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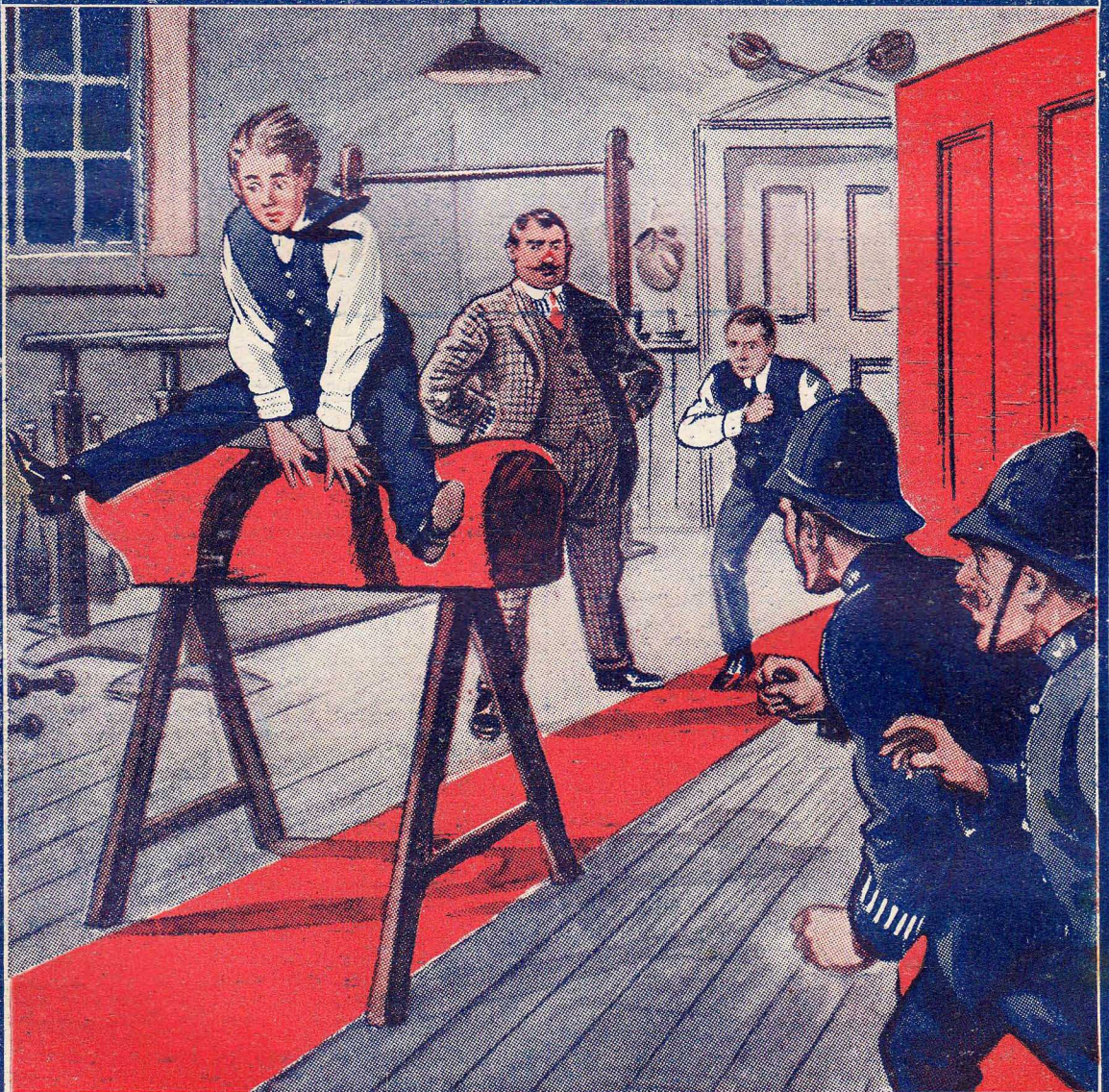
# The BOYS' HERALD

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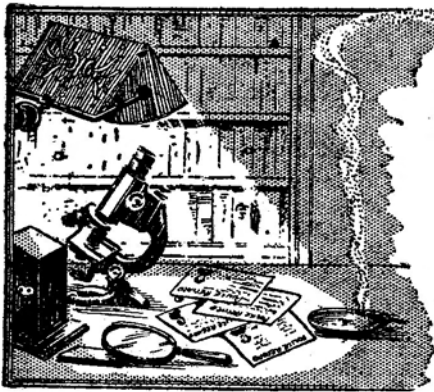
Dec. 17, 1921.



**THE RAID ON THE GYMNASIUM.**

An Incident From Our Grand Long Story Inside.



**COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.**

# FERRERS LOCKE TO THE RESCUE!

A Grand, Long Complete Detective Story introducing Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake.

BY OWEN CONQUEST.

**Ferrers Locke, the Up-to-Date Detective with New Methods.**

### Tracked on the Sea.

**S**ILKY SMITH, known to the London police as card-sharper, cracksman, and crook generally, stood on the deck of a dingy schooner in the Gulf of Guinea, and cursed volubly. Dawn was creeping over the African coast.

With every dirty, patched rag of canvas drawing, the coast schooner was plunging through the waves before a favouring breeze.

Far behind—far off, as yet, but growing nearer and clearer—was the smoke of a steamer.

Silky Smith shook his fist at the smoke, and spat out curses. More than once the schooner had changed her course; but with every swerve, the steamer had swerved also, and Silky Smith knew that he was being pursued. By moonlight, and now by dawn, the steam-yacht was hanging like a hound on his trail, and as she steamed at least two knots where the coast schooner sailed one, there was not much doubt as to the ultimate outcome of the chase.

Silky Smith had a fine flow of language when his feelings were excited. He cursed the schooner, that seemed to crawl under his feet; he cursed the steam-yacht that was steadily drawing nearer; he cursed the cunning scheme that had brought him from the haunts of crime in London, to the West African coast, and which now seemed doomed to utter failure. For he had no doubt that Ferrers Locke, the Baker Street detective, was on board the pursuing yacht, and most volubly and heartily of all he cursed Ferrers Locke.

The rough hands of the coast schooner, six or seven in number, stared at the enraged crook, and grinned. The half-breed skipper, Garcia Ijorra, smoked his long black cheroot, and grinned also. Silky Smith's enraged curses echoed fore and aft of the little coast vessel; and they reached the ears of a girl in the dingy little cabin below—to her they brought hope. For disaster to the plans of the London crook meant hope and rescue to Aline Hilton, the planter's daughter of Kawhee.

The mist of dawn cleared, the sun came up like a ball of fire in blue, cloudless heavens.

All eyes on the schooner turned towards the pursuing yacht, now clear to the view across the intervening waters.

Silky Smith jammed the binoculars to his eyes, and scanned the yacht.

He knew what to expect; but he cursed again, fluently, as he saw what he expected to see—the tall figure of Ferrers Locke, watching the schooner through a glass; beside him, Jack Drake, his boy assistant; on the bridge, the gigantic form of Captain the Honourable Algernon Jervis. Silky Smith lowered the glass with another savage expletive.

"Ferrers Locke!" he muttered, between his teeth. "Coming up hand over fist! The game's up."

He turned to Captain Ijorra. The Spanish half-breed watched him curiously with his sharp, black eyes.

"Can't you put on more speed?" snarled Silky Smith. Ijorra shook his dusky head, and pointed with a tobacco-stained finger to the straining masts.

"No, senor! Every stitch is drawing now."

"We are crawling!" growled Silky Smith. Ijorra shrugged his shoulders.

"The Onda is the fastest schooner on this coast, senor. But sails will never beat steam."

Silky Smith knew that well enough. It was only in comparison with the pursuer that the schooner seemed to be crawling.

The half-breed removed the cheroot from his thick lips.

"What is the trouble, senor?" he asked. "Who are they in your steamer, and why are they following us?"

"Ferrers Locke, and friends of his!" snapped the crook.

"Who is Ferrers Locke?"

"A detective."

"And what does he want?"

Silky Smith made a savage gesture. "He wants me—and the girl below. Ijorra, is there no way of escaping? You know this coast well. Is there no creek we can hide in—no river where we can escape from that fiend?"

"It is possible," yawned Ijorra. Silky Smith's face brightened.

"Fool! Why did you not tell me before? Make for it at once, then."

The half-breed shook his head. "You must tell me more first, senor," he said calmly. "You say the man is a detective, and he is after you? I do not want

trouble with the governor of the Gold Coast Colony. Carambo! I have trouble enough in my way of life, without looking for more, for your sake!" He shrugged his shoulders again, and resumed his cheroot.

Silky Smith ground his teeth. "You are paid for your service," he snapped.

"True, senor. You hired my schooner and crew for this trip, and we have done what you have paid us to do," said Ijorra calmly. "We dropped anchor at Kawhee yesterday, and you have taken the senorita from the plantation, and brought her on board the Onda. But we did not bargain for pursuit by a detective in a steamer. You did not tell me that."

"I did not know. I never expected to see Ferrers Locke in Kawhee," muttered Silky Smith. "How was I to guess? And it was a stroke of ill-luck that his friend happened to be there in his steam-yacht."

"His friend must be wealthy to own that vessel," said the half-breed, with a glance at the pursuing Firefly.

"What does that matter?"

Ijorra laughed.

"I was thinking, senor, that it might pay me better to heave to, and allow them to come up," he answered coolly. "If they are so keen to recapture the planter's daughter, and to take you, mi amigo, they may make it worth my while."

Silky Smith breathed hard.

He had known that he was using dangerous tools in hiring a lawless gang like Garcia Ijorra and his rough crew to help him in carrying out his scheme. But he had had no choice in that matter; only lawless rascals would have taken his pay for such work. But for the intervention of Ferrers Locke all would have gone well.

