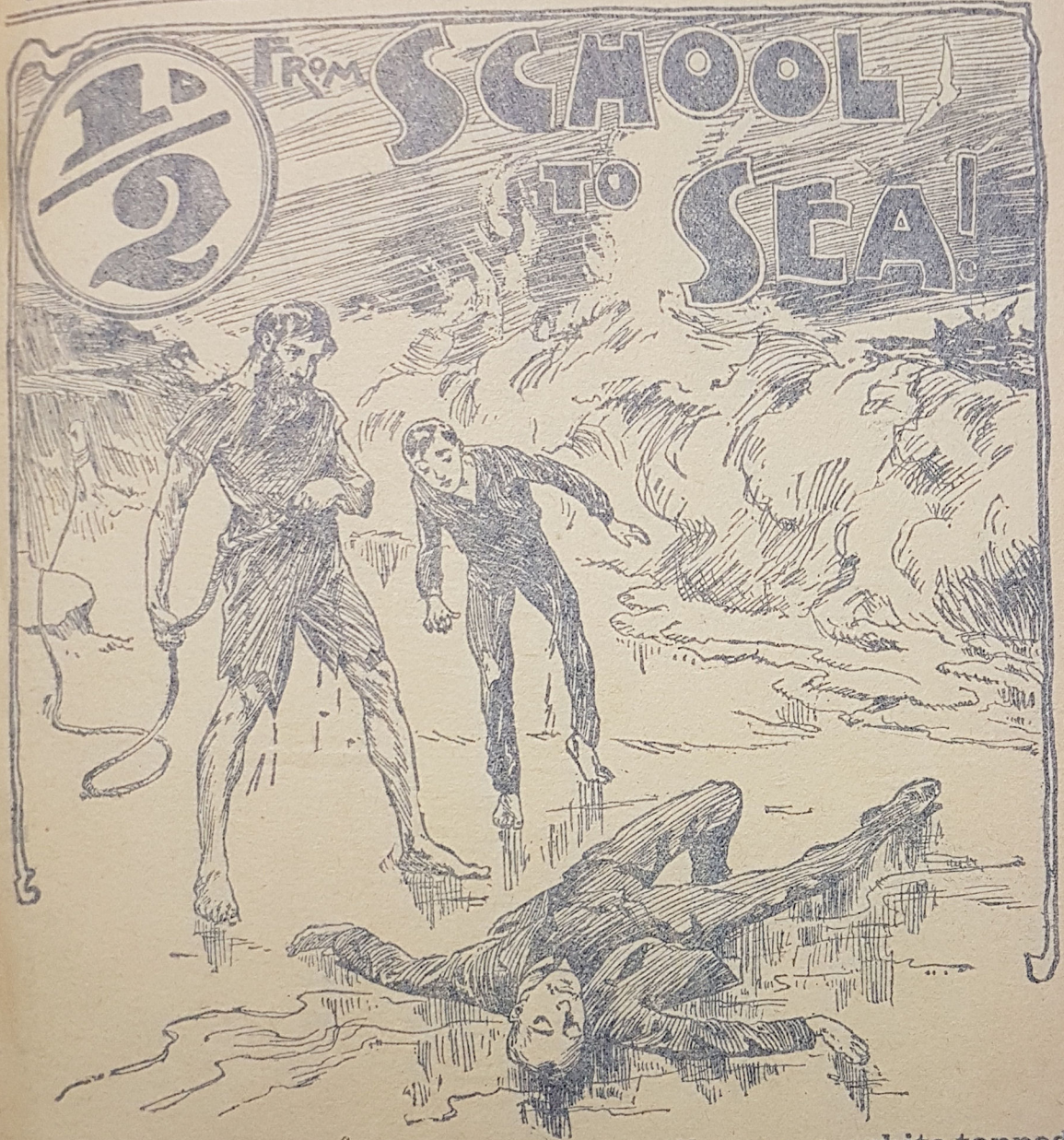


TALE OF ADVENTURES AFLOAT AND ASHORE!



As they stood anxiously watching the sea a white-topped wave came rolling up the beach and flung a body almost at their feet. "It is Yorke!" cried Dick. "And he is dead!"

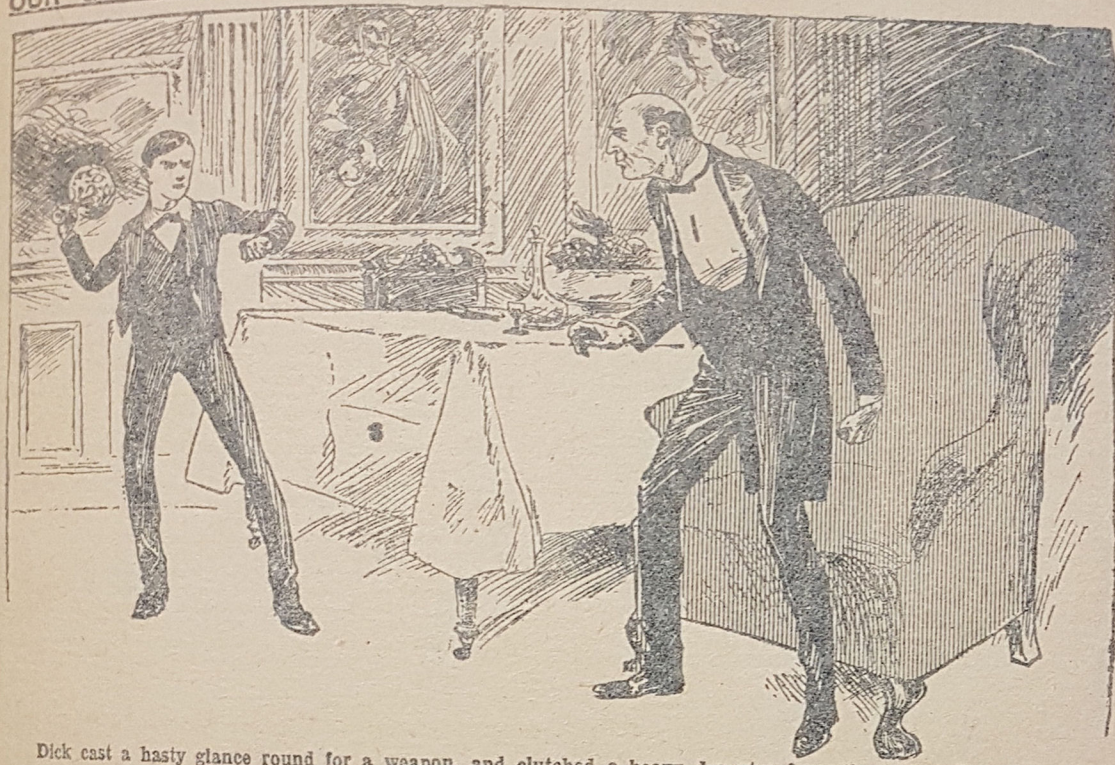
THE MARVEL
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No. 503. STARTED TO SUPPRESS BAD BOOKS FOR BOYS.

FROM ANOTHER SCHOOLMASTER
TO THE EDITOR.

"Dear Sir,—You will see by the heading to this notepaper that I hold a responsible position in a 'known' school. I have much pleasure in testifying that PLUCK and the MARVEL form excellent class-books, both entertaining and improving.

OUR GRAND COMPLETE NOVEL,



Dick cast a hasty glance round for a weapon, and clutched a heavy decanter from the table. He swung it threateningly aloft. "Keep off!" he said, in a low, tense voice.

FROM SCHOOL TO SEA.

A Tale of Stirring Adventure Afloat and Ashore.

By CHAS. HAMILTON.

Bitter Blood—The Shadow of a Crime—A Villainous Compact.

"I am going to send you to school, Dick."

Dick Trevelyan looked up and met the shifty grey eyes of his stepfather.

His boyish face brightened considerably. School was not exactly an enticing prospect, but he could nowhere be more miserable than he was at Trevelyan Grange.

"Yes, sir," he said hopefully. "When?"

"To-morrow." There was a strange gleam in Mr. Gadsby's eyes, as he fixed them upon his stepson. "Mr. Carker will arrive here to-morrow morning to take you to Cliff House School. I dare say you will not be sorry to go," he added, with a sneer.

Dick's eyes did not flinch.

"You know I shall not be sorry," he replied. "I should be glad to leave here, if I were going to prison instead of to school."

"I've no doubt that that is your ultimate destination," sneered Mr. Gadsby. "Prison is certainly a fit place for the son of Robert Trevelyan."

Dick started to his feet, flushing with anger.

"You coward! You coward!" Mr. Gadsby's brows contracted with rage. He rose and made a movement towards his stepson.

Dick cast a hasty glance round for a weapon, and clutched a heavy decanter from the table. He swung it threateningly aloft.

"Keep off!" he said, in a low, tense voice. "I've had enough of your brutality, Mr. Gadsby. I warn you that if you lay a finger upon me I'll strike you to the floor."

His resolute face and flashing eyes daunted Mr. Gadsby. He paused abruptly, casting a look of the deadliest hatred at his stepson.

"A worthy son of a worthy sire," he sneered. "You are following early in your father's footsteps. Go to your room, you impudent young hound, and don't let me see you again till morning."

Without a word, but with defiance in his face, Dick Trevelyan walked out of the dining-room of Trevelyan Grange.

Mr. Gadsby looked after him with gleaming eyes.

"How I hate the young cub! If he stayed here much longer I should kill him with my own hands. But—I can trust Carker."

And there came upon his cold, hard face an expression which would have alarmed Dick Trevelyan if he had seen it.

Dick went to his room. He was not sorry to be alone. His boyish brow was dark with thought. It was his father of whom he was thinking.

Robert Trevelyan had died seven years before. He had died under a cloud.

Dick had been but a child then. He had only a dim and confused recollection of that time of horror—the finding of Vincent Eversley's body on the Bideford road, the arrest of his father, the long agony of the trial.

Robert Trevelyan had been acquitted. The evidence, wholly circumstantial, did not warrant a verdict of guilty; but suspicion lingered.

The acquitted man encountered cold looks or averted glances

from former friends. Under the burden of it he sank. Two years after his trial he was in his grave.

Dick, holding his father in deeply affectionate remembrance, was greatly pained when his mother married for the second time. And yet, in truth, Mrs. Trevelyan had done so chiefly for his sake—that he might have a second father in life, and to care for the large property of which he was the heir.

Mr. Gadsby had been her suitor in earlier days. When she married Robert Trevelyan, Gadsby had apparently taken the disappointment calmly, and, instead of a lover, he became a friend.

During her widowhood he had been of service to Mrs. Trevelyan in many ways; but when he became her husband he showed the cloven foot. He loved her in his hard way. But he hated the son of his former successful rival.

It was not easy for the poor lady to keep the peace between the two; and, at length, harassed by the consciousness that she had done the worst instead of the best for her boy, she closed her eyes upon life.

This terrible loss for a time subdued the enmity of stepfather and stepson; but it broke out again ere long.

To his wife Gadsby had always professed a belief in Trevelyan's innocence; but he had no similar regard for Dick's feelings. He took a gnomish pleasure in taunting the lad with bitter allusions to his father, of whose guilt he now professed to entertain no doubt.

But the severest thrashings could not make Dick bear these cruel taunts in silence; and, as he grew older, he began to strike back when Mr. Gadsby resorted to violence.

It was clear that such a state of affairs could not last for ever, and Mr. Gadsby found a solution of the difficulty in sending for Mr. Carker to take Dick away to Cliff House School.

"The cowardly cur!" muttered Dick wrathfully, as he strode to and fro in his little room. "He always told mother that he believed in poor dad's innocence—to get into her good graces, I suppose. He would eat his own words to any extent for the sake of taunting me. When I'm a man, won't I just give him a good hiding, that's all!"

His eyes sparkled at the thought. He was sixteen now. In five years he would come back and kick Mr. Gadsby out of Trevelyan Grange. That would be a pleasant task.

But, if Mr. Gadsby could prevent it, there would be no home-coming for Dick Trevelyan as we shall see.

Mr. Carker arrived early on the following day, and Dick saw him as he went to the library—a short, thin man, with sallow face and meagre features, and cruel little hawkish black eyes. He was dressed in a suit of rusty black, and looked more like an undertaker than a schoolmaster. Dick's heart sank at the sight of him.

The door closed, shutting off Mr. Carker from Dick's view. The boy went slowly and thoughtfully up to his room, where his box was in the process of packing.

In the library Mr. Gadsby's greeting of Carker was brief. "Glad you've come early. I suppose you know why I've sent for you?"

"I can guess," replied Mr. Carker, nodding. He had an unpleasant voice, in sound like the creaking of an obstinate hinge. It was a voice that suited his physiognomy. "Something afoot, of course. Another little game like that of nine years ago?"

"Shut up!" growled Mr. Gadsby irritably. "I don't see why you want to bring that up."

"You don't care for reminiscences? For my part now——"

"Let's get to business. I want you to take my stepson to Cliff House School."

"Only too pleased. The lad I saw in the hall, I suppose? A fine boy," said Mr. Carker, with a sly look at Mr. Gadsby.

The latter scowled.

"Don't talk rot. You know how matters stand—Trevelyan left everything to his wife. She, in her turn, left it to the boy. In case of his death before marriage, it comes to me."

"I understand perfectly. It has sometimes surprised me that you have done nothing up to now."

"There was no hurry; and I don't want to excite any inconvenient suspicions."

"You don't like the boy?"

Mr. Gadsby ground his teeth.

"Like him? I hate him! It poisons me to breathe the same atmosphere with him."

Mr. Carker nodded sympathetically.

"Of course, you can't be expected to love a brat who stands between you and three thousand a year. It isn't human nature."

"That is not all. It isn't that. He's the image of his father. Every look of his, every tone of his voice, recalls to me his father—the man I hated—the man I still hate, though my vengeance drove him seven years ago to a dishonoured grave."

Mr. Gadsby hissed out the words. His face was dark with passion; but he calmed himself at once.

"You will take the boy away with you, Carker. You understand what you are to do?"

The schoolmaster nodded.

"You leave the matter entirely in my hands?"

"Entirely. You will take care that no suspicion is aroused. I care for nothing else."

"Relay upon me. This isn't the first case of the kind I've handled. Relay upon Elisha Carker." He grinned hideously.

"And now, as to terms."

They talked for a time in subdued tones. Then Mr. Gadsby rose.

"One thing more—have you heard from your brother yet?" Carker shook his head.

"No, not a word for seven years. I greatly fear that he must be dead."

"You fear?" sneered Mr. Gadsby. "You know you would be as glad as I should be if he was no longer able to wag his tongue."

"Poor Roger, he had no stamina!" said Carker, with his unpleasant grin. "He allowed little matters like that Everley affair to weigh upon his mind. It would perhaps be better, as you suggest, if he joined the silent majority; though, as he is as deep in the mud as we are in the mire, he is not very likely to babble, I think."

To this Mr. Gadsby made no reply. He touched a bell. A servant entered.

"Tell Master Dick to come here."

In a few minutes Dick made his appearance.

"Dick," said Mr. Gadsby coldly, "this is your future schoolmaster, Mr. Carker."

"I am glad to make the acquaintance of Master Dick," cried Mr. Carker, holding out a skinny claw. "Shake hands, my dear lad. I am sure we shall be excellent friends."

"I hope so, sir," said Dick, as cordially as he could. But he had his doubts about it.

"Believe me, Mr. Gadsby, I shall take excellent care of your ward," continued Elisha. "At Cliff House School I make it a point to allow my dear boys all the comforts of a home. Plenty of food, plenty of holidays—that's my maxim. Every indulgence, consistent with a proper attention to studies, is allowed."

Dick cheered up a little at that.

He had few friends to say good-bye to. In an hour he was in the train with Mr. Carker, speeding towards Cliff House School and his new life.

Cliff House School—Dick Makes a Friend and a Foe—A Night of Torture.

An old, rambling building, in the midst of ill-kept and desolate grounds, the latter circled by a high, spiked wall—that was Cliff House School.

It stood about twenty miles from Bideford, the part of Devonshire with which Dick was familiar.

From the upper windows could be seen the watery waste of the Atlantic, dotted with glancing sails and black patches of smoke.

An ill-tempered-looking porter opened the huge gates at the summons of Mr. Carker. Dick felt a sense of depression as he entered, which was not lessened by the dull clang of the closing gate.

"Take Master Trevelyan's box in, Bissley!" said Mr. Carker. "Come along, you young whelp!"

Dick stared. Mr. Carker's manner during the journey down had been so genial that the boy began to forgive his unprepossessing looks. He saw now that Mr. Carker, like the spider in the story, abandoned dissimulation as soon as the victim was safely within his web.

The dismay in Dick's face brought a malicious grin to the meagre features of Elisha Carker.

"Your good and indulgent guardian has told me of your violent character, Master Trevelyan," resumed Mr. Carker.

"I hear that you have even raised your hand against him."

"Only when he beat me, sir."

"Only, eh?—Well, don't you do it when I beat you, that's all. And I shall beat you often enough, I've no doubt. You're a hardened young ruffian. But Elisha Carker will cut it out of you."

Dick followed the master into the house with his face more woebegone than it had ever been at Trevelyan Grange. And the sight of the boys of Cliff House School deepened his despondency.

There were some twenty, all told. As Dick soon discovered, most of the inmates of Cliff House were boys whom their relations cared little about. Few had living parents. Mr. Carker took charge of them for a fixed sum, and they were left to his tender mercies.

The "comforts of a home," of which Mr. Carker had spoken, proved to be only a figure of speech. At least, Dick could see, no sign of them at Cliff House.

Dinner consisted of sloppy broth and poor potatoes, and chunks of stale bread.

It was very different from the fare Dick had been accustomed to; but he got it down—not without wry faces, however.

A boy seated next to him observed his distaste with a smile of amusement.

"You don't like our tommy, I can see," he remarked, in an undertone.

Dick looked at him. He was rather a delicate-looking lad of about fifteen, very pale, with big, dark eyes as soft as a girl's. Dick liked him at once.

"I can't say I care for it," he replied. "Do you always live on this stuff?"

"Rather, and glad to get it. So will you be when you've been here a week or two. We don't get any too much to eat at Cliff House, I can tell you. Mr. Carker believes in strict economy. At least, that's what he calls it. I call it beastly meanness."

"You don't like the school, then?"

"I hate it. So do all the fellows. No one would stay here if he could help it."

"Can't you write to your father—"

"Not very well. You see, he was lost at sea six years ago," was the grim reply.

"I'm paid for here by a distant relation who lives in India. He looks upon me as a burden, and thinks I'm his awfully good to do anything for me at all. Sometimes I wish I was at the bottom of the sea with poor old dad." His eyes moistened. "But, I say, what's your name? Mine's Percy Conway."

"Mine's Dick Trevelyan."

"I— But 'sh! Old Skimp's looking our way," said Percy hastily.

Mr. Skimp was the second master at Cliff House. He was not liked there. Servile to Mr. Carker, he indemnified himself by playing the tyrant towards the boys.

"You were talking, Conway!" he said harshly, his greenish eyes resting upon the pale-faced boy. "Come into my study this evening."

Percy made a grimace at Dick. Dick did not speak again till they rose from table.

"I'm sorry," he whispered then.

"Don't worry. I was bound to have a licking before bedtime. Just as lief have it for something as for nothing," answered Percy carelessly.

Dick met him when he came out of Mr. Skimp's study in the evening. His face was whiter than ever, stained with tears and twitching with pain. Dick felt his blood beginning to boil.

"Has he hurt you much?"

"Rather, the brute!" gasped Percy. "Scissors! he does know how to lay it on. The brute!"

"Who are you calling a brute?" A large, coarse hand seized Percy by the ear. It belonged to a hulking fellow of seventeen, who had suddenly stepped from a study into the corridor. "Is it my father, you little beast, eh?"

"No, Carker, really," said Percy, making no effort to release himself.

Indeed, such an effort would have been useless. He was a mere child in the hands of the bully.

Samuel Carker, a worthy son of his father, looked at the boy suspiciously.

"I dare say you're lying. Take that, anyway." He began to twist Percy's ear. "Stop your squealing, or I'll really hurt you."

Dick could stand no more. Conway's spirit had been broken by years of ill-usage. But Dick was new to Cliff House School.

"Let him go, you cowardly bully!" he exclaimed. "Do you hear? Let him go, I say!"

In sheer amazement Samuel released Percy. He fixed a furious look upon Dick.

"Ah, you're the new boy, are you? Come here to run the show, I suppose. I shall have to put you in your place, I see. Take that as a starter."

His heavy hand swung towards Dick's head. But he had to deal with a sturdy Devonshire lad, whose limbs were full of strength, whose heart was full of courage. If Dick had not submitted to the blows of his guardian he was certainly not likely to knuckle under to Master Samuel Carker.

Samuel's blow was parried, and a clenched fist, planted fairly in his pasty face, sent him reeling and staggering along the corridor, till he fell at full length outside Mr. Skimp's study.

He gave a howl, which was heard in every corner of the building. Mr. Skimp came bouncing out of his study, and stumbled over Samuel. In the dusky corridor he could not see who it was, and his cane descended in a vigorous slash upon the prostrate bully.

"I'll teach you to play these tricks," panted Mr. Skimp. "Take that, and—"

"Stop!" yelled Samuel, wriggling. "Can't you see it's me, you blithering idiot?"

"Samuel, pardon my mistake. I thought—"

It was his policy to keep on good terms with his master's son.

"You ought to have looked! How dare you strike me?"

roared the injured Samuel, with tears in his eyes between rage and pain.

"I'm sorry—extremely sorry. But how came you to be lying there?"

"Do you think I laid down on your doormat for fun, you bleating booby?" Samuel was never very choice in his selection of epithets, and he was more abusive than usual now.

"That's a lie!" broke in Dick. "You attacked me, and I knocked you down. And for two pins I'd do the same again!"

"You hear him threatening me, Mr. Skimp. You hear him, father?" whined Samuel.

Mr. Carker had suddenly appeared upon the scene, attracted by the uproar.

"You have begun early, Trevelyan," said Elisha, in his creaking tones. "I think I warned you what to expect if you showed your ruffianism here."

"I was not to blame, sir."

"Don't dare to argue with me! Come here!" Mr. Carker gripped his collar and dragged him into Skimp's study. "Skimp, kindly select your stoutest cane. Trevelyan, take off your jacket! You won't? We'll see about that."

He locked the study door. Dick was shut in alone with his three enemies. His heart was palpitating as if it would burst. His colour came and went.

He would not have dreamed of resisting an ordinary school "licking." But this was nothing of the kind. Only too clearly he could see that Mr. Gadsby had sent him to this den of tyranny and cruelty in order to make him suffer. His spirit was fully aroused. He resisted Carker and Skimp as he would have resisted two common roughs who sought to beat him.

But his resistance, fierce and hardy as it was, availed him nothing against such odds. They got him down, they flung him across the table. Skimp and Samuel held him there, in spite of his struggles, while Mr. Carker wielded the cane. The long, flexible instrument of torture rose and fell with frightful rapidity and force.

Such agony Dick Trevelyan had never experienced before. Pride for a while kept back his cries. But that could not last long. As savage cut succeeded cut long, piercing screams of anguish left his lips. Percy, in the corridor without, stopped his ears with his fingers, while the tears ran down his cheeks.

The cries died abruptly away. Dick had fainted. His tortured form lay limp across the table.

"There," panted Mr. Carker, "that's the first lesson. I think that will take some of the insolence out of him. Take him to the dormitory!"

Dick was put to bed. When he came to himself he lay tossing and turning, moaning and gasping in ceaseless, biting pain.

And that was Dick Trevelyan's first night at Cliff House School.

Dick's Resolve—A Bid for Liberty—A Hot Chase—The Boat Adrift.

Dick was so stiff and sore in the morning that he could scarcely rise from his bed. It was with Percy Conway's assistance that he got into his clothes. His back was simply a mass of weals, and pained terribly.

"I'm so sorry, Trevelyan. It was all my fault," Percy said remorsefully. "But, I say, it was awfully plucky of you to tackle Sam Carker like that. Still, it won't do, you know. He's a monitor, and his father lets him do as he likes. He's an awful bully."

"He sha'n't bully me," said Dick determinedly. "They shall cut me in pieces first."

Percy shook his head.

"It's plucky, Trevelyan, but it won't do. Better make up your mind to knuckle under like the rest of us. You'll have to do it in the long run, you know."

To that Dick made no reply. But his resolution remained unchanged.

Breakfast consisted of watery tea and thick slices of bread, with just a suspicion of margarine spread over them. Mr. Carker presided at the table. His ratty eyes fastened with satisfaction upon Dick's pale, pain-drawn face. The change in the boy's looks was startling, and might have moved even a hard heart to pity. But Mr. Carker found only pleasure in the contemplation of it.

Dark and dreary to Dick were the following days.

That Mr. Carker had singled him out for especially harsh treatment he could not fail to see.

It was all due to Mr. Gadsby, he knew that; and his feelings towards his guardian and stepfather may be imagined.

Strong as he was, high as was his courage, the continual ill-usage began to wear him down. Percy had said that he would have to knuckle under in the long run. He began to fear that the prediction would come true.

There was but one avenue of escape. He might run away from Cliff House.

This idea soon occurred to him. He cherished it. Of course,

THE "HALFPENNY MARVEL."

It would be useless to return to Trevelyan Grange and throw himself upon the mercy of Mr. Gadsby. If he ran away, he would have to keep clear of his stepfather until he was of age. But he was strong and sturdy. It would be strange if he could not earn his own living in the interval. But whatever the risks, he was resolved to get away from Cliff House and the tyranny of Elisha Carker.

To Percy alone he confided his plan. The boldness of it startled his friend.

"Run away!" repeated Percy, in amazement. "Would you dare, Dick?"

"I'd do anything rather than stay here. Suppose you make up your mind to come with me."

Percy shook his head. He did not regard the idea as feasible. To an active, high-spirited lad like Dick success was perhaps possible. But with Percy the case was different.

"No, Dick. I should only be a clog to you. But I'll help you all I can if you're determined to go."

"I am determined."

"But you'll never get over the walls, Dick; and the gates are kept always locked."

"I have fixed on Sunday."

Sunday was the only day upon which the boys of Cliff House were allowed beyond the high spiked walls. Upon that day they marched in a melancholy procession to the parish church of Torrence, half a mile away. Under the vigilant eyes of Mr. Carker and Skimp there seemed but a doubtful chance of a fugitive getting away. But, doubtful as the chance was, it was the only one, and Dick had made up his mind.

Under the influence of his secret determination, Dick forced himself to endure quietly the tyranny of Mr. Carker and the bullying of Samuel. The schoolmaster, believing that the spirit of the lad was breaking down, saw the alteration with ghoulish satisfaction.

It was his intention that his victim should die a "natural" death. The first step was to reduce the sturdy lad to a low estate, to undermine his strength and sap his vitality; and this could not be done more surely, more fatally, than by crushing his courage and fixing him in habitual gloom and despair. It was a plan worthy of a fiend, but Elisha Carker felt no qualms of conscience. He thought only of the price of his iniquity.

Hitherto, in spite of repeated floggings, Dick had resisted Samuel's bullying. Now he took it in silence. Samuel, first astonished, then gleeful, redoubled his kind attentions.

Sunday came at last. It was Dick's second Sunday at Cliff House. Was it to be his last? That question would soon be decided.

It was a sunny afternoon when the boys trooped back from Torrence towards the school. They walked in twos, with Mr. Carker, looking more like an undertaker than ever, at their head. Mr. Skimp brought up the rear. Dick walked beside Percy, who cast frequent anxious glances at him. Percy was, in fact, more excited than Dick. His heart beat like a hammer. Dick, with all his faculties at full tension, preserved a calmness which surprised himself.

The spiked walls, the huge gates of Cliff House appeared in view. Dick had only a few minutes left. He gave Percy a look to tell him the moment had come.

"Good-bye, Percy, I'm going!"

"Good-bye, Dick! Heaven help you!" breathed Percy tremulously.

Dick cast one look up and down the line, then, with a spring, cleared the fence which bordered the road, and started at a rapid run across the adjoining field.

So totally unexpected was the incident that no motion was made by Mr. Carker or Skimp for fully a minute. They stared blankly at the lithe figure vanishing across the field.

"It's Trevelyan! He's running away, father!" cried Samuel.

Mr. Carker rapped out an oath.

"After him, Samuel! Mr. Skimp, follow him! You brats, into the school immediately or I will make you smart!"

The excited and astonished boys were driven into the school-grounds like a flock of sheep, Carker, in a savage temper, dealing blows right and left.

Dick crossed the field, entered upon a lane, and followed it. It led towards the village of Torrence. It would never do to return there; so, after a while, he turned off across another field, heading for the sea.

He had formed no definite plan. Knowing nothing of the locality or the inhabitants, he was compelled to trust to fortune. He had some dim idea of hiding among the rocks, of seizing a boat and landing further down the coast. Beyond that he had arranged nothing.

The pebbles were under his feet now. He sprang upon a rock and looked back. His teeth came together with a sharp click as he saw Samuel and Mr. Skimp racing towards him. Mr. Skimp was panting; but Samuel seemed fresh. At some distance behind them were Elisha Carker and Bissley, the sour-faced school-porter and man-of-all-work, running as hard as they could.

Dick's heart beat hard. Recapture threatened him. His glance swept wildly towards the sea.

He was not far from Torrence. Along the shore of the little bay fishing craft were moored. The tide was on the ebb; some of the boats were already left high and dry. Others, further out, were bobbing and straining at their moorings. Dick stepped down from the rock and went tearing towards the water's edge.

His object was easily seen by his pursuers. They redoubled their efforts to overtake him. And Dick, weakened by insufficient food and ceaseless ill-usage, did not run as he was used to do upon the wide Devon downs round about Trevelyan Grange.

They were gaining. He could hear Samuel's heavy footsteps drawing closer and closer. Desperation grew in his heart. If Mr. Carker had been cruel before, what would he be after this bold attempt to escape him? Life at Cliff House would be hell upon earth. And would there ever be another chance of flight? Carker would take care that there was none. It was now or never! To the persecuted, hunted boy death itself seemed preferable to being taken back to Cliff House School!

"Now I've got you, you whelp!"

It was the voice of Samuel almost at his ear. The bully's stretching hand nearly touched his shoulder.

Had he been alone Dick would have turned upon him. But a minute wasted upon Samuel would give Skimp and Carker time to arrive upon the scene, and then all would be over.

Dick put on a tremendous spurt. Splashing, dashing, he went through mud and sand towards a boat that floated, only a single straining rope preventing it from being sucked out to sea by the ebb. Some fisher had left it there, as he had done a hundred times before, little dreaming that, upon this occasion, he had looked the last upon his humble craft.

Clatter! Splash! Dick bounded fairly into the boat. The rocking of it sent him rolling over the thwart. He was up again in a second. Seconds were worth centuries now. Fiercely he dragged at the mooring-rope to cast it off.

"Hold him, Samuel! Hold the brat!" panted Elisha from the rear; and Samuel, encouraged by the nearness of his allies, sprang into the boat after Dick and laid hold of him.

A smashing blow in the face was the reward of his action. He gasped blindly, and fell into the bottom of the boat, dazed by the concussion.

Again Dick tore at the rope. Joy of joys! It loosened and slid off. The boat, in the clutch of the ebb, danced seaward. Only just in time. In ten seconds more Mr. Skimp's fingers would have been upon the gunwale.

Elisha Carker, knee-deep almost in slush, stood and looked blankly after the receding boat. It was tossing and rocking; but he saw Dick place himself at the tiller, and after that it ran well enough.

What to do, Carker had not the least idea. In fact, there was nothing effective to be done.

There were other boats moored there, destitute, of course, of oars. But if the oars had been there neither Carker nor Skimp had any knowledge of how to manage a boat. And, with evening coming on and a strong ebb tide running, neither would have dared to put to sea in any case.

"We must get help in Torrence," said Mr. Carker at last. He was very pale.

But he knew beforehand that it was useless. The honest fisher folk, indeed, readily turned out to help when they learned that two lives were in danger. Half a dozen boats were run down to the sea. But by that time the fugitive boat was only a speck on the dusky waters.

Night, descending like a pall upon the ocean, swallowed the speck. The searchers returned unsuccessful.

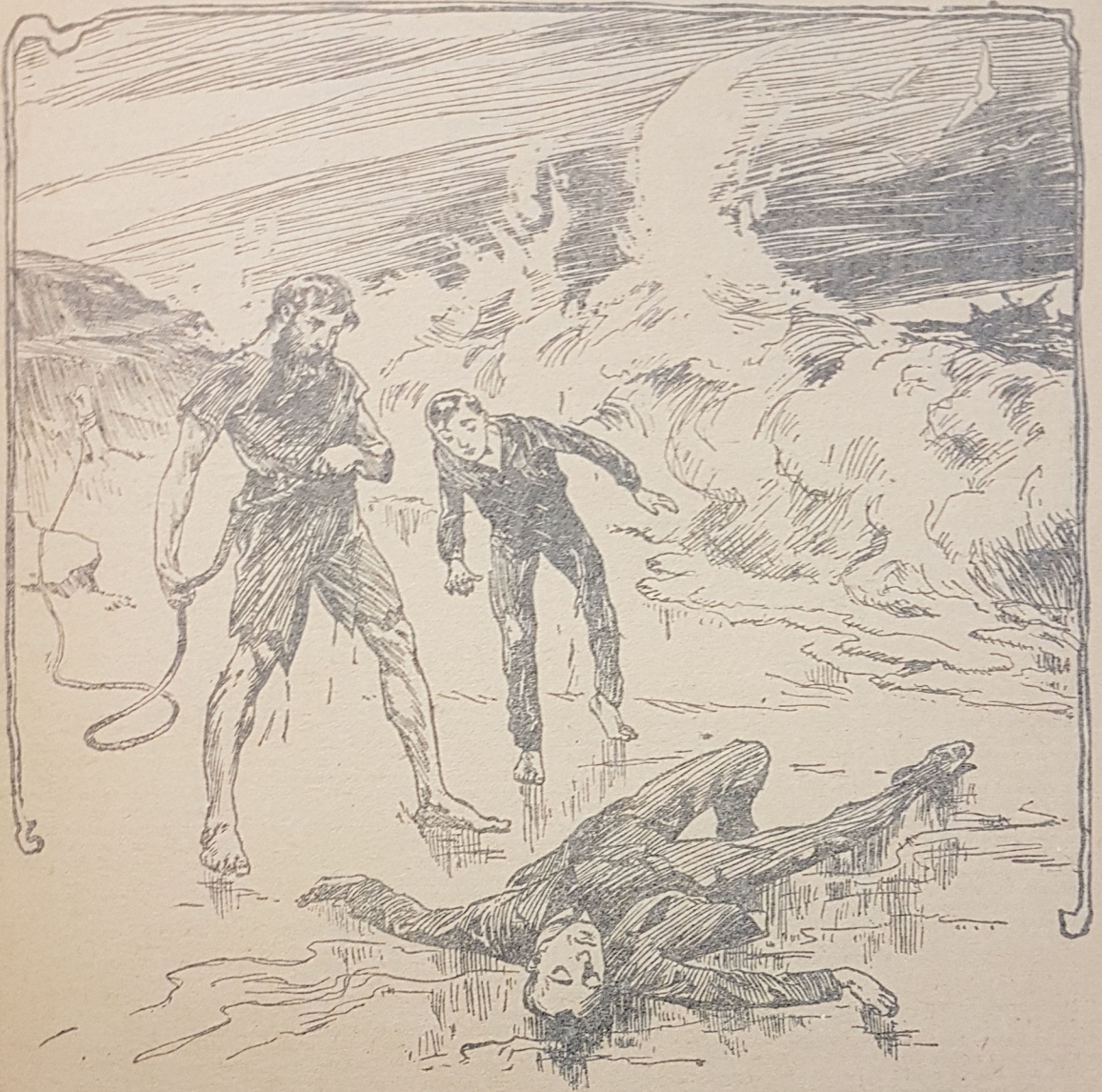
Mr. Carker took his way back to Cliff House in an unenviable mood. Wretch as he was, he was not without natural affection, and he was anxious for Samuel. The chances that he would ever see his son again seemed remote. But this was not his greatest anxiety.

What was he to say to Mr. Gadsby? The disappearance of Dick Trevelyan would not satisfy that gentleman. Satisfactory proof of his death would be required before Mr. Gadsby could call himself master of Trevelyan Grange. The guardian would be simply furious when he heard what had happened.

Elisha's hopes of receiving the blood-money now dwindled to vanishing point. Under the circumstances, what was he to do? He could think of nothing but to flog the boys. This he did. But though it relieved his feelings, and gave him the gratification of knowing that there were others at Cliff House more gloomy than he was, it did not mend matters. And a time of retribution was coming for Elisha.

The Boat Adrift—The Red Light—Picked Up—Bound for the Antipodes.

But it is Dick Trevelyan whom we must now follow. Possessed with the fixed idea of escaping from Cliff House



As they stood anxiously watching the sea a white-topped wave came rolling up the beach and flung a body almost at their feet. "It is Yorre!" cried Dick. Captain Conway bent over him.

at any cost, Dick had given no thought to the perils of his reckless embarkation.

And now it was too late to think of it. The Devon coast was sinking out of view. Dusk was deepening on the sea. Before him lay the Atlantic. No means now of returning even if he had wished to do so.

Samuel, still a little dazed, sat up in the bows and stared at Dick. Dick was pale. But his hand was firm upon the tiller.

"Look here, what are you up to, you whelp?" blustered Samuel. "You'll get us both drowned before you're done! Turn the boat round at once!"

"Don't be a fool, Carker!" said Dick calmly. "If you use your eyes you will see that there are no oars in the boat. Even if there were we couldn't make head against this tide."

Samuel turned as white as a sheet.
"Then—then we're drifting out to sea!"
Dick nodded.

Samuel sat petrified with terror. He had heard of boats lost at sea. Thoughts of starvation, of cannibalism, crowded confusedly into his mind. He crouched, crushed with fear.

Dick was not without dread. The situation was terrible.

But even then he would not have exchanged it for Cliff House and the slashing cane of Elisha Carker. Come what might, he did not regret the step he had taken. As for Samuel, he had only himself to thank for his misfortune. It served him right, and Dick had no pity to waste upon him.

The night was dark, but fine. Few stars shone over the shadowed waters. Dick kept a keen watch for ships' lights. The boat was in the track of ships coming from the Bristol Channel. He had strong hopes of being picked up. Other hope of life there was little.

It was about midnight when he saw a red gleam rising out of the blackness to the north. His eyes were strained with watching. The red danced and flickered to his vision. He closed his lids and kept them closed for a full minute, then looked again steadily. His hopes had not deceived him. It was really a light, burning now nearer and clearer.

A ship, as yet invisible, was advancing over the dark waters, its red eye, as it were, glaring forward upon its hidden route.

Dick's heart beat almost to suffocation. The red light meant life instead of death.

"Carker!" The bully, smitten with a kind of palsy by fear, sat motionless, his face in his hands. "Carker, rouse

yourself! There's a ship yonder! We are saved if we can make them hear our voices!"

Samuel raised his baggard face. Dick pointed to the red light.

"She must pass very close to us. I've no doubt we shall make them hear."

Samuel nodded sullenly.

Closer came the red light.

"Ahoy!" shouted Dick, with his hands hollowed before his mouth. "Ship ahoy! Help! Help!"

Then both went at it, shouting together with all the strength of their lungs. Far into the night rang their voices. Still the red light kept steadily on. If the course were not altered the vessel would pass them probably at a mile's distance. And they had no means of propelling the lazily floating boat!

Carker gave a groan of despair and flung himself down.

"It's no use! It's no use! They can't hear us!"

"Get up! They may hear us yet!" Carker did not stir. Dick kicked him. "Get up, you whining coward, and shout!"

Thus adjured, Samuel obeyed. Again, in shout after shout, they flung their voices into space.

"Hur—rah!" yelled Dick suddenly.

"How do you know?" began Samuel.

"Can't you see the green light? They've changed their course!"

The green starboard-light as well as the red port-light could be seen from the boat. The ship was heading directly for them.

Filled with renewed hope, the lads redoubled their exertions. With wild, heart-breaking anxiety they watched the gleams of green and red. One or the other vanished at intervals as the ship stood this way or that in her patient endeavours to locate the boat. But all the time they came nearer and nearer, till at last Dick could see other lights, and the dim outlines of a three-masted brig with her courses and topsails set.

"Help! Help!"

"Ahoy! Haven't you a glim?" came a roaring voice.

"A what?"

"Bust my tops'ls! A glim—a blink—a light!"

"No!"

"Sing out, then!"

There was, in fact, great danger of the rescuing vessel passing over the tiny boat in the darkness. But, thanks to a ceaseless "singing out," such a catastrophe was avoided. The ship lay to close enough for a rope to be thrown. Dick caught it and made it fast. Five minutes more and the pair were on the stranger's deck.

In a glare of lantern-light, Dick Trevelyan found himself facing a short, stout, ruddy sailorman, in captain's attire, with a pipe in his mouth. As for Samuel, as soon as he was quite safe, his nerves gave way utterly. He threw himself upon the deck blubbering hysterically.

"Bust my topsails! Where did you spring from, laddy?" demanded the red-faced captain, looking at Dick, taking no notice of the blubbering Samuel.

"Boat adrift," replied Dick concisely. "I'm from Devonshire."

"Well, do you know where you're going to now, young shaver?"

"No, sir."

"Melbourne, somme—right across the world. How do you like the idea?"

Dick's heart beat with gladness. Australia! Far from the clutches of either Mr. Gadsby or Elisha Carker!

"Oh, sir, I'm so glad!" he said impulsively.

The jolly-faced skipper looked at him rather queerly.

"Hem! Bust my topsails! What have you been doing in Devonshire, eh?"

Dick flushed. The suspicion, though, was not an unnatural one under the circumstances.

"I have done nothing I have reason to be ashamed of, sir," he answered, in a low voice.

"All serene, laddy, I believe you," said the skipper kindly.

"But, anyway, Australia's the word, for I couldn't turn back the 'Boadicea' on any account."

Dick was very glad to hear it. Samuel was as yet too

hysterical to hear or heed anything.

Leaving the empty boat dancing away upon the waves, the "Boadicea" turned her prow once more towards the boundless Atlantic, bearing Dick Trevelyan away swiftly toward the rosy regions of hope.

The "Boadicea"—The Captain and Crew—A Startling Meeting and a Mystery.

Strangely enough came the dawn to Dick Trevelyan. He had slept soundly in a corner of the cuddy. At daybreak he was up.

The wide sea glimmering in the rising sun, the boundless heavens fleeced with clouds, formed a scene new and wonderful to the boy who had never been out of sight of land before.

The straining masts, the belying canvas, the bronzed, bearded seamen and swarthy lascars, the smell of tar and the keen, salty breeze—he thought he could never tire of them.

What a change after dull, dreary Cliff House, and the creaking voice, the cruel face, the pitiless cane of Elisha Carker!

But Samuel's feelings were very different. Cliff House had not been a house of bondage to him. He was dismayed at the thought of being carried so far from home.

"It's all your fault, you eub!" he said to Dick when they met to breakfast in the pantry. "I'll make you smart for it, too!"

Dick laughed carelessly.

"Better not try it, Sammy. You haven't got old Carker or Skimp to help you now. I'm willing to let bygones be bygones; but if you badger me I'll give you a hammering you won't get over in a hurry!"

And Samuel, after a little cogitation, decided to leave Dick Trevelyan severely alone.

Breakfast over, the boys were called into the captain's cabin. Captain Mitford was as ruddy and genial-looking as when Dick had seen him first.

"Seeing that you're booked for Melbourne, lads, I expect you to do something for your rations," he said. "Are you willing to work?"

"More than willing, sir," Dick answered cheerfully.

Samuel made a long face, but he could not venture to dissent. Work was never agreeable to Samuel. An objection was upon the tip of his tongue. But there was something in Captain Mitford's keen eyes, kindly as they were, which warned him that no nonsense would be tolerated.

Captain Mitford nodded approval to Dick's reply.

"Very good. I don't like idlers. And now, please, explain to me how you came out at sea in a boat."

Forthwith Samuel burst out with a tale of woe. How Dick had run away from school; how he, Samuel, had valiantly tried to recapture him; how between Dick's rascality and the unlucky ebb tide he had come to be adrift upon the Atlantic.

Captain Mitford listened quietly. Then he asked, without comment, for Dick's account.

Dick told the plain truth. The story of Mr. Gadsby's hatred, of Elisha Carker's cruelty, of Samuel's bullying, of all that had forced him to run away.

"Your accounts don't agree, that's clear," Captain Mitford remarked. He had no doubt of Dick's veracity, for he read the boys' characters in their faces. But he did not deliver his opinion. "Take my advice. Let bygones be bygones, and make the best of the situation."

By the skipper's orders, the sailmaker cut down some sea-clothes for the boys, and their school attire was discarded. Dick took to the new life with a zest; Samuel with subdued grumbling. The result was that Dick began to develop into a fine, active sailor lad, while Samuel remained the hulking hobbledoh he had always been.

Some description of the "Boadicea" and her crew may not be out of place here.

She was a fine brig, belonging to Cardiff. Captain Mitford was part owner.

The chief mate, Llewellyn, was a Cardiff man. Stoke, the second, hailed from Bristol.

The crew numbered thirty, and of these nearly a dozen were British.

The rest were Swedes and lascars.

Captain Mitford was a skipper of the old school—fond of his glass and his bottle, and, indeed, seldom without a pipe in his mouth wherever he was.

Dick liked the skipper immensely; while Samuel soon grew to hate him, for he was decidedly rough on shirkers.

Upon the first day of Dick's sailor-life occurred a strange incident, which he did not soon forget.

The bosun's mate, David Yorke, was on the sick-list, and in the dog-watch the steward sent Dick to him with a savoury. Yorke was in his bunk in the fore-castle, which was none too well-lighted. Dick dimly saw a pallid face peering at him from the bunk.

"Good heavens! who are you?"

It was a cry, eloquent of fear and horror, which broke wholly from the lips of the sick man.

Dick started. His first thought was that Yorke had suddenly gone delirious.

The seaman stretched out his hand and clutched the boy's arm before he could get out of reach.

"Who are you?" he repeated gaspingly. "Is your name Trevelyan?"

Dick looked at him in amazement. How did this sailor of the "Boadicea" know his name?

"Tell me, is your name Trevelyan?"

"Yes; Richard Trevelyan."

"Who was your father?"

"Robert Trevelyan, of Trevelyan Grange," replied Dick, more and more amazed.

The seaman released him, sinking back weakly into the bunk.

"I know it. I could not mistake the Trevelyan face. Heaven forgive me!"

"Did you know my father?" Dick asked eagerly. Yorke gazed at him fixedly, and burst into a strange, mirthless laugh. Dick felt that he had stumbled upon some hidden mystery.

"Did I know him? What matters? How came you here? What are you doing aboard the 'Boadicea'?"

Dick explained. Naturally the name of Carker passed his lips. As he heard it the seaman broke again into his disconcerting laugh.

"Carker! This is the cub grown up, then! Elisha's cub! Strange that we should meet."

Dick did not understand in the least. After he left Yorke he pondered over the sailor's mysterious words and looks, but could not fathom any solution of them.

In the following days he took a good deal of interest in Yorke, and by talking with the other fore-castle hands learned what was known about him, which was not much.

He had not been brought up to the sea, but he was a good sailor. He was quiet, reserved; but had a devil in him when roused. He described himself as a Liverpool man; but on one occasion in talk he had inadvertently referred to Devon as his native county, which led the wisecracks of the fore-castle to surmise that there was something in his past which he wished to keep secret, doubtless for excellent reasons.

Yorke seemed to take a fancy to Dick. He did not talk to him much. But he helped him when he could—explained to him various details of seamanship, and took his part in fore-castle "rova."

For the last-mentioned service Dick had cause to be especially grateful.

There was a rough set amongst the crew, much given to bullying and cuffing. Yorke's friendship stood the boy in good stead.

Yet, grateful as he was for kindness shown, Dick could not find in his heart a liking for Daniel Yorke.

There was an indefinite something about the man which seemed to repel him.

In Southern Waters—A Dark Plot and a Sudden Outbreak—Mutiny!

Days passed, and weeks. The "Boadicea" ploughed the sunny waters of the South Pacific.

Dick was becoming a good sailor. Samuel, on the other hand, proving useless on deck, was turned over to the steward. Dick and he, therefore, did not often meet.

Dick did not know when it was that he first became aware that all was not as it should be forward, but by the time the "Boadicea" was in Australian waters he was conscious of an undercurrent, of something which certain members of the crew talked over among themselves in whispers.

He knew that there was dissatisfaction forward. He vaguely felt that there was something more. But what?

Captain Mitford was a good skipper, but he was "hard as nails" upon idlers. And the "Boadicea's" crew contained a considerable proportion of would-be idlers.

The lascars, especially, were a sullen set. Dick had often seen their black eyes flash savagely at the skipper.

In short, the "old man" was pretty well hated forward. Dick had a sort of presentiment that ill would come of it.

But he was far—very far—from suspecting the terrible mischief which was brewing aboard the "Boadicea" during these sunny days.

It was with terrible suddenness that the outbreak came.

One calm, starry night, when the starboard watch went off duty, Dick proceeded to his bunk as usual.

But it suddenly struck him that the others were making no motion towards hammock or bunk.

Daniel Yorke was speaking in a low voice to Bjornsen, a tall, loose-jointed, fair-bearded Swede, and the rest were gathered round them.

Dick looked at them. He felt that a crisis had come. There was, so to speak, danger in the air.

Bjornsen made a gesture towards him.

"But the boy, Yorke?"

"He must not be harmed."

"It would be safer—"

Yorke silenced him with a gesture, and walked across to Dick. The boy's heart was beating wildly.

A sudden sense of his danger had rushed upon him like an icy blast.

"Don't be alarmed, Trevelyan. Your life is safe."

"If you keep quiet," added Bjornsen. "Waste no time, mates. Rope him up!"

Resistance was out of the question.

Dick was bound hand and foot. He spoke only once.

"What are you going to do, Yorke?"

"You'll see soon enough," was the brief reply.

And the seaman did not meet Dick's eyes.

Bjornsen gagged the lad with a not over-clean neckerchief.

Powerless to move or speak, Dick was lifted into his bunk.

He laid there, his pulses throbbing, a thousand horrible images of mutiny and murder flitting through his excited brain.

"Are you going to wait for Carker, Bjornsen?" asked one of the seamen.

The Swede nodded.

"Yes. If he succeeds he will bring us the captain's revolver."

A few minutes later Samuel entered the fore-castle. Bjornsen met him eagerly.

"Have you got them?"

Samuel, nodding, drew a case from under his jacket. Bjornsen seized it eagerly, and opened it. He took out a revolver; Yorke took the other.

"Was the old man asleep?"

"Rather. Snoring like a porpoise."

"Is Llewellyn in his cabin?"

"Yes."

Bjornsen drew a deep breath.

"Come on, mates! It's time!"

The seamen, led by Yorke and Bjornsen, crowded out of the fore-castle.

Samuel, though he had joined in the plot of revolt—partly through native rascality, partly because he was afraid of getting his throat cut if he didn't—had no intention of taking part in the fighting, if there was any. That wasn't in his line at all.

He sneaked into the cook's galley, and stayed there shivering till it was all over.

Dick, helpless in his bunk, listened with straining ears for sounds from the deck. He heard the voice of the second mate—amazed, probably, by seeing the off-duty watch return to the deck before eight bells.

"Hallo! What's amiss?" The question was not answered. Dick heard a pattering rush of feet, an exclamation of angry surprise, then sounds of a desperate struggle. Then the savage voice of the Swede.

"Stick him, you fools! There's no time to waste!"

A choking scream succeeded, a deep groan, and a sullen splash in the sea.

Dick's brain reeled. Horror thrilled in every vein. It was murder—brutal murder—that had been done there under the stars.

"To the cabin!" Again the strident voice of Bjornsen. Footsteps, voices receded airt. Cries, cracking pistol-shots echoed through the ship.

A violent shudder ran through Dick's limbs, his head seemed to turn round, and he was conscious of nothing more.

Black oblivion shut out the horrors of the night.

After the Mutiny—Blow for Blow—Adrift on the Pacific.

The sun rose from the bosom of the waters. The Pacific glimmered wide and blue.

Dick opened his eyes.

For a minute he could not realise where he was, or what had happened.

He looked round wildly. He was lying upon canvas on the "Boadicea's" deck, the blue sky above him, the white sea-gulls skimming the azure depths.

What had happened?

The memory of it rushed upon him abruptly. He shuddered. But how came he unbound, and on deck?

"I am glad to see you awake, Trevelyan."

Daniel Yorke was by his side. Dick could not help a movement of repugnance.

A bitter smile crossed Yorke's face.

"What, have you already forgotten that I saved your life?" he said, with a sneer.

Dick coloured. This man was no doubt a villain. But what he said was true. He had saved Dick's life, not without risk to his own.

"I do not forget it," Dick said in a low voice. "I am grateful. But why did you save me?"

Yorke looked at him gloomily.

"Let that pass."

"What have you done to the captain?"

"He is a prisoner—wounded."

"And Mr. Llewellyn?"

"The same."

Dick did not ask about Stoke. The splash he had heard last night had told him what was the second mate's fate.

"It was easily done," resumed Yorke. "Carker had abstracted the captain's pistols, and that made all plain sailing."

"The hound!"

"The son of his father," said Yorke, with a shrug. "Samuel is worthy of Elisha. But now, what are you going to do? Join us, or—"

"I will never join a gang of mutineers."

"I tell you plainly that the alternative will probably be death. We cannot keep aboard the 'Boadicea' any but our friends."

"Does that mean—"

"It means that we are going to give a boat to the captain and to those who choose to go with him."

"I shall be one," said Dick resolutely.

"Better think over it."

Yorke walked away and joined Bjornsen at the wheel. Dick rose and looked about him.

The sails were set. The seamen were at their posts, somewhat less orderly than usual, Dick noted. Several of them were already the worse for drink.

The captain sat at the foot of the mizzenmast. His hands were tied, and there was blood upon his face. Mr. Llewellyn lay close by him. The chief mate, more severely wounded, was not bound.

Dick saw three or four gloomy faces among the crew. He guessed that these were men who had not been in the secret, and who had acquiesced in the new state of affairs in fear of their lives.

Bjornsen and Yorke were talking earnestly at the binnacle. From their tones Dick expected that a dispute was imminent.

"Hallo, you cub!" It was Samuel's voice. He fixed a leering look of triumph upon Dick. "We have our ups and downs, don't we? I'm up now and you're down."

And Samuel, with the idea that he could now play the bully with impunity, drove his fist into Dick's face before the boy could elude it.

Never was he under a greater mistake.

Dick was less inclined than ever to knuckle under to the cowardly bully. He staggered under the blow, but recovered himself immediately.

"You hound! You treacherous hound!" he panted.

And he went for Samuel like a tiger. A right-hander in the chest, closely followed by a left-hander in the eye, sent Samuel reeling; and, as he reeled, a perfect tattoo of blows rained upon his face and chest. He yelled and fell to the deck, half-blinded and wholly beaten.

"Get up, you cur!" said Dick, standing over him, with clenched fists and flashing eyes.

But Samuel was wise in his generation. He did not get up. He lay on the deck and howled for breath. But the mutineers, instead of helping him, only laughed at his discomfiture, and jeered at him to get up and fight. Samuel would just as soon have jumped into the Pacific.

Dick turned contemptuously away; and Samuel, as soon as his back was turned, scooted away and took refuge in the galley.

Meanwhile, the argument between Bjornsen and Yorke had ended. Yorke's hand had gone to his revolver, and then the Swede gave in. Yorke came over to Dick.

"It's settled," he said. "Captain and his friends are to have a boat and provisions. Bjornsen wants to send 'em adrift without grub or water. He wants them dead."

"The scoundrel!"

"He's in the right," answered Yorke moodily. "If we let them live, they'll hang us as like as not later on; but I can't agree to it." An almost wild look came over his face. "There's blood enough upon my hands."

"You did not kill Mr. Stoke?"

"Last night? Oh, no. That was Bjornsen's doing. I was thinking of—" He paused and looked strangely at Dick. "Nine years ago I shed blood, and I've never had a moment's peace since."

Then, as if he regretted saying so much, he turned abruptly away.

It was not only to Yorke that the villainous Swede had yielded. More than half the mutineers, now that they were cool, were opposed to inflicting death upon the prisoners.

A quarter-boat was prepared for them. Yorke saw to the placing of provisions and water-kegs in it, and a sail and oars.

"Now, captain, are you ready?"

Captain Mitford rose. He did not speak. He appeared to be stunned by the terrible misfortune that had befallen him.

He was placed in the boat. Llewellyn, who had become unconscious, was laid there gently enough. Then Yorke looked round at the crew.

"Whoever chooses to go with Captain Mitford is at liberty to do so."

It was Dick Trevelyan who spoke, and he sprang lightly into the boat. Yorke glanced at him with an indefinable expression.

"Any more?"

Denton, the boatswain, followed Dick, then two seamen. And they were all.

"Cast loose."

The boat slid down to the sea. The mutineers lined the side to watch it push off.

"Good-bye, Dick Trevelyan!" called out Samuel. "I hope you'll be drowned."

To this charitable valediction Dick made no response. He looked along the line of faces, and he caught the eyes of Bjornsen. There was a grin of evil mockery upon the Swedish seaman's face. He made an ironical salute to Captain Mitford.

"Adieu, captain, and a pleasant voyage to Davy Jones's locker. Hard-a-port, there!"

The boat rocked upon the Pacific—a speck upon the boundless blue.

The "Boadicea," with bulging canvas, flew on, and the abandoned boat's crew watched her white sails sinking lower and lower upon the horizon.

They watched and watched, with haggard eyes, and faces drawn with despair.

Adrift upon the boundless Pacific, five hundred miles from the nearest known land, what were their chances of life worth? Little—very little, and they knew it.

A strange, horrible sound drew their attention from the vanishing sails of the "Boadicea." It was the death-rattle in the throat of Llewellyn. The chief mate was at his last gasp. They gathered round him with seared faces; but he was past all human aid.

"Dead," muttered the skipper. "He was a true shipmate. Heaven rest his soul!"

He was dead—the first to perish of the abandoned six—the first, but not the last!

The Open Boat—The Skipper's Fate—"A Sail!"—Breakers Ahead—Cast Ashore.

Sky and sea—sea and sky! Burning blue above, glimmering blue around. The boