Rivers and his friend, if Moritz and Annchen would have allowed it. But though he succeeded so far to prevent anything like close intimacy, he could not prevent civilities from being offered and accepted; and Vander Heyden had seen too much of Captain Ranken, to venture upon any repetition of the conduct which had brought about the collision between them a fortnight before.

During the stay at Cape Town an unfortunate incident occurred, which caused the captain much greater vexation than the misconduct of his Dutch passenger. Nearly a dozen of his best men, who had been allowed by the second mate, in the absence of his superior officers, to go on shore, were reported missing, and all inquiries after them proved vain. Either they had been bribed to serve on board some foreign ship, or to join some party to the interior. Captain Ranken was obliged to supply their place, as well as he could, with some men whom he had picked up at Cape Town, but whose appearance he by no means liked.

"We must keep a sharp look-out upon them, Wyndham," he said on the morning of the day after that on which they had resumed their voyage. "If it wasn't that it would be impossible to navigate the ship without them, there's hardly one of these fellows with whom I would like to sail. I shall send them adrift at Port Elizabeth, along with Bostock and Van Ryk and Sherwin. I expect there will be no lack of good hands there."

"Well, it won't be very long, sir," said Wyndham, – "not above three or four days at the outside, and there are enough of us to put down any disturbance during that time. I'll speak to Mr Rivers and Mr Whittaker, and the others. They'd be very useful if any disturbance occurs."

"I will speak to Mr Whittaker myself," said the captain. "He told me something yesterday, an hour or two after we left the harbour, which if he had mentioned before, I should have taken certain steps, which it would be too late to take now. I gave him my mind on the subject, though there was no great use in doing that."

"What, he has something valuable on board, I suppose?" observed Wyndham; "I have suspected as much for a long time. That was why he would not go ashore at Saint Helena, then?"

"Yes," said the captain; "I think under the circumstances it is quite as well you should know, Wyndham. He has got 5000 pounds in specie, which he is taking out to the bank at Maritzburg. Of course he was bound to tell me – to give it into my custody, in fact – before we sailed. He declares he did not know that. That may be true, though it seems strange he should be ignorant of it. But, any way, it is no use discussing that matter any further."

"No, sir. I suppose you have it in your charge now?"

"Yes, of course. I have put it away in the strong cupboard, and will not deliver it up till we reach Durban."

"And what made Mr Whittaker tell you about it this morning, more than on any other day?" asked Wyndham.

"That is one of the most unpleasant features in the matter," rejoined the captain. "Mr Whittaker has always kept his cabin locked throughout the voyage, and has never been absent from it for any considerable time. Until this morning, he had no suspicion but what everything was perfectly safe. But last night, after the passengers had gone to bed, he fancied he heard a noise in the passage, and caught a glimpse of some one hurrying away. This morning, on going into his cabin, he found Bostock there; and on his inquiring what business the man had in his cabin, Bostock muttered something about having gone in to clean it out. But it is not Bostock's business to clean the cabins. Mr Whittaker was alarmed, and came to me immediately afterwards."

"Indeed, sir! That looks ugly, certainly. You must get rid of Bostock when we get to Port Elizabeth."

"I have already said that I meant to do so. Indeed, I would have dismissed him at Cape Town, if Mr Whittaker had spoken to me in time. All that we can now do is to keep a bright look-out. Mr Whittaker and I are alternately to keep watch in my cabin, until we drop anchor in Algoa Bay. You had better keep an eye on Bostock; and it would be as well if you asked Mr Rivers to help you in doing so. Mr Rivers is, to my mind, as stout-hearted and cool-headed a fellow as any we have on board."

"I agree with you in that, sir, and will see Mr Rivers at once. But I don't apprehend much mischief from John Bostock. The man seems to me as if he had lost his head."

If Mr Wyndham could have been present at a conversation which had taken place an hour or two before between Bostock, Van Ryk, Andersen, the captain's servant, and a sailor named Sherwin, he would hardly have expressed this opinion. John Bostock, little as Wyndham suspected it, was by birth a gentleman. He was the son of a Lincolnshire squire of ancient family, but very reduced means. His father was the last of a long series of spendthrifts, who had gradually reduced a noble inheritance to a heap of encumbrances. Langley Cargill, or, as he now called himself, John Bostock, was one of his younger sons. He followed in his father's steps, and was soon hopelessly involved in debt. He tried to live by successful betting and gambling, but failed here also, and was reduced to extreme straits, when a boon companion, a man of some influence, obtained for him a commission in a Dutch regiment quartered at the Hague. Here he was safe from creditors, and had an income upon which it would have been possible to live decently, if strict economy had been observed. But to Cargill economy had become impossible. He fell into his old courses, and would probably have soon been

expelled from the Dutch service, if his ruin had not been precipitated by an outrage which drew on him the punishment of the law.

In the second year of his residence he was attracted by the grace and beauty of a young girl, who had just made her first appearance in public. Langley contrived to obtain an introduction, which he tried for several months to improve into an acquaintance. The lady's friends, who were aware of his character, interfered to prevent this. Her brother, in particular, a haughty young officer, had forbidden all intercourse; and on the occasion of a public ball, when Cargill was more than usually importunate, had insisted on his leaving the room. Cargill replied by drawing his sword on Vander Heyden. The police interfered, and Cargill was insane enough to resist, wounding several men, and one severely. He would have received a heavy sentence, if he had not contrived to escape from prison, and enlist as a sailor in a ship just leaving the harbour. After several voyages he found himself in London, and in the autumn of 1879 engaged himself, under the name of Bostock, as an A.B. on board the *Zulu Queen*, about to sail for Durban. Here he found Jans Van Ryk, Amos Sherwin, and Eric Andersen, old companions of his coarse debauches. A day or two after leaving harbour, he also recognised Annchen Vander Heyden and her brother, as the reader has heard in the previous chapter. Annchen had no suspicion that she had even seen him before; but her brother's memory was better, though with the scornful hauteur of his character he paid no further heed to Bostock's presence.

It will readily be believed that Bostock was not so indifferent to their former relations. He had devised a scheme by which he was to revenge himself on Vander Heyden, during the ship's stay at Cape Town. He had resolved to follow him on shore, force him to a personal encounter, in which, being himself a first-rate swordsman, he expected to get the better of his antagonist, and, in event of his wounding or killing him, make his escape to the Transvaal, which was at the time full of lawless characters. He had been baffled by Wyndham, who had refused him permission to leave the ship during the stay at Cape Town. Provoked to fury by this failure, he had resolved to enter Vander Heyden's cabin on the night of his return to the *Zulu Queen*, kill him, or be killed; and, if he should prove the survivor, throw himself into the sea and swim ashore. His purpose was a second time defeated – in this instance by Mr Whittaker, who occupied the next cabin to Vander Heyden, and who, as Bostock could see through the glass in his door, was awake and completely dressed. Surprised as well as disconcerted, he looked through the square of glass, and saw Whittaker engaged in counting a number of packages, which he perceived to be rouleaus of gold. The strong iron-bound chest was evidently full of them; in which case, he must have a very large sum of money with him. This discovery turned his thoughts into a different channel. He took an opportunity the next day of visiting Mr Whittaker's cabin, to make some examination of the chest, but was surprised by the sadden entrance of its owner. Mr Whittaker threatened to complain to the captain, and Bostock had no doubt he had carried out his threat. He felt at once that if he was to execute his designs either on Vander Heyden or the chest of specie, it must be done before the ship reached Algoa Bay. He had therefore invited his three mates in evil to a conference in the hold of the vessel. At this he imparted to them the discovery he had made, and the three worthies between them had hatched a plot, which was that very night to be put into execution.

When Wyndham left Captain Ranken, he went immediately to George Rivers' cabin, to whom he imparted the information received from the captain. George at once agreed to do all that lay in his power, and promised to join the first mate on deck, after he had taken a few hours' sleep. Wyndham, on his part, went to take his supper, which was brought him by Amos Sherwin, one of the quartermasters, his own servant, it appeared, being ill.

The night came on suddenly, as is usual in those latitudes, and the moon was obscured by clouds. About ten o'clock the first mate came on deck to take his watch. He complained of feeling drowsy and heavy; but was nevertheless quite able to take his work. A steady hand was placed at the wheel, and everything was quiet on deck. Walters and Margetts, who had not been disposed to turn in, were seated near the taffrail, smoking. Notwithstanding the darkness, the night was pleasant, and it was

possible occasionally to discern the coast-line, – which was distant two or three miles, – though very indistinctly. The first mate seated himself near them, leaning his head on his hand. A few minutes afterwards, some one came up with a message to the steersman, and the latter, surrendering the wheel to the newcomer, went below. The night wore on, and after a while the moon, forcing its way through the clouds, lit up the scene. The two young men now noticed that the ship appeared to be a good deal nearer to the coast than it had been all day. Walters called out to the first mate to point out the fact to him. He hailed him once or twice, but received no answer.

"I say," he exclaimed, "Wyndham must be asleep. Oughtn't we to wake him, Redgy?"

"He can hardly be asleep," returned Margetts, – "a smart hand such as he is. But I'll go and speak to him."

He stepped up to Mr Wyndham's side, and, finding he still took no notice, shook him. But the mate did not bestir himself, and the two young men perceived that he was either seriously ill, or intoxicated.

"I say, this is serious," said Redgy; "we had better go down and bring the captain, hadn't we? Look here, if you'll take charge of him, I'll go to the skipper's cabin."

He hurried to the companion accordingly, and on his way encountered George Rivers, who was coming up, according to promise, to join the first mate. He hastily informed him of what was going on up above; and George, a good deal startled, hastened to the place where Wyndham was still sitting, with Walters leaning over him. But, while crossing the deck, he caught sight of an object which filled him with astonishment and alarm. This was the coast-line, which was now clearly visible in the broad moonlight.

"What can you be about?" he shouted to the man at the wheel. "We are more than half a mile nearer shore than we ought to be. If our course is not immediately changed, we shall run upon a reef; and, by Heaven!" he added, a moment afterwards, "there *is* a reef just ahead of us! Starboard hard! – starboard, I say! Are you drunk, or mad, that you don't see where you are taking us?" he continued, as the man, paying no heed to his warnings, allowed the ship to drive on straight towards the reef.

George rushed up, and endeavoured to wrest the helm from his grasp; but it was too late. The next moment a grinding noise was heard, as the ship's keel grated over a sunk rock. Then came a tremendous crash, which shook her from stem to stern, and the *Zulu Queen* was lodged hard and fast on the reef. George collared the steersman; but he was a powerful man, and shook off his assailant's hold. Pulling his cap farther over his face, he ran down the hatchway, but not before Rivers had recognised Jans Van Ryk, a Dutch sailor, against whom Wyndham had warned him as one of Bostock's intimate companions.

It was no use following the man. Indeed it would have been impossible to do so; for in another minute the hatchway was crowded with men, who rushed up, half-dressed and in deadly terror, to know what had happened.

"Where is Mr Wyndham?" shouted the captain. "How can he have allowed the ship to run on a rock after this fashion, in a light where everything is as clear as noonday?"

"Mr Wyndham is in a kind of fit, sir," said Margetts. "He has been sitting there without moving for the last hour or two. You had better go to him yourself."

The captain stepped across the deck, and took a look at the first mate's face.

"Come here, McCarthy!" he cried to the surgeon. "He has been drugged, hasn't he?"

The surgeon put his hand to Wyndham's pulse, and, bending down, inhaled his breath.

"Yes, sir; he has been drugged with opium. This has been a preconcerted thing!"

Chapter Four

There was an uneasy silence for a minute or two, and then the captain spoke again.

"There cannot be a doubt of it," he said. "My lads," he continued, advancing towards a number of men who were gathered in a confused huddle on the forecastle, "I have a few words to say to you. We have traitors on board. The ship has been run intentionally on the reef. By and by a searching inquiry will have to be made respecting it; meanwhile I shall take the necessary steps for preserving discipline, and I call upon all here to help me in doing so. Let those who are willing to support me come forward and say so."

The men looked doubtfully at one another; and presently the greater part of them slunk off and went below. About a dozen of the best hands remained, and, going up to the captain, declared their resolution of standing by him whatever might happen.

"Thank you, my hearts," said the captain; "that's cheery! There is nearly a dozen of you, I see. There's Radburn, Marks, Coxwell, Daley, Rutley, Wall, Bateman, Hurd, Hooper, and Cookesley. I am obliged to you all, and I hope your example may help to keep the others right. But we must guard against a possible outbreak. The first thing will be to bring out some of the arms and distribute them. I had them all stowed away in my cabin yesterday, half expecting something of this kind. Come with me, Mr Rivers, and we'll hand them up."

This was soon done, and it was found that enough had been brought up to make an ample supply for all the party. Besides the carbines, revolvers, and cutlasses, there were several rifles belonging to the officers and passengers. The captain had two, the surgeon and first mate one each, Vander Heyden and Moritz, George and Margetts, also had one each; and all these gentlemen were well acquainted with the use of their weapons. They were a formidable party. Even supposing that all the crew, excepting those on deck, joined the mutineers, – as the captain evidently feared they would, – they might well hesitate to attack so well-armed and determined a company. At all events, it looked as if such was the case.

"I wonder where Bostock and the others can be," remarked Walters, when half an hour had passed, and everything remained quiet below.

"I have no doubt where they are," said Captain Ranken. "They are ransacking Mr Whittaker's cabin, fancying that what they want is there, though cleverly hidden away. It is fortunate that they made that mistake, as it has allowed us time to make our preparations. Now the next thing is to send a boat to Mossel Bay – which is the nearest place where any ships are likely to be found – and request that something may be sent to fetch the crew and cargo off this reef."

The pinnace – the most suitable boat for the purpose – was accordingly got ready; and by the time this had been done, and the men chosen who were to go in her, the first mate had recovered sufficiently to take charge of her. When he was informed of what had happened, he said he had no doubt that the opium must have been given him in a glass of grog, which he had taken before going on deck. He had poured it out, he said, and mixed it, when he unexpectedly received a message that the captain wanted to speak with him immediately in the cabin. He had hastened thither, but found the door locked. Supposing that the captain had gone on deck, he had hurriedly drunk off the grog, and followed him. The opium must have been put in while he was out of the cabin. He remembered that there had been something strange in the taste; but he was thinking of important matters, and did not notice trifles, he supposed.

"Do you remember who it was that brought you the message?" asked Captain Ranken.

"Not very clearly," replied Mr Wyndham; "but I fancy it was Sherwin."

"Likely enough," remarked the captain. "He and Van Ryk are this man Bostock's bosom friends. Well, all this must be gone into at a later time. What we have to do now is to get away as quick as we can."

"There isn't any hope of getting the ship off the reef, is there?" asked Redgy.

"Not the slightest. She can never swim again. But we must remember that our chief danger is from these mutinous scoundrels. I am convinced this plot has been hatched since we left Cape Town. I understand that all you gentlemen are prepared to stand by me?" he continued, addressing himself more particularly to Vander Heyden and Moritz, who had hitherto said very little.

"I am prepared to take my part," answered Vander Heyden, bowing somewhat haughtily. "If we are attacked, I shall, of course, protect my sister and property. I have no doubt Mynheer Moritz will do the same."

"Certainly," said Moritz in a more friendly tone; "I am prepared to stand by the captain, whatever may happen."

"I thank you," said the captain. "Then we have twenty men on whom we can rely. I am afraid I must reduce the number to sixteen, as I cannot send less than three men with Wyndham in the pinnace; but sixteen will, I hope, be sufficient for our purpose. We must keep an armed watch, – four of us in my cabin, and four on deck, – relieving every four hours. I will take charge of one party; Mr Rolfe, the second mate, had better take the other. Remember the spirit-room must be carefully watched, and any one fired on who tries to force it."

The dawn had broken before the work was half done, and it was morning when the pinnace, with the first mate and his men on board, took its departure. There was a favourable breeze inshore; and to Mossel Bay it was only an hour or two's sail. But it was quite uncertain how long it might be before she could return, or rather how long it might be before another vessel could be sent, large enough to carry off the crew and cargo. There might not be any such vessel in the bay, and Mr Wyndham might have to go overland to Cape Town, before the required assistance could be procured. In this event, of course, there would be a much longer delay – several days, perhaps. If this should prove to be the case, their situation would be far from agreeable. To say nothing of the danger from the mutinous sailors, if a storm should come on, the ship might go to pieces, and their only hope then would be to get on the reef itself, and shelter themselves as well as they could until help came. Vander Heyden suggested that such as chose it might be allowed to get on board the three remaining boats, and make their way to Mossel Bay, from whence they might get across the country to their destination at Natal. But the captain would not agree to this. He pointed out that of the three remaining boats, the launch had been so damaged when the ship ran on the reef, that it could not swim, another – the long-boat – was in such a position that it could not be got at, unless with the consent of the party below, and the remaining one would not hold more than four or five with safety. They were but just enough as it was to resist an attack. If they should be further reduced in numbers, the safety of those who remained behind would be seriously imperilled.

"And what is to become of my sister?" exclaimed Vander Heyden, "if these scoundrels do attack us?"

"We will all die in her defence, will we not, lads?" exclaimed Captain Ranken, looking round him. He was answered by a cheer.

"Nay, do not think of me," said Annchen; "I am not afraid. Any way, I cannot allow the safety of the others to be endangered, in order to preserve me from harm." There was a second cry of approval.

"None of us will allow a hair of your head to be hurt," cried Margetts.

"No," said Rivers, "you may be sure of that. But I would nevertheless suggest that the boat should be launched, and kept in readiness for an emergency. If we should be attacked and overpowered, that might enable some of us at the last moment to escape. In any case, if a skirmish appears imminent, Miss Vander Heyden and her brother might be put on board, and lie off the reef until the result of the encounter is known."

"Why do you propose that, sir?" exclaimed Vander Heyden angrily. "Do you suppose I am a coward, that I should shrink from an encounter with these scoundrels?"

"I implied nothing of the kind, sir," returned Rivers. "I was only carrying out your own suggestion. I suppose Miss Vander Heyden could not be put into the boat with no one to take care of her?"

Vander Heyden would have made an angry answer, but the captain interposed.

"You are quite wrong, Mr Vander Heyden, and, I must add, ungrateful too. Mr Rivers merits our thanks for his suggestion, which I shall at once put in force. We had better launch the boat at once, while the deck is in our possession. As soon as she is in the water, we can put a few provisions in her, and then she can lie off at a little distance. We had better set to work upon that at once."

All hands went to work accordingly with a will, and presently the gig was lowered, and got ready for sailing. Then dinner was served, and the afternoon passed quietly away. Bostock and his companions, if they had intended any violence, appeared to have abandoned the idea. Probably the captain's promptitude had disheartened them, – so it was thought, – and as they knew the pinnace had been sent off to Mossel Bay, they were aware that assistance would probably come from the shore in a few hours' time.

Late in the afternoon the captain, who was very tired, went down to get a few hours' sleep. He was aroused not long afterwards by Rivers.

"Captain," said the latter, "I fear mischief is brewing."

"What makes you suppose that?" said the captain, who had roused himself on the instant.

"There are two things I don't like. In the first place, the men must have got into the spirit-room – "

"Hasn't careful watch been kept upon it?" asked the captain.

"Yes," said George, "most careful watch. No one has approached the door the whole day. They must have broken into the room another way. Any way, there is furious drinking going on on the lower deck. I clambered round on the outside, and could see what was passing. Bostock, Van Ryk, and Sherwin are inciting the men to drink. Half of them, indeed, are drunk already."

"Could you hear what they are saying?" asked the captain.

"Not very distinctly; there was too much shouting and yelling. But I could make out that they were inciting the men to attack us."

"They would hardly do that," answered the captain. "They know that we are armed, and on our guard."

"No doubt, but they are armed too."

"Armed? are you sure? I myself conveyed all the arms in the ship into the cabin, on the night after we left Cape Town."

"In that case, there is either a traitor among the men who have access to your cabin, or they have brought their own arms on board. All the fellows we suspect are provided with cutlasses and revolvers, and I could see more lying about on the tables and benches."

"Was Andersen, my servant, among them?"

"Yes, he was one of the most forward, apparently, of any."

"He is the traitor, then. But that is of little consequence now. Do you think they will make their attack soon?"

"Not for another hour or two, I should say. They may ultimately succeed in getting the men to join them; but they are not ripe for it yet."

"An hour or two may be time enough. Come with me, Rivers; I shall want your help."

The captain went on deck, and, calling three or four of his best hands together, told them what he had learned. By his instructions, they provided eight or ten stout spars, which they carried down below and placed as a barricade, at the distance of about eight or ten feet from the captain's cabin, lashing the ends of the spars, so as to make it impossible for any one to pass. Then the other hatchways were secured, and a man set to guard each. The captain next went down, accompanied by Rivers and Vander Heyden, taking with him the second mate, Rolfe, as well as Marks, Daley, Wall, and Bateman,

four of the stoutest and most trustworthy of the sailors. He placed these in positions which would command the barricade, some inside the cabin, some in the passage. The strictest silence was to be observed, and no one was to fire until the word was given. The captain then lighted his dark lantern, obscuring the light until the moment of action should arrive. Annchen had been sent on deck under the charge of Moritz, Vander Heyden having insisted on remaining below. But Whittaker, Margetts, and Walters had constituted themselves her special bodyguard.

When all had taken their places, a long silence ensued. The shouts of the men below were now more plainly heard. It was evident that they were fast becoming drunk, and at any moment the expected attack might be made. Presently the noise below ceased.

"They are getting ready," whispered the captain to George; "we shall have them up in another moment."

His words had hardly been uttered, before they were made good by the sound of feet stealthily ascending the stairs.

"They think to take us unawares," continued the captain. "They don't suspect anything about the barricade."

Presently there was a cry of surprise, followed by a volley of oaths. Then a light was struck, and the mutineers were seen trying to tear down the spars which blocked their passage.

"You had better leave off that, and go below!" shouted Captain Ranken. "We are prepared for you. If you attempt to remove those spars, you will take the consequences."

"Let fly at them," said a voice, which the captain recognised as that of Bostock, – "let fly at them, and particularly at that Dutchman."

Half a dozen pistols were discharged, three of them directly levelled at Vander Heyden, who was standing close to the captain. He had a narrow escape. One of the bullets would have struck him in the heart if Captain Ranken had not at the moment changed his position, and it struck his epaulet. A second grazed his temple, the third was lodged in the partition behind him.

"Your blood be on your own heads!" cried the skipper. "Fire on them!" A general discharge followed, by which it was evident considerable execution was done. Several were seen to fall, and among them Bostock and Van Ryk; but whether these were killed or dangerously wounded did not appear. They were either able, however, to crawl down below, or were carried off by their companions.

"They got that hot and strong, sir," remarked Rolfe; "I don't think they'll try it again."

"It depends a good deal on whether the leaders are killed or severely wounded," returned the captain. "As for Bostock, you hit him fairly, Mr Vander Heyden. The bullet struck him below the hip. But whether it was a slight or a severe wound, I can't say."

"I think it was only a flesh wound," rejoined the Dutchman. "The other fellow – Van Ryk, his name is, I believe – was more seriously hurt, I fancy."

"I hope he is. If those two men should be silenced, we needn't be afraid of the others. Well, we are safe for the night, I think, and we must hope that help will come to-morrow."

The captain's words were so far made good, that the rest of the night passed in quiet. The forenoon of the next day was a time of great anxiety, which no one felt so keenly as the captain. He knew that if Wyndham did not return, it could be only because some accident had happened to his boat, or because he had been unable to obtain any help in Mossel Bay, and had been compelled to go overland to Cape Town. The distance thither from Mossel Bay was more than two hundred miles, and the means of getting there not easy to procure. Even if he could find horses to carry him the whole distance, it would probably take him a day or two to reach the town. Then, no doubt, a vessel would be fitted with as little delay as possible. But probably two or three days more must elapse before it could reach the reef.

Altogether, it was not unlikely that a full week would pass, during which they would have to remain in their present situation, unless, indeed, they could attract the attention of some passing

vessel. As the hours went by, the captain grew more and more despondent; and at last it became only too evident that Wyndham's speedy return could not be looked for.

"We are in for this, Rivers," he said, as they stood together on deck, looking anxiously toward shore, half an hour or so before sunset; "unless we are picked up by some ship, we may have to stay a week on this reef, and there is no disguising that, if it should be so, our lives are in the greatest danger."

"Do you apprehend a storm coming on, sir?" asked Rivers.

"I see no signs of that, though in this climate the changes of weather are so rapid that one is never secure for six hours together; but that is not what I am afraid of. These men will get desperate – the ringleaders, that is. They know there is a rope round their necks in consequence of last night's work, and they will get away from the reef at all hazards before Wyndham's return, if by possibility they can."

"I don't see how they can force their way on deck in the face of our fire, any more than they did last night, sir; I don't see how they could remove the barricade either."

"They might contrive to cut the ropes which hold one of the spars," said the captain, – "that is, if they could work in the dark. But I shall take care that the passage is kept lighted all night, so they won't attempt that I think they will try to blow up the hatchways. They have got plenty of powder, and it would not be a difficult thing to do. They would lose some men in forcing their way up; but their numbers so greatly exceed ours, that, once on deck, we should have no chance with them."

"You think all the ship's company will go along with Bostock and Van Ryk, then?"

"I am a good deal afraid of it. I don't think they'd have done this of their own heads. But these two rascals are exceedingly clever, and will, I have no doubt, make out a plausible story. They will persuade the poor fellows that, if they are caught, they will be charged with mutiny for what has been done already. They'll tell them it is their only hope to get off the reef before help comes, and they must cut all our throats to accomplish that."

"And we can't take to the boats, and be gone ourselves?"

"That is what the Dutchman proposed yesterday. But I then pointed out that we cannot get at the long-boat without exposing ourselves to the fire of the mutineers. Nor would they, of course, let us repair the other boat, even if she could be repaired. I only guessed then that they would attack us. It is unfortunately only too certain now. We should simply be playing their game. If they could overpower us, or, in plain English, murder us, they would no doubt go off in the three boats, or make a raft, if the boats would not hold them all. But while we remain here, that would be impossible.

"No," resumed the captain presently; "we must go on as we have begun. It really looks as though the men were unable to devise any plan of attacking us; in which case it is most probable that they will submit, and throw themselves upon my mercy. It is only against a few, you see, that direct mutiny can be proved. Nor have I quite given up the hope that Wyndham may have found a ship at Mossel Bay, though her sailing may have been delayed. Perhaps the men also are reckoning on the possibility of that, and will not commit themselves further, until they feel sure that he will have to go on to Cape Town for help. But all that we can do is to keep a bright look-out, and be ready for action at a moment's notice. I shall go and lie down now for two or three hours, as I feel quite worn out; but I shall trust to you, Rivers, to rouse me if there should be the slightest necessity. You are the only man on board I can thoroughly trust, for, though Rolfe and McCarthy are good fellows, they are not equal to an emergency. But you know what you are about."

They parted. George took a turn or two up and down the deck, apparently buried in thought. Then he laid aside his cutlass and pistols, put on a sailor's jacket that was lying on the deck, and tied a handkerchief round his head. Having completed these preparations without attracting notice, he disappeared below.

It was about three hours afterwards that the captain was a second time roused from his sleep by a hand laid on his chest. He started up instantly, and was about to speak, when George Rivers, who was his visitor, stopped him.

"Don't wake the others, sir," he said. "If you will come on deck, I have something important to tell you. I wish to say, sir," he continued when they were seated out of the sight and hearing of any of their companions, "that I have been down among the men, and have learned pretty accurately what they mean to do."

"Down among the men – among the mutineers?" exclaimed the captain. "How did you manage that?"

"Well, it was not so very difficult, sir. Several of the men had left their jackets on deck, as well as a handkerchief or two. I put two of these on, pulling the handkerchief well over my forehead, so that by the dim light on the lower deck it was hardly possible that I could be recognised, even if any one noticed me, which was hardly likely. Then I untied one of the ropes, and so got through the barricade. I went to the head of the ladder and listened. There was loud and angry talk going on, and several of the speakers seemed to be more than half drunk. I crept cautiously down, ready to make a bolt up again if any one hailed me, but they were all too busy to notice me. I crept into a corner and lay down, as if asleep, drawing a sailcloth half over me. I lay there for a couple of hours, I should think, and learned all I wanted to know. After that I took advantage of a violent quarrel which broke out among them, to creep up-stairs in the same way as I had crept down, and then secured the spar."

"You have done nobly?" exclaimed the skipper. "And what have you learned?"

"I learned, first of all, that nothing will be attempted to-night, though an attempt will be made to-morrow. In the first place, it appears that Sherwin was one of those killed in the skirmish, though they contrived to carry him off. Van Ryk and Bostock were wounded, though not severely. Bostock was hit in the right leg, and is unable to use it, though the wound is already greatly better. They won't stir unless he leads them, and that he can't do this evening."

"That is fortunate. They are not afraid of Wyndham's return, then?"

"No; they seem to feel sure that he has failed to find a ship in Mossel Bay. Indeed, one of the men said he had gone over to the bay from Cape Town, only a day or two before the *Zulu Queen* sailed, and there was no ship there, and none expected."

"I feared as much," said the captain. "Well, then, what are the men's intentions? Do they all go along with Bostock?"

"I am afraid they do," returned George. "Bostock has persuaded them that there is an enormous sum of money in gold stowed away in the cabin – enough, as he told them, to make them all rich for life. If it hadn't been for the barricade, he said, of which no one had any idea, this would have been in their possession already. But as it is, it is theirs as soon as they choose to seize it. They evidently believe they can get on deck whenever they please – "

"Did you ascertain how?" interrupted the captain eagerly. "Not exactly, sir, but I fancy they mean to blow a hole in the ship's side, and so get down on to the reef, which at low water extends for several feet beyond the ship – "

"Yes, yes," said the captain, "I was afraid so; no doubt they could do that. Go on."

"Well, I expect they will make their way out in that manner, and, although we may be able to kill half a dozen of them before they knock us on the head, they would certainly do so, sooner or later. None of our party are to be spared, except, I am sorry to say, Miss Vander Heyden. Bostock means to carry her off with him."

"The brute!" exclaimed the captain. "He shan't do that, Rivers."

"No, sir. I would blow out her brains with my own hand sooner than allow it?"

"And so, to do him justice, would her brother, or Mr Moritz either – nay, I am persuaded she would do it herself! Well, Rivers, we are in for this, and we must get out of it the best way we can. But I must own I am at my wits' end. Can you suggest anything?"

"It has occurred to me, captain, that we might possibly, if we were hard driven, get on to the other part of the reef yonder, and take provisions with us enough to last two or three days. They couldn't get at us there, I imagine."

The captain looked in the direction to which George pointed. There was another reef, or, more properly, another part of the same reef, divided from that on which the ship was lying by a deep channel some twenty or thirty yards wide. It rose a good deal higher out of the water, and was so plainly visible at all states of the tide that nothing but design, or the most culpable carelessness, could have caused the disaster.

“That is a good thought,” he said. “If ever I command a ship again, I must make you my first mate. That reef will be our salvation. We must not lose a moment in getting across, and taking all we want with us. Go and wake all the hands, and bring them on deck at once. If we wait for the moon, the rascals may see us. It is lucky that we have Marks and Cookesley, the ship’s carpenters, among our party.”

Chapter Five

The sailors who had remained loyal to Captain Ranken obeyed his summons with prompt alacrity. They were reduced to seven, three having gone with the first mate in the pinnace. The captain gave them their orders, which they proceeded to put into execution as rapidly and with as little noise as possible. The boat was brought immediately under the ship's side, and a number of articles put into it, the first being the carpenter's chests, and a load of spars and planks from the workshop. Then the boat returned for boxes and barrels, containing provisions to last for a fortnight, together with all the firearms and cutlasses on deck. Then a quantity of bedding, knives, forks, and crockery, and a large tarpaulin which had been used to form a shelter from the heat for the passengers. A number of empty boxes and barrels were also lowered into the sea, which, as the tide was then running, would be washed up on the further reef. There was a great deal to be done, but the hands were all active and willing; and by the time when the moon rose all the most necessary articles had been ferried over.

As soon as the light permitted, the men, under the direction of the carpenters, began putting up a hut at the spot indicated by the captain. They fortunately found one or two crevices in the rock, in which uprights could be fixed. A long spar was run across from two of these, and the tarpaulin stretched over it. Then four shorter posts were placed at the corners, but at two of these points there were no crevices, and the spars had to be placed in tall barrels filled with stones. The sides were next filled in with planks, with a door and an opening to serve as a window at the end farthest from the wreck. The gig continued her voyages under the conduct of Captain Ranken, George, and the second mate, and almost everything that would be required was brought over. Mr Whittaker's chest had been one of the first things cared for.

By daybreak a very tolerable hut had been constructed; and the captain directed them, as the next job, to put up a barricade extending the whole length of the hut on the side facing the ship. This was formed of barrels and chests containing large stones, of which there was abundance on the reef, the spaces between them being similarly filled. When this had been completed, it was broad day, and it was impossible to expect that the crew, who by this time must have slept off their drunken debauch, could be kept any longer in ignorance of their officers' proceedings. The second mate was sent, therefore, to inform the passengers of the removal to the further reef, and convey them over to it as quickly as possible. They were taken by surprise, but complied readily enough; only Vander Heyden making some complaint that the cabin party had been kept in ignorance of what they ought to have been told.

While they were being ferried across in the boat, the captain and George returned for the last time to the deck.

"We are well out of this, sir," remarked George; "we shall be safe over there."

"Yes, unless they come across to attack us."

"Come across? what, in the long-boat?"

"Yes, in the long-boat. They can't launch it while we have possession of the deck. But as the ship is left to them, there will be nothing to prevent their doing it."

"It would be a desperate thing to attempt, landing on the reef under such a fire as we could open on them."

"No doubt, if they attempted it by day. But in the dark they could get ashore unseen by us, and perhaps make one or two voyages before we found it out. Besides, the long-boat will hold a great number of men. We must not risk it."

"What do you propose then, sir?"

"To destroy the boat," answered the captain. "It is easily enough done, if you will lend a hand. But first, are all the others safely landed on the reef?"

"Yes. The boat, with Mr Rolfe in her, is just coming back for us."

"Very good. Then we will go to work."

He went below and fetched two iron pots, in each of which he placed a heavy charge of powder, rolling a piece of rag round it to prevent its escape. Then, motioning to George to pick up some heavy blocks of wood, he moved noiselessly across the deck, and laid the pots in the bottom of the boat, one at each end, with the blocks to keep them down. Next he laid a train of powder with a slow match, the end of which he ignited.

They now crept down to the boat, and put off. They had almost got across, when a loud explosion, followed almost simultaneously by a second, was heard. Immediately afterwards the men poured up on deck, having evidently contrived some way for themselves of getting up there. Some of them carried carbines, and they might have fired on the captain and his two companions, if these had not hastily drawn up the boat and made for the shelter of the shed.

"Safe now, sir," remarked Rolfe, "unless they swim across to us."

"They'll hardly try that on," rejoined the captain. "They would be an easy mark for our rifles, and they know we have several and can use them. We roust put a man to watch their movements; but I think that is all that will be needed. If breakfast is ready, we may go to it with an appetite."

This had hardly been completed, when Hooper, the man set to watch, came in with the information that a flag of truce had been hoisted on the vessel, and three men, Gott, Shirley, and Sullivan had come down to the edge of the water to parley with the captain.

"Are they unarmed?" asked the second mate.

"Yes, sir," answered Hooper.

"Can you see anything of the other men?" inquired the doctor.

"There are none on the reef, sir, but I thought I saw one or two peeping over the ship's bulwarks."

"I guessed as much," said McCarthy. "You ought to think twice, sir, before you go to meet these men. You would be an easy mark for any one hiding in the forecastle; and they may think that, if they once got you out of the way, they could do anything they pleased."

"That's possible," said Captain Ranken. "But I can't help that. There is a chance of avoiding bloodshed, and it is my duty to go."

"Well, any way, let us take any precautions we can," urged Rolfe. "Five or six of us can take our rifles, and show ourselves over the top of the barricade. They will see that if they have you at their mercy, we have Gott and Shirley and Sullivan at ours."

"You may do that, if you like," said the skipper. "There is never any harm in showing that one is prepared."

The mate's suggestion was acted on. Half a dozen marksmen, including the two Dutchmen, Rivers, Margetts, Whittaker, and the mate, took their guns, climbed on to the top of the barricade, and then stationed themselves behind it, the muzzles of their rifles projecting from between the stones. Then the captain, accompanied by McCarthy, went down to the edge of the reef, and, hailing the three men opposite, asked what they had to say.

"We're very sorry," said Gott, – "sorry as you're displeased, sir. But the most of us don't know what we've done."

"Do you call running the ship on a reef, and then trying to plunder her, and after that attempting to murder us, nothing?"

"It was only one or two as did that; we didn't wreck the ship, or join in the attack as was made on you, sir," said Sullivan.

"I am glad to hear it. What do you want now?"

"We want you and the others to come over here again, and we'll go back to our duty," answered Gott.

"And what about the mutineers?" asked the captain.

"There was but a few of they, and they was mostly killed in the scrimmage."

"Indeed! were Bostock and Van Ryk killed, may I ask?"

There was no answer. The skipper repeated his question, and then Shirley said sullenly, “I don’t know as they was.”

“Very good. Van Ryk was the man who ran the ship on the reef; Mr Rivers saw him do it. Bostock fired deliberately at Mr Vander Heyden; *I* saw him do it. I don’t want to inquire too closely what others may have done, but these two are clearly guilty. If they are put into irons and brought over here, together with all the arms in your possession, we will return to the ship, and when help comes, no proceedings will be taken against anybody, except the two prisoners. These are the only terms I shall offer you. I shall expect to receive an answer in an hour or two.”

The men, after exchanging a few words, sullenly withdrew. The captain, and McCarthy, who had been chosen to accompany the skipper, because the men are always unwilling to hurt the doctor, also beat a hasty retreat, and informed their companions what had passed.

“Do you think they will give in, sir?” asked Whittaker.

“No,” replied the captain. “I fear Van Ryk and Bostock have too much weight with them. Besides, sailors on these occasions are apt to stick together. If we don’t get an answer within the hour, we must look for broken heads.”

The hour passed, and then another hour or two. The after noon slipped away, and there was no return of the deputies. The men kept quite out of sight. But the sound of hammering and sawing and the buzz of voices were plainly audible.

“They are up to something, sir,” said Rolfe; “making a raft, most likely, by which they hope to reach the shore. They’ve plenty of materials, and some smart hands among them. Don’t you think that is likely, sir?”

“I think it very likely,” answered the skipper; “only I am afraid they are more likely to use it to make an attack on us than to reach the shore – or rather, they will attempt the latter, but only when they have carried out the former. They won’t go without the money if they can help it. But the first thing for us will be to ascertain what they are really about, and we can do that, though not without some risk. The boat is still lying off at the place where we moored her when we came across for the last time. If we got aboard her we might row out to the other side of the reef, keeping at a safe distance, and then we should find out what they are doing.”

“No doubt, sir,” rejoined Rolfe; “but would they let us do it? I am pretty sure there are one or two fellows lying under the bulwarks, watching us from the deck. They could pick off any one who tried that.”

“I am afraid that is only too likely,” said Captain Ranken; “but it is so important to us to know what they are up to, that I think we must attempt it. Who will volunteer for the service?”

He was answered by half a dozen eager voices, declaring each man’s readiness to make the adventure.

“Very good, gentlemen; I thank you heartily,” said the skipper. “The men I want must be good divers, if possible, but certainly good swimmers. They must also, of course, understand the management of a boat.”

“I can’t swim, I am sorry to say,” cried Walters.

“I can swim, but I am no diver,” said Rolfe.

“And I can swim and dive, but I am a poor hand at managing a boat,” added Margetts. “But look here, captain, here’s your man – George Rivers. He swims like a fish, and dives like a cormorant, and can manage a boat first-rate.”

“He will do for one, no doubt,” said the captain. “And I think, Mynheer Moritz, you offered, did you not? You, I know, can both swim and dive, and, I believe, understand managing a boat?”

“Yes, sir,” returned Moritz, “I believe, without vanity, I can say I do. I shall be pleased to undertake this in company with Mr Rivers.”

“Very good,” said the skipper. “That is settled, then. Now, gentlemen, this is what you have to do. You must get into the water here, out of the sight of the ship, and swim round, keeping under water

as much as possible. Then get under the lee of the boat, and bring her round, sheltering yourselves under the cover of her side. Of course our fears may be groundless. There may be no one lying in wait. But I fancy I have seen heads looking from time to time over the ship's sides, and it is best to take every precaution. Now be off as quick as possible, for the daylight is dying out."

George and Moritz complied. Going to the farther point of the reef, they stripped, and, slipping silently into the water, began swimming round the reef. When they got to the point where their heads would be visible from the ship, they dived, and swam under water, neither of them reappearing until their heads came to the surface close under the bows of the boat.

"Capitally managed!" cried the captain. "If they get her out from shore, all will be safe. I really hope our apprehensions were unfounded."

But at this moment two or three guns were fired from the ship, and several bullets spattered in the water. Moritz, who had incautiously raised his head, had a narrow escape. George seized and dragged him down, himself only just escaping a bullet which whistled over his head. The boat, however, was by this time in motion, and they were enabled to drag it along with them, without again exposing themselves until they were out of shot. Then they climbed in and rowed to the place whence they had started. Here the captain received them with many commendations and thanks; and, while the two adventurers were resuming their clothes, went off in the boat with two of the men to the other side of the wreck, taking care to keep at a safe distance. He returned in half an hour with a very uncomfortable report.

"Have you found out what they are about, sir?" asked Margetts.

"I am sorry to say I have. They mean mischief, and, I fear, will be only too likely to be able to work it. They are putting together a raft, and are getting on fast with it."

"But may not that be only to enable them to make their escape to the shore?" suggested Walters.

"If that had been their intention, they would not have fired on Rivers and Mr Moritz. There is no use in disguising facts. They mean to attack us."

"But how can they contrive, sir?" asked the second mate. "Neither wind nor tide is favourable to them. A raft is a very difficult thing to manage at all times, and they would have to approach this part of the reef under the fire of all our guns."

"You are right, Rolfe," replied the captain; "but unfortunately the raft is not the only work they are engaged on. Somehow it appears that the launch was not so much injured as I had supposed. Two or three smart hands have been employed on it, and it looked as though it had been made all right again. What they mean to do, I expect, is to launch both raft and boat at nightfall, and the one will tow the other till our reef is reached. Then they will land in the dark, and then either take up a position behind our barricade, from which they can fire upon us whenever we go in or out of our hut, or else make an assault upon us as soon as the moon rises, and overpower us by superior numbers. The first would be the surest plan for themselves, but their dread of Wyndham's return may induce them to adopt the other. They outnumber us, remember, at least six to one."

"It is only too likely that you are right," said George; "but what do you advise?"

"I think, in the first place, we must complete the barricade round the hut. At present we are open on two sides to a sudden rush, which would overpower us by force of numbers. Behind, the rise of the rock is so precipitous that they could only climb it with great difficulty, one by one. We must place our best marksmen up there, and the others behind our barricades down below. We must put a man, when the darkness comes on, at the very extremity of the reef, nearest to the wreck. He will be able to distinguish what they are doing sufficiently well to tell us when they are launching their raft. It cannot, I know, be completed for many hours yet. As soon as it does put off, we can burn a blue light, – I took care last night to bring some with me, – and that will enable us to fire on them, while approaching and landing, with effect. We may be fortunate enough to kill their leaders, in which case the others will submit at once."

"If I catch sight of that Cargill," exclaimed Vander Heyden, "he will not trouble us any more! Ha, Vrank?"

"No," responded Moritz; "he doesn't deserve much mercy, and I don't imagine he would show us much."

"None at all, I fear," assented the captain. "But I don't desire his death on that account, but because he is leading these poor misguided fellows into crime and ruin. But no more of him. If we mean to put up our barricades, we must go to work at once."

"All right, captain!" said Rolfe; "we will not delay a minute."

A quantity of barrels and boxes, with which the reef was still strewn, were brought up, and filled with stones, as well as some heaps of wreck-wood, which had been thrown up above high-water mark. In two hours' time a barricade had been erected sufficiently strong to repel any sudden assault. Then attention was turned to the high ground behind the hut. Large stones and pieces of wood were laid along the highest ridge, behind which the riflemen might fire in safety. This party consisted of McCarthy, Rolfe, George Rivers, Margetts, Whittaker, and Walters, together with Vander Heyden and Moritz. The captain took the command of the party below, which consisted of the seven sailors. Here also Miss Vander Heyden was placed, under the captain's special protection. When the hut was first erected, a space had been partitioned off to serve as Annchen's sleeping-place, and George, during the captain's absence in the boat, had employed his time in doubling this partition, and filling up the space between the boards with stones, so that even if all the other defences were carried, she would still have a last place of shelter.

When the job was done, the whole party sat down to rest and take some refreshment. The evening came on before they had finished their meal, and in a short time it was quite dark.

"If they mean to come," remarked the captain, "it will be pretty soon now. The noise of hammering has ceased for the last half-hour; they must have completed their job; and now it will be seen whether they are going to make for the shore, or attack us."

It was an anxious moment. The whole party sat in front of their barricade, on the stones or logs of which it was composed, listening intently to catch any sound which might determine the momentous question at issue. Presently the silence was broken by Coxwell, the sailor whom the captain had stationed at the farthest point of the reef. He came up with the information that the boat and raft were both afloat, and by the lanterns they had lighted he could see the men getting on board.

"We must all take our places," said the captain. "I will go down to the water's edge and listen. Mr Rivers, be ready to put a match to the blue lights as soon as I call to you."

All obeyed in silence. Annchen took leave of her brother and Moritz, and bade also a general farewell to the others; her eye, as George could not help fancying, lighting with special kindness on him. When they had all taken up their stations, there was a silence of some minutes, and then the voice of the captain was heard, – "Light up! I hear them coming!" Rivers obeyed; and a lurid flame suddenly sprang forth, by the light of which the boat and raft were both distinctly visible, the former with only five or six rowers aboard, the other following in tow, and crowded with armed men.

"The party on the rocks fire on the boat?" shouted Captain Ranken; "those in the shed on the raft!"

He was obeyed on the instant. Eight rifles cracked almost at the same moment from the rocks. The steersman and two of the rowers dropped dead in their places. The other two flung themselves into the bottom of the boat, wounded, but not killed. Several also on board the raft fell into the sea, or into their companions' arms, and a cry for quarter was raised. But the next moment the voice of Bostock sounded loud and clear.

"Step into the water!" he cried. "We are already on the reef; it is not above our knees."

He sprang out himself as he spoke, and began wading ashore, followed, after a moment's pause, by the other men. Several volleys were discharged from the barricade and rocks, not without their effect, though the mark was now more difficult to hit. In a few minutes the mutineers had found

refuge, as the captain had anticipated, on the outer side of the barricade, which the besieged, if they may so be called, had run up for their own protection.

The riflemen were now called down from the rocks, and joined their companions in the shed. The fire not having been returned from either the boat or the raft, no injuries had been sustained. But the situation of Captain Ranken and his companions still appeared to be almost hopeless; as the fight would now be carried on on almost equal terms, and the mutineers still outnumbered them in the proportion of four to one. It seemed most likely now that they would try to surround the shed on all four sides, firing through the crevices, which were as available to them as to those within, and so soon pick off all the defenders. But for this light was necessary, and they were therefore waiting for the moon to rise.

While they were still waiting in anxious suspense, a stone with a paper wrapped round it was thrown through the open window. The captain picked it up and read it. It had no name attached to it, but professed to come from the whole of the crew, except those with Captain Ranken. It stated that the hut was completely surrounded, and that the assailants had the lives of all those within at their mercy. But they wished to avoid further bloodshed. If the five thousand pounds which had been removed from Mr Whittaker's cabin should be given up, together with all the arms in the possession of the besieged party, they would go quietly away without hurting any one. But if this was refused, an attack would be made as soon as the moon rose, and no man's life would be spared. It was added, that if no answer was sent before moonrise, that would be regarded as a refusal.

When the captain had finished reading, no one spoke for a while. At last McCarthy broke the silence, —

"Have you any idea, sir, of complying with their demand? You see they do not ask – what we could not have agreed to – the surrender of Miss Vander Heyden."

"No," said Mr Whittaker; "and I do not think my employers would blame you, if you did comply. I daresay we should all agree to bear some portion of the ransom."

Several of the others broke in together, declaring their willingness to pay any portion in their power.

"What do you say, Mr Rivers?" asked the captain, observing that he had not spoken.

"I would pay my share, sir," answered George; "anything that is in my power. But I fear it would be useless. The best hope these men have in escaping the penalty of their mutiny lies in our death. If we were to surrender ourselves to them, as this letter proposes, I think they would murder us in cold blood – all except – "

"You need not mention her name, sir," interposed Vander Heyden. "But you say well. I know the villain who leads these men; he is quite capable of that, or any other atrocity. We had better die sword in hand, like men, than be stabbed like sheep."

"You speak only too truly, sir," said the captain. "Our choice lies between one kind of death or another; and I, for one, choose that of a brave man, who will have no trafficking with villains."

He looked round him, and read approval in every eye. "You are right, sir," said McCarthy briefly, and the others echoed the sentiment.

No one spoke for the next ten minutes. Each was busy with his own thoughts; such as are likely to fill men's minds when on the verge of eternity. The time seemed painfully protracted, and all wished that the trial was over. Suspense was worse than death itself. At last a sudden burst of yellow light streaming through the window warned them that their time had come. The next moment the door was burst in, and a crowd of men, armed with cutlasses and pistols, endeavoured to force an entrance. They were met by a general volley, which killed or wounded nearly all the foremost assailants. But the rush from behind was kept up. Several forced themselves into the hut, and a hand-to-hand struggle ensued. Miss Vander Heyden had been placed behind the screen which Rivers had strengthened for her; and he shouted to her, when the attack began, to throw herself on the ground, as the best chance there was of her escaping injury. The screen caught the eye of Bostock as he entered in the rush, and

he and Van Ryk instantly made for it. Vander Heyden threw himself in Bostock's way, and a fierce encounter began between them; while, George in like manner interposing between Van Ryk and the screen, they were soon engaged in deadly combat.

By this time the hut was nearly filled with the mutineers. The captain, with McCarthy on one side of him and Redgy on the other, was desperately defending himself against two or three assailants. The third mate, Whittaker, and Walters, had been all struck down, and several of the men were mortally wounded, when suddenly there came from the sea a strange and unexpected sound – the boom of a cannon!

The strife was instantly suspended. Each man looked in doubt and wonder upon his opponent's face. Then the captain's voice was once more heard, —

"Throw down your arms, you mutinous dogs, and yield yourselves prisoners, or every man among you shall swing at the yard-arm before another hour has passed!"

Chapter Six

About a week had elapsed. George and Redgy were standing on the deck of the Government steamer Wasp, leaning over the bulwarks and contemplating the appearance of the harbour of Port Natal; which lay immediately in front of them, with the town of Durban in the middle distance, and the Natal country in the background. The ship could proceed no farther. The bar across the harbour mouth, on which seething masses of foam were breaking, presented an insuperable obstacle.

"How are we ever to get in, George?" asked Redgy. "I suppose ships *do* get in somehow. Indeed it is plain they do, for there is a lot of them lying off the quays yonder. But how they surmounted that bar, it is beyond me to imagine. I should think even the Yankee captain, who declared he could run his ship anywhere where there had been a heavy dew, would be puzzled here."

"I don't suppose Captain Deedes will take his ship in," answered George. "He has only to deliver and take back despatches to Cape Town, and these can be brought to him out here."

"What, in a boat, I suppose?" suggested Margetts; "and that is the way we shall go in, then? Well, every man knows his own business best; but I should have thought there was a very comfortable chance of any boat being swamped!"

"Wait, and you'll see, Redgy. Captain Deedes told me we should be safe ashore before twelve o'clock."

"Did he tell you anything about what is going on at Mossel Bay?" asked Margetts. "I know he has had letters from thence. I saw them brought aboard half an hour ago."

"Yes, a good deal. I am sorry to say Rolfe is dead; that is the fifth of our party that was killed. Walters and three of the sailors were dead before we sailed, you know."

"I am sorry for Rolfe. How are McCarthy and the captain and Whittaker?"

"They are all doing well. The captain's was only a slight cut across the hand. He was much more hurt by Bostock's and Van Ryk's escape than by that wound."

"I don't wonder. It is certainly a pity that they were not run up to the yard-arm, as half a dozen others may be, who were less guilty than they were. I can't think how they managed to get off."

"Well, I can understand it. Van Ryk and I were having a desperate tussle, and we had been driven close to the door of the shed. When I heard the gun from the *Wasp*, our encounter was broken off, and I thought nothing more of my antagonist for the next ten minutes. As for Bostock, who was, I noticed, a first-rate swordsman, he had disarmed Vander Heyden, and would, I daresay, have run him through, if the cannon hadn't been fired at that moment. I judge both he and Van Ryk, who had their wits well about them, made off as fast as they could to the place where the gig had been left, when Moritz and I landed from her."

"Ay, just at the farthest point behind the ridge, I remember," said Margetts. "She was almost out of sight."

"Exactly. Well, they fell in with Sullivan and one or two other fellows, got aboard, and rowed straight off for land. I daresay they had reached it, before their absence was discovered."

"Very likely. What do you think they will do, then?"

"Most likely land on some solitary spot, scuttle their boat, and make their way into the interior. They have their carbines, and will have no difficulty in providing themselves with food. Perhaps they will make their way to the diamond fields, and there change their names, and make a pot of money; or perhaps they'll take to hunting or farming, and you'll meet them some years hence, driving bullock waggons, or taking flocks of sheep to the market – thriving men and respectable – at least according to their ideas of respectability; or perhaps, once more, they'll come across a band of criminals, who have escaped from prison, and go about robbing and murdering travellers."

"Nothing more likely, I should say. And what will become of the others?"

"Well, as you suggested, half a dozen or so are safe to be hanged – Shirley and Andersen, for example, who were among the leaders, though not the main movers, of the outbreak. As for the others, the captain is mercifully disposed. You see, the whole thing (as has been proved now) was got up by those three villains, Bostock, Van Ryk, and Sherwin, after the ship had left Cape Town. They persuaded the new men – Shirley and Sullivan among them – to enlist. Only three or four in the first instance were told about Whittaker's money. They expected to find that in his cabin, and they would then have launched one of the boats and gone off, leaving us on the reef. When they learned, as they did from Andersen, that it had been locked up in the captain's cabin, they told half a dozen more about the money, and persuaded them to join in the attack on the officers and passengers. Then they induced the rest of the crew to believe that their only hope of escaping hanging lay in silencing the captain and his men, and getting away from the reef. The men have been the victims of several clever scoundrels, and I hope the law won't be put in force too severely against them."

An hour or two afterwards, the bar having become practicable, the steam-tug arrived which was to convey such of the party as desired it to the shore. But the surf dashing over the bar was still so formidable, that it was judged necessary to secure the passengers against damage, after the very curious fashion resorted to on such occasions. They were sent down below, in what would have been total darkness, if it had not been for the glimmering light of a lantern. Then the hatches were covered over, and the passage accomplished, with an amount of shaking and rolling which was considerably worse than a stiff gale at sea. As Redgy afterwards described it, it was like as though they had been a lot of marbles thrown into a bag, and then shaken up. Happily, however, it did not last very long; and they were presently safely landed on the quay, and free to examine the prospect before them. Land is said always to look attractive in the eyes of those who have just accomplished a long sea voyage, but the scene which George and his companions beheld, when they emerged from the cabin of the steam-tug, did not need this consideration to enhance its beauties.

It was indeed a lovely sight which met their eyes. The streets of the town were spacious, and built at right angles to one another, – most of them of a dark stone, which is said to harden by exposure to the air, – but some of them of brick, or wattle covered with plaster; many of them having deep verandahs, with rows of trees in front. Along the quays, which exhibited a busy scene of cargoes in the course of landing or shipping, a mass of vessels bearing the flags of all nations were lying; and on either side of the town rich forests bordered the whole coast. A little inland were seen pastures, and plantations of sugar-cane. The monotonous appearance which this kind of landscape usually presents was varied by high hills, and valleys here and there intervening. The wonderful blue of both sky and sea, which only those who have beheld it can realise to themselves, formed a glorious background to the picture. George and Margetts, accompanied by the other passengers, made their way to a hotel in one corner of the principal street, and partook of a luxurious repast, which to be duly appreciated ought to be eaten by persons who had just landed after many weeks at sea.

This over, they had next to obtain a conveyance to Umvalosa; and for help in providing this they applied to Mynheer Moritz, who had always been friendly, and more especially since the memorable day of the battle on the reef.

"I will help you as well as I can," he said. "I wish I could ask you to join our party, which will pass Umvalosa on our way to Vander Heyden's place, 'Bushman's Drift.' Henryk, his sister, and myself mean to ride, and the luggage will be conveyed in his bullock waggon, which is one of the best in Natal. But it would be no use for me to propose that."

"None at all," assented George drily.

"Well, I don't defend him. He might, and ought to be, more courteous to you. But you mustn't be too hard on him. He has his good qualities. He is brave, and honourable, and high-minded, and capable of very warm and strong affection. He is very fond of his sister, and there is a lady, Lisa Van Courtland, his cousin, to whom he is almost romantically attached, and whom he is soon to marry. As for you, it is not *you* he dislikes, but your country, and that feeling, I am afraid, is not peculiar to

him. A great many of our people believe that they have been hardly used by the English. You see, the whole country once belonged to us – was our undisputed possession for more than a century. We had done nothing to forfeit it – so we feel, because we had nothing to do with the quarrels of the governments in Europe; which were the only grounds on which it was taken from us. Then, when we couldn't live under English rule, and left the Cape to settle elsewhere, giving up the homes to which we were so long used, in order that we might live undisturbed, the English followed us to Natal, and we were again obliged to move elsewhere. And now, since this annexation, many of us fear that we shall not be left alone even in the Transvaal, and may be obliged to break up our homes for the third time, to go to some new country; where, even then, we may not be secure from interference. Henryk is one of those who feel this keenly, and he's apt to show his feelings rather too plainly."

"No doubt of that," said George, smiling. "However, I am disposed to make all possible allowance for him under the circumstances you have mentioned; which are, I ought to add, but very imperfectly known to me. I suppose, as is generally the case, there are two versions of the story."

"Probably there are," said Mr Moritz, returning his smile, "and perhaps it is too much to expect that you should credit my version. However, whatever may come of it, I hope you and I will remain friends. I could never forget the service you have rendered me, and, indeed, Annchen also: for she tells me that she believes she is indebted to you for saving her life on the night of the attack."

"I don't know how that may be," said George. "I did my best to protect her, certainly. But as you and her brother were not so close at hand as I was, to defend her, I do not know how I could possibly have done less. I hope we shall be allowed to take leave of her."

"She will wish that too," said Moritz, "but I am afraid her brother will not permit it. She has, indeed, charged me to give you her adieux, together with her regrets that she cannot speak them in person. But now you want my assistance in getting to your destination. Your best course, I think, will be to make the acquaintance of a Natal farmer, named Baylen; who, I have learned, means to set out in a few days for Horner's Kraal, and will therefore pass very near, if he does not stop at, Umvalosa. He is a thriving man, and knows the country well. He is neither wholly English nor Dutch, his father having been an Englishman and his grandfather a Hollander, but his sympathies are mainly English. I will give you a letter to him. I would go with you to his son's house, 'Hakkluyt's Kloof,' where he now is, but time will not allow it, as Vander Heyden sets out in a few hours."

George thanked him, and they cordially shook hands and parted. The two friends then walked out to Hakkluyt's Kloof, and delivered Moritz's letter; which at once secured a hearty welcome from the old man. He was a fine specimen of a colonial farmer, standing more than six feet high, and strongly, if somewhat heavily built. He introduced the young men first to his wife, a still comely matron of fifty, and his daughter Clara, a handsome girl of twenty, then to his sons, Stephen, the eldest, and owner of the Kloof, Walter, Wilhelm, and Ernest. They were all stout and sturdily-built young men, though hardly equalling their father's height or breadth of shoulder. He readily agreed to convey the Englishmen and their baggage to Umvalosa, naming a very reasonable sum as their passage-money. He also invited them to take up their quarters at his farmhouse until the day of his departure came, an offer which the two lads were thankful to accept. George then went out to look at the waggons in which the journey was to be made – each of which, he found, would be drawn by no less than sixteen oxen. They were in construction not unlike an English waggon, only a good deal stronger and more solid. They were arranged not only for the conveyance of goods, but for the accommodation of travellers. At one end there were seats arranged on either side, and from the roof hammocks might be suspended, in which the females of the party might sleep; the men usually making their beds either under the waggons, or at the farther end. Two entire days were consumed in loading them. As George and Redgy were not to go the whole distance, their boxes were put in last, and then one day more was passed in careful examination of the cattle, to make sure they were all in sound condition. On the morning of the fourth day, however, they set out; the party consisting of the farmer, his wife and daughter and his three sons, three native servants, a boy, and the two young

Englishmen. The first thing was to harness, or, as it is termed in that country, to inspan the cattle. This is a curious process for a stranger to witness. The oxen, which in a well-trained team are fully as well experienced in the operation as their masters, are driven close up to the wheel of the waggon, with their heads towards it. Then the waggon driver calls each ox by its name, which it knows as well as any English dog knows his, and the animal bends forward to allow the yoke to be put upon its neck. Then they are arranged in a double line – eight couple, one behind the other, a Kaffir lad, called the fore-louper, leading the way. He brandishes in his hand a huge whip of cameleopard's hide, which he delivers with terrific effect on the shoulders or back of the unhappy animals, generally towards the close of the journey, when the team are becoming weary, or, at all events, lazy.

The farmer and one of his sons accompanied the waggon on horseback, while the rest of the party walked by the side, or took a few hours' siesta in the waggons. Farmer Baylen proposed to George to ride the first part of the journey in his and his son's company, and the latter gladly accepted the offer. He was greatly struck with the beauty of the scenery in the neighbourhood of Durban. The journey for the first two days lay over Cowie's Hill, which rises to a considerable height, affording a wide prospect of the sea-coast, with its rich line of woods; while inland, the country for a considerable distance presents a succession of elevated ridges, extending as far as the Umkomanzi river. The road itself was in the highest degree picturesque. It was November, the May of the Southern Hemisphere. Every now and then the waggons would enter upon a thick undergrowth of shrubs, ploughing their way, as it were, through an inland sea; the fragrance and beauty of the shrubs far exceeding anything that an English landscape presents. When a few miles had been accomplished, the oxen were outspanned, and allowed to graze, while the men took their mid-day meal, and afterwards smoked their pipes, under the shelter of some fragrant shrubs. Just as they reached the first halting-place, George discerned in the distance some singular-looking circular erections, which, the farmer informed him, were a native village; and finding that George was anxious to see it, offered to ride up and make an examination of it. The offer was gladly accepted, and after a short canter the kraal was reached. It was situated on one of the slopes above a rapid stream, and was built after the design usual among the Kaffirs. There were two circular enclosures, one inside the other, the whole being protected by a strong palisade. The outer circle is for the Kaffirs themselves, the inner one for the cattle. As these latter constitute the wealth of the villagers, they are careful to secure them against theft or violence, and by this arrangement they could only be seized after all the resistance the men could offer had been overcome. Each hut is circular in shape, and consists of a framework, constructed of long poles, driven into the ground, and bent towards the top, so as to meet at one point in the centre. Similar poles are laid horizontally at intervals one above another, and secured to the uprights by strips of fibre, so that the whole structure resembles a huge circular crate. The portion which forms the roof is covered with grass pegged down and secured to the poles, something after the way in which ricks are thatched in England. The floor usually consists of clay, when it can be found in the neighbourhood, levelled and beaten hard. It is sometimes even polished, by being rubbed over with a flat stone. There is a circular elevation in the centre of the hut similarly formed, which serves as a fireplace, but there is nothing resembling a chimney, the smoke escaping, as used to be the case in the dwellings of the ancient Britons, through the framework above. There is generally a door formed of wattle-work, which can be closed in inclement weather, and sometimes a kind of screen of similar material can be placed to windward of the fire, when the weather is unusually severe. George was struck with the fine proportions and intelligent faces of the men, many of them exhibiting muscular, stalwart frames and expressive features, which a Greek sculptor might not have disdained to copy. The women, though some of them were not ungraceful in figure, were not nearly equal, either in personal beauty or intelligence, to their male companions. Their features were, indeed, altogether too flat to satisfy the European idea of beauty, a fault which was not observable among the men. On George's remarking this disparity of the sexes to the farmer, he answered it was no doubt caused by the severe and incessant labour imposed upon the women, for which nature had not designed them.

"They are required," said he, "to perform the entire manual labour of the kraal – all the digging, planting, and reaping, which in other lands is performed by the men; while the men themselves sit at home, engaged in sewing their karosses, in which they display great dexterity, and by which they realise considerable sums. There is, however, no lack of manhood among them. Their bravery in the chase and in war is not inferior to that of civilised nations."

"If ever they should learn from us how to fight," said old Baylen to George, "and possess themselves of the Gatling gun and Martini rifle, it would be a bad day for the whites. They outnumber us ten to one, and are as fearless and resolute as any European race."

"But if they are converted to Christianity," said George, "they would hardly rise against their benefactors, would they?"

"Ay," said the old farmer, "so many think. But to my mind that is a rotten reed to lean on. The nations of Europe have been Christianised many centuries ago, but that does not prevent their going to war with one another, when they think themselves wronged, or even when they imagine some advantage is to be gained. How mistaken the idea is, was to be seen in Sandilli's war, only a little time ago. Some of the chiefs, and some of their men too, who had been baptised in their infancy, and had lived as Christians all their lives, nevertheless took part with their heathen countrymen in the struggle with the English. Several of the chiefs – Dukwana among others, who had been a very zealous proselyte – hesitated for some time as to what course they should pursue, and did not renounce their Christianity. But they took part with Sandilli, nevertheless; and if they could have succeeded in exterminating the whites, and regaining possession of Southern Africa, would not have hesitated to do so."

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.