But Silky realised that the pursuit had made a great difference. Ijorra was quite prepared to "sell him out" if it was worth his while.

"You will get nothing by handing me over," muttered the crook. "Ferrers Locke will have no dealings with you."

"That is unlikely, if he is so keen on laying you by the heels, mi amigo. Why is he so keen on it?"

"An old quarrel, that is all," muttered Silky uneasily.

"Did that bring him from London to the coast of Guinea?" asked the half-breed, laughing. "Better tell me the truth, amigo. There is yet time to find safety among the sand-banks."

Silky Smith paused.

He realised that it was only by an appeal to the ruffian's greed that he could hope to induce him to keep faith. As yet, he had told his hirelings little, and, but for the pursuit, he would have been landed with his prisoner unquestioned. But circumstances had changed now.

"The girl below is worth fifty thousand pounds," he said at last.

Ijorra opened his eyes.

"So much as that?"

"She is an heiress," explained Silky hurriedly. "Her father, the planter of Kawhee, would have inherited a fortune, if he had lived. He died on the Coast, and the girl was left alone on the Kawhee plantation—in ignorance of her good fortune. Roderick Hilton's daughter is being searched for. I believe that Ferrers Locke came out to this coast to search for her. But I knew, and I came—"

The half-breed nodded.

"And your game is—"

"My game is to make Aline Hilton Mrs. Silky Smith," said the crook. "That is the only way of handling the fortune. Now you understand."

"I understand."

"She will go home to England with me—legally tied," said Silky Smith. "That is all I want. She can go to her grandfather, who is having her searched for, if she chooses—but they will have to buy her husband off." The rascal grinned faintly.

"My price will be half the inheritance—and they will pay it to get rid of me. Or they can take me into the bosom of the family, as they choose. Once the knot is safely tied, nothing can undo it, and I am master of the situation. And I shall be able to pay you well for helping me to get clear of that blood-hound Ferrers Locke. Keep in with me, Ijorra, and it will be worth your while."

The crook eyed the half-breed anxiously.

Ijorra nodded slowly.

He called out an order, and the course of the schooner was

changed a little. Far ahead was the line of the coast, with a dark forest in the background.

"We are running for the sank-banks now, senor," said Ijurra. "Once among them we shall be safe from pursuit—unless the English sensors yonder wish to run their vessel aground."

"Oh, good!"

A sign passed from Ijurra to a couple of the rough seamen, and they drew nearer to Silky Smith, but the crook, with a triumphant glance turned on the yacht, did not observe them.

"Good!" he repeated. "You will not lose by it, Ijurra." Silky Smith shook his fist at the yacht. "I've beaten you, Ferrers Locke!"

"But one word more, senor," murmured the Spanish half-breed. "If the senorita below is so valuable to you, she will be equally valuable to me. Carambo! She would have the worst of taste if she preferred you to a dashing man like myself."

Silky Smith started, and spun round towards the half-breed.

"What—" he began furiously.

"Seize him!"

Before Silky Smith's hand could close on the revolver in his pocket, the two seamen had closed in on him, and pinioned him by the arms.

The crook struggled fiercely.

"What does this mean, you bound?" he panted. "What—" Captain Garcia Ijurra did not trouble to reply. He pointed to the sea, and the two ruffians dragged Silky Smith to the side of the schooner.

The crook's face grew like chalk as he understood.

"Ijurra," he panted, "you—you— Help!"

In the grasp of the two ruffians, the struggling crook was pitched clear over the rail.

There was a splash.

Garcia Ijurra looked at him coolly, blowing out little rings of smoke, as he struggled in the heaving waters.

The schooner, with every sail filled, sped on towards the distant sandbanks, and Silky Smith's choking cries died away behind.

### Rescuing A Rascal.

"By gad!" Captain the Honourable Algernon Jervis jerked out that exclamation in tones of astonishment.

"What the thump—" exclaimed Jack Drake.

Ferrers Locke smiled grimly.

The yacht was near enough now to the fleeing schooner for the Baker Street detective and his companions to watch her deck without the aid of their glasses. With startled eyes they had witnessed the sudden tragedy.

"They—they've pitched somebody overboard!" exclaimed Drake.

"By gad!" repeated Captain Jervis. "He's swimming! What the merry thunder does that mean, Locke?"

Ferrers Locke shrugged his shoulders.

"It is a case of thieves falling out, I imagine," he said. "Unless I am mistaken, it is Silky Smith who has been flung into the sea."

"The man we're after!" exclaimed Drake.

"Exactly."

"Then his rascals have turned on him," said the Honourable Algernon.

Locke nodded.

"He has received what he deserves," he remarked. "Our concern is for the poor girl who is a prisoner on that schooner. We are overhauling them pretty fast, Jervis."

"I think I could knock them over with my rifle, at this distance," said Jervis, with a nod. "But in half an hour at the most we shall be alongside, unless—"

"Unless what?" asked the Baker Street detective quickly.

"Unless they are able to run in shore," said Jervis. "Fellows of that kidney know this coast thoroughly, and they may have some dodge. They are heading for the coast now, not for the open sea. But I reckon we shall have them."

"There is not a moment to lose," said Locke.

"True!"

The Firefly was throbbing with the efforts of her engines. She seemed to flash through the curling blue water. Every minute the dingy schooner ahead was clearer to the view.

Drake touched the Baker Street detective's arm.

"But—but that man, sir," he said uneasily. "He is drown—"

"He has brought it on himself," said Ferrers Locke grimly. "It was he who placed Miss Hilton in danger. We cannot afford to risk losing her to save his worthless life."

Drake was silent. But his eyes were fixed on the wretched man struggling in the sea.

The yacht, speeding like a hound in the wake of the fleeing schooner, would pass close by the drowning man, who was still swimming and struggling for his life.

But there was, as Ferrers Locke said, no time to round to and lower a boat for him. The delay might easily mean the escape of the schooner. The sandbanks for which Ijurra was heading were in view now, and his intention was plain.

But Drake's heart smote him.

He knew that Ferrers Locke was right; but he could not help feeling a glimmering of compassion for the hapless wretch whose ruthless plotting had brought him to this.

As the yacht swept nearer, the white face was clearly seen, upturned in despair from the water. Silky Smith was almost exhausted now, but he was still feebly struggling for his life.

"Mr. Locke—"

"We cannot stop!" said Ferrers Locke sternly.

"If I threw him a rope—" muttered Drake.

"Little use, I fear," said Ferrers Locke. "But you may try it if you like. I would willingly save his life, if it does not delay us."

"Good!" said Drake.

He rushed for a coil of rope, and stood ready as the yacht swept down almost upon the drowning man.

Silky Smith's despairing eyes were on the steamer. He did not think that it would stop for him—but he hoped. Faintly across the water came his cry:

"Help!"

Jack Drake waved his hand to him, and held up the rope. If

the crook understood, if he acted promptly and unerringly, he would be saved; but it would be touch and go.

Captain Jervis rapped out a word to the mate at the wheel, and the yacht swerved a little, to pass closer to the castaway.

Silky Smith made a last effort, as the steamer rushed down upon him. At the right moment Drake cast the line, and it fluttered over the struggling man. By good fortune Silky Smith grasped it, and held on for his life.

He was dragged through the water at blinding speed; but he held on convulsively.

Two or three pairs of hands dragged on the rope, and the wretched crook, half-insensible, but still clinging to the rope, was drawn up the side, and landed on the deck.

"Good for you, Drake!" said Ferrers Locke, with an approving glance.

Silky Smith lay on the deck, fainting. Captain Jervis put a brandy-flask to his lips.

It was a quarter of an hour before the rascal was able to move. He took another pull at the flask, and sat up, dizzily. He blinked uneasily under the stern eyes of Ferrers Locke.

"You—you've saved my life!" he muttered weakly.

"More than you deserved," said Locke coldly. "You may thank Drake for it. We should not have stopped for you."

Silky Smith panted.

"They turned on me," he muttered. "Garcia Ijurra, the captain of that schooner, as soon as he knew—"

"Is Miss Hilton safe?" asked Captain Jervis.

"Yes, yes. She has not been harmed. I never meant to harm her," muttered Silky. "I—"

"We know what you intended, you scoundrel," said the Honourable Algernon. "By gad, I'm half sorry you were not left to the sharks, after all."

Silky Smith shuddered.

"She's altering her course, sir," said Jack Drake, whose eyes were on the schooner.

"Look out!" panted Silky Smith. "Garcia Ijurra is making for the sandbanks, and he expects you to go aground if you follow!"

"So that's the game, is it?" muttered Jervis.

"Slacken speed, for your lives!" exclaimed Silky.

Jervis' lips curled.

"For our lives, or for yours, you rascal?" he said contemptuously. "You will take your chance with us, now that you are on board, my man. Drake, hand me my rifle."

"Here it is, sir."

There was a hush on the speeding yacht, as the Honourable Algernon raised the rifle to his shoulder. The schooner was winding among the sandbanks now, and Garcia Ijurra turned a grinning, triumphant face towards the pursuers. He was safe now—or so he counted. And he grinned still more as the steamer dropped to half-speed.

### Run Down.

CRACK!

Sharp and clear the report of the rifle rang over the sunny waters, echoing back in a hundred reports from the dense forest on shore beyond the sandbanks.

Locke watched, with a grim, set face.

There was nothing else for it—it was that, or the escape of the kidnappers. The schooner, winding among the half-submerged sandbanks by channels known only to her skipper, was safe from the pursuit of the yacht. She was within half rifle range; but the steamer could not approach her now. Once among the sandbanks, without a skilled pilot, the Firefly would inevitably have run aground.

As the schooner glided on her way, with shoals and sucking sands between her and her pursuer, the rough crew grinned, looking back at the steamer. Garcia Ijurra lighted a fresh cheroot, and blew out a cloud of smoke. But the sudden crack of the rifle startled him from his sense of security.

The bullet whizzed over the schooner, and tore through the mainsail.

The half-breed spat out an oath.

"That is a warning," said Captain Jervis grimly. "If they do not stop, the next bullet will find a billet."

Drake watched anxiously.

The schooner glided on, and the Honourable Algernon allowed a minute to elapse, to give the rascals a chance. Then he took aim with the rifle again, across the sandbanks where the water churned and foamed.

Crack!

This time the rifle-shot was answered by a yell from the schooner.

The helmsman suddenly let go the wheel, and staggered away, collapsing in a helpless heap on the dirty planks.

The wheel spun round, the schooner lost way, and there was a crash as she struck on a shoal.

Ijurra, with an oath, sprang to the wheel, and forced it round. The schooner glided off the shoal, and sped on her way. The half-breed loosened one hand, and shook his fist at the pursuer.

Crack! crack! crack!

Five or six of the ruffians on the schooner were firing now with revolvers, and the bullets splattered on the yacht.

"Keep in cover," said Captain Jervis quietly.

He did not keep in cover himself. His rifle was aimed again, and it bore upon the half-breed at the schooner's wheel.

Crack!

Had Ijurra faced the music, he would have been stretched on the deck with a bullet through his body. But he released the wheel, and sprang to cover just in time.

Crash!

The unguided schooner, instead of winding through the narrow channel between the banks, ran fairly upon a shelving mass of sand.

There was another crash as the mainmast went by the board. In a moment, the coast schooner was a mass of wreckage of spars and rigging and torn canvas.

She lay half-over on the sandbank, with sloping deck, and the waves beating upon her.

Captain Jervis lowered the rifle.

"I fancy that stops their game!" he said.

There was a chuckle from Silky Smith. The crook had seen the wreck of the schooner with malicious satisfaction.

Wild cries came from the schooner.  
Two of the crew had been tossed overboard in the shock. One of them clambered on board again by the trailing rigging. The other was knee-deep in shifting sand, yelling for help. But his comrades were not thinking of helping him, and every moment he sank deeper in the treacherous sand. In a few minutes he was up to the armpits, still yelling frantically for help.

But Garcia Ijurra was not beaten yet.  
A boat dropped from the schooner, as she heeled over and trembled under the beat of the waters. Five men scrambled into her, and a minute later Ijurra was seen, with a struggling figure in his arms, making for the boat. Jervis raised his rifle, but lowered it again. He could not fire at the half-breed without danger to his prisoner. So close was the yacht now, that Drake could see the white, terrified face of Aline Hilton as Ijurra swept her to the boat.

The oars were hastily shoved out, and the rascals pulled on, with the Gold Coast heiress crouching in the stern.

The schooner was a hopeless wreck, thrashed by the sea, and sinking every moment deeper in the sand. From the ruffian who was pinioned in the quicksand, sunk now to his chin, came a succession of fearful shrieks, as he saw his comrades abandoning him to his fate. They could not have saved him without fearful peril to themselves—and they were thinking only of escape. The boat sped away, with six oars pulling, winding among the sandbanks for the shore, now close at hand.

Ferrers Locke gritted his teeth.  
Without danger of imminent destruction, the yacht could not venture among the shifting sands. Captain Jervis shouted for a boat to be lowered. Four sturdy seamen took the oars, and Jervis, and Ferrers Locke, and Jack Drake stood in the stern. Captain Jervis watched the fleeing schooner's boat, watching for a chance. He fired again, and one of the ruffians dropped his oar and fell back from his seat.

The man in the quicksand had disappeared now, his last cry choked by the treacherous ooze that closed over his head. Drake turned his eyes away from the spot, with a shudder. In plunging among the sandbanks, the rescuers were risking the same fate. There was a bump, as the yacht's boat grounded on a shallow shoal.

The fleeing boat was past the banks now. Ijurra and his men ran her ashore on a firm stretch of sand, and sprang out. Leaving the boat, they sped across the level to the shore, Ijurra carrying Aline Hilton in his arms.

Captain Jervis muttered a curse.

The boat had grounded, but it was shoved off again, and the pursuit resumed. It grounded again and again as the pursuers felt their way through the unknown channels in the sandbanks. Every second that was lost was precious. The running rascals were escaping—Ijurra, burdened with his prisoner, was the last—several of the schooner's crew had already reached the rocks of the shore, and disappeared among them.

They were of no account to the pursuers; it was Ijurra upon whom their attention was fixed. Ijurra and the Gold Coast heiress. Ferrers Locke's face was hard and a little pale.

Once the scoundrel was safe beyond the rocks, plunged into the primeval forest, the Baker Street detective knew that the pursuit would be almost hopeless. And Ijurra was very close to safety now.

His men had disappeared ahead, but the burdened half-breed had still a dozen yards to go, when the yacht's boat bumped at last on the firm stretch of sand, and the pursuers sprang out.

Jack Drake broke into a run. There was a call from Captain Jervis.

"Stand clear!"

The Honourable Algernon dropped on one knee, and levelled the rifle at the fleeing figure of the half-breed.

Drake stopped, and panted.

Locke looked on with an impassive face. A few yards more, and the rocks would shelter the half-breed, with his prisoner. At any risk to Aline Hilton, it was necessary to shoot now.

The captain dwelt calmly, coolly, upon his aim.

The seconds fled; it seemed to Drake that Ijurra, panting on rapidly, would reach safety before the shot came.

But it came at last.

Crack!

One more leap, and Ijurra would have cleared the open sands, and the rocks would have sheltered him. But that leap was never taken.

As the shot rang out, Drake watched with starting eyes.

The half-breed was seen to stagger.

He made one great effort to steady himself, and plunge on. But it was in vain.

He pitched heavily forward, and fell, and his burden fell on the sand. Drake gave a cry, and sped forward.

The half-breed lay struggling on the sand, within a few feet of the safety he had sought.

Aline Hilton struggled to her feet.

She gave one terrified stare at the groaning half-breed, and started running towards the rescuers.

Ijurra made an effort to rise, and dragged himself to one knee. The other knee was shattered, where Jervis' bullet had struck him in the leg. The half-breed's face was convulsed with rage and pain. He had turned on his employer, and staked all on the throw of the dice—and this was the result of the throw! The ruffian was like a wounded tiger at that moment, hardly conscious of his own injury, conscious only of a savage thirst to inflict injury upon his enemies. Drake was ahead of the rest, but Ferrers Locke and Captain Jervis were close behind him, running hard. Ijurra glared at them, as he dragged a knife from his belt. He made a desperate plunge towards Aline Hilton, his savage intention only too clear.

The girl was running towards Drake, without outstretched hands. Ijurra, wounded as he was, reached her—but Drake was there at the same moment. Heedless of the half-breed's knife, Jack Drake fung himself between them.

He grasped Ijurra, and hurled him back, and the knife, slashing at him, grazed his shoulder.

The half-breed panted out a curse, and struck again; but at

the same moment the Honourable Algernon reached the spot. His clubbed rifle crashed on Ijurra's head.

With a gurgling cry, the half-breed dropped on the sand. His knife fell from his hand as he rolled over.

Captain Jervis gave him one grim look. Garcia Ijurra did not move again.

Ferrers Locke caught the swaying form of Aline Hilton.  
"Safe now, my dear child," he said. "You are among friends—safe now."

The Gold Coast heiress was rescued at last.

### Silky Smith's Farewell.

**S**ILKY SMITH had watched, with savage satisfaction, the wreck of the schooner in the sandbanks, and the fall of Garcia Ijurra. The half-breed who had betrayed him had not benefited by his treachery, and that was a solace to Mr. Smith. As the rescuers came back to the Firefly, the figure of the Spanish half-breed lay still where it had fallen, stretched on the sand. Aline's eyes fell on Silky as she came aboard, assisted by Captain Jervis, and she shuddered.

The crook made a step forward. He was glad to see Garcia Ijurra so fearfully punished for his treachery; but that did not alter the fact that his own scheme had fallen into ruins. It was the quest of the Gold Coast heiress that had brought him out to West Africa; and now the heiress was in the hands of Ferrers Locke. Silky's narrow eyes glittered venomously at the Baker Street detective.

"You have won this time, Ferrers Locke!" he muttered. "But

the detective did not glance at him. But Captain Jervis turned on the crook, and grasped him by the collar. With a swing of his powerful arm, the Honourable Algernon tossed him across the deck. Silky Smith went spinning and staggering, and sprawled at full length.

"Keep your distance, my man!" drawled the Honourable Algernon. "Miss Hilton, may I help you below. We shall be back at Kawhee in a few hours."

Aline smiled faintly.

Silky Smith sat up and cursed, as the Gold Coast heiress disappeared down the companion with the Honourable Algernon. Jack Drake glanced at him, and smiled.

"You had better lie low a bit, Mr. Smith," Drake suggested. "You are lucky to get through with your life. The other scoundrels have not all been so lucky."

Drake made a gesture towards the dark speck that lay on the sands, the sea-birds already clustering over it.

Silky Smith replied with an oath.

"The game isn't up yet!" he muttered.

"I don't think you'll do much further harm," said Drake contemptuously. "If there were any police in Kawhee, you'd be handed over as soon as we drop anchor there. Anyhow you'll be taken care of."

Silky Smith slouched away without answering.

The schemer's reflections were not pleasant, as he watched the forests behind Kawhee rise clearer on the horizon, as the Firefly churned her way back to the coast town.

His trip to West Africa had not been a success; he had found the missing heiress, only to lose her again. But the rascal's thoughts were busy as the yacht drew nearer to Kawhee. He had staked all upon his desperate scheme, and he did not give up hope yet.

When the Firefly dropped anchor, and a boat was lowered, Silky Smith came towards it; but he backed away as Captain Jervis swung round on him.

"Stand back!" snapped Ferrers Locke.

"You are not keeping me on board this vessel?" hissed Silky Smith.

"You will remain here," said the detective coldly. "If you give trouble, you will be put in irons."



"I was thinking, senor, that it might pay me better to heave to, and allow the Firefly to overtake us," said Garcia Ijurra coolly. "If those aboard are so keen to recapture the planter's daughter, and to take you, they may make it worth my while." Silky Smith breathed hard.



"If you have a charge to make against me, you can make it ashore," said Silky Smith. "You dare not keep me a prisoner here."

Locke shrugged his shoulders.

Aline Hilton was taken into the boat, and Captain Jervis and Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake took their places. The boat pulled shoreward, passed through the surf, and beached on the sands of Kawhee. Silky Smith watched it from the deck of the Firefly, gritting his teeth. He moved about the deck like a wild animal, regarded with contemptuous amusement by the crew of the yacht.

It was afternoon when the boat came back, and Jack came up the side with a message for the mate. After giving his message, Drake stretched himself in a deck-chair, in the shadow of an awning. Silky Smith came towards him.

"You've come back alone, then?" he asked.

"Looks like it," agreed Drake.

"Where is Ferrers Locke?"

"He has taken Miss Hilton back to the plantation," said Drake.

"Captain Jervis is gone with them."

"She remains there?"

Drake smiled.

"Only long enough to prepare for a journey," he said. "Then the young lady is taking a passage on the yacht to England with us. Is there anything more you wish to know, Mr. Smith?"

"The crook's eyes glittered."

"When do we sail?" he asked.

"Probably to-morrow morning."

"And I am not allowed ashore?"

Drake shook his head.

"I suppose you know, and your master knows, that you have no legal right to detain me a prisoner on this steamer?"

"My dear man, you can get off when you choose," said Drake amiably. "You were picked out of the water—and you can drop back where you came from, any time you please. I'm sure I shan't try to stop you."

Silky Smith strode away, and stood leaning on the rail, staring shoreward. Half a mile away, beyond the surf, Kawhee baked and dozed in the blaze of the African sun. The crook watched the shining waters, and the glistening sands of the shore, and the green-painted verandah of the Planters Hotel. By that time, Aline Hilton was back in her father's bungalow—to take her last leave of the lonely dwelling. On the morrow she was to sail in the Firefly for England, to claim her inheritance—under the guardianship of Ferrers Locke. There was one night for him to work in—if he could gain the shore. He was a good swimmer, and the sea was as smooth as glass. It was only the surf that was dangerous, and Silky hesitated long; but he made up his mind at last.

Jack Drake strolled to the rail. He was quite aware of the desperate thoughts that were passing in the mind of the captured crook. Silky Smith gave him a savage look.

"You are thinking of trying a swim?" smiled Drake. "Jump in, Mr. Smith—one will stop you."

"Is that the truth?" muttered Silky.

"No one on board, I mean," said Drake. "Look!"

He pointed to a black triangular fin that streaked the water at a little distance.

Silky Smith started as he saw it.

"What—what is it?" he asked.

"Shark!" answered Drake laconically. "If you jump over, Mr. Smith, there will be one rogue less in the world two minutes afterwards."

The crook shuddered.

He watched the black fin circling nearer to the yacht. The cook had thrown waste from the galley overboard, and the garbage had attracted the monster of the deep. The form of the shark loomed through the clear water, and Smith caught sight of a pointed snout, and then of a gleam of white, as the shark turned over to snap at the floating garbage. He shuddered again and retreated from the rail.

Drake smiled, and returned to his deck-chair. There was not much danger now that the crook would attempt to swim ashore. Silky Smith had nerve enough in his own way; but not the nerve that was required to face a shark in the deep waters.

When night came on, the baffled schemer was still lounging savagely and aimlessly about the deck of the Firefly, taken no notice of by the men aboard. He was unarmed, and could do no mischief, and he was left to his own devices. Jack Drake went to his state-room, and turned in, and, at a late hour, Silky Smith found a bunk. But he slept little through the hot, tropical night.

His cunning brain was still busy in his wakeful hours. He had failed; and nothing now could prevent the embarkation of the Gold Coast heiress in the steamer for England. So far as the Gold Coast was concerned, the game was up. But the voyage home was a long one, and Silky Smith still hoped that his chance might come. He would watch and wait and scheme for it, and if it came, he would not fail to seize it. Somehow, anyhow, he desperately resolved, he would turn the tables on Ferrers Locke before the Firefly dropped her anchor in English waters, and even if he did not succeed with the heiress, at least he would be revenged upon the detective who had baffled

him. Silky Smith swore that, with many an oath, as he lay sleepless in his bunk through the heavy heat of the night.

His chance would come—even if he had to scuttle the Firefly, and send her to destruction with all on board. He was determined upon that. When dawn glimmered over the Atlantic, the crook came out on deck again, his face dark and lowering.

It was about ten o'clock when the Firefly's boat was signalled for, and put ashore for the passengers.

It came back with Captain Jervis, Ferrers Locke, Aline Hilton, and old Koka, the Yoruba woman, who was to sail with her young mistress. The boat was followed by a canoe with native rowers, stacked with the baggage of the travellers.

Silky Smith looked on with an evil eye.

The voyage was about to begin—the voyage home, that was to end in disaster for his enemies, if not in triumph for himself.

Aline Hilton was handed on board, and conducted to the state-room set aside for her, with Koka. The baggage was passed up the side from the canoe. The boat was swung up to the davits.

Then Ferrers Locke glanced at Silky Smith, with a slight smile curving his lips.

"Are you ready, Mr. Smith?" he asked politely.

Silky Smith stared at him.

"You are starting now?" he asked.

"Yes."

"I am in your power," said Silky savagely. "It does not matter much whether I am ready. I have to sail whether I like it or not. But we shall have a reckoning some day, Mr. Locke."

The Baker Street detective laughed.

"You are making a slight mistake, Mr. Smith," he drawled. "You have been kept on board the Firefly, so far, to keep you out of mischief. But we have not the slightest intention of giving you a passage back to England."

Silky Smith's jaw dropped.

The plans he had been forming during the long night fell to pieces, like a house of cards, at the Baker Street detective's words.

"You—you—" He paused. "You mean—"

"I mean that you are going ashore now, Mr. Smith," answered Ferrers Locke coolly. "The canoe will take you. Jump in!"

Silky Smith clenched his hands convulsively. It had been his last hope; and now it was gone. He glared round, as if in search of a weapon; and as he did so, a couple of seamen seized him.

"Drop him into the canoe!" said Ferrers Locke coldly.

"We shall meet again, Ferrers Locke," panted Silky Smith. "You shall repent this, you—" He spat out a stream of oaths.

"If we meet again, it will be in London, and I shall do my best to send you to the prison you deserve, Silky Smith," said the Baker Street detective. "In that case, an revoir."

Silky Smith struggled as the grinning seamen forced him to the side. He was dropped over the rail into the canoe, which rocked against the side of the Firefly as he landed.

The black boatmen had had their instructions. They pushed off from the yacht, and paddled away towards the surf.

Ferrers Locke, with an ironical smile on his face, watched the canoe thump through the surf, and spin on to the stretch of sand that baked in the sun by Kawhee.

The yacht was in motion by the time Silky Smith clambered out of the canoe, and tramped up the wet sand to the shore. He could still be seen, a dot in the distance, standing on the sands, and staring towards the yacht. As the Firefly glided out to sea, he raised his clenched fist and shook it in impotent rage.

Ferrers Locke shrugged his shoulders.

Jack Drake enjoyed the run home to England in Captain Jervis' yacht—though he was not wholly glad to exchange the blazing sun of the South for the cold and mist of an English winter. But he was glad enough to find himself in the familiar rooms at Baker Street again.

During the homeward voyage Aline had been very happy, and Captain the Honourable Algernon Jervis, who was always cheery, had been even more cheery than was his wont. And Drake had a strong suspicion that it would not be long ere the Gold Coast heiress found a husband—though certainly her choice would not fall upon Mr. Silky Smith. The result of the crook's plotting and scheming had been to secure the happiness of another—a result which Mr. Smith certainly had not foreseen, and which certainly could not have been very gratifying to him.

Ferrers Locke went down to Hilton Place with Captain Jervis and Aline, and there the planter's daughter met her grandfather. And Captain Jervis remained there long after Ferrers Locke had returned to town. In a short time, the Baker Street detective was busy on a new case, and the affair of the Gold Coast faded from his mind, and from that of his boy assistant—but they were destined, ere long, to be reminded of the existence of Silky Smith.

THE END.

Another fine long story of Ferrers Locke, the great detective, in next Tuesday's "Boys' Herald."

## : Editorial :

My dear Chums,—Next week is Christmas, or close upon it, and with Christmas comes the special number of the "Boys' Herald." I know it will have an extra warm welcome, and I am pretty sure you will all admit the special issue is a triumph. My own idea has always been that the best way to celebrate a season is to go one better than ever. The "Boys'

Herald" Christmas Number certainly does that much. I have a ripping programme of stories, and the many favourites in the various series will all go up one in the estimation of everybody. There will be an extra fine long story of Frank Sturdy & Co., and heaps of other attractions, including an illustrated article showing you how to make and run a Christmas pantomime of your own this year. Our paper has rushed ahead and gained such a tremendous popularity for many reasons, but

I think one reason stands out most vividly. The "Boys' Herald" has got some imagination in it. It shows the world as it is, and as it might be. But next week's Christmas number will beat all records, and you will miss a great treat if you do not get it. It contains as fine a budget of stories as has ever been issued. Order your number right away if you have not already done so. There will be a rush. The price will be as usual.

YOUR EDITOR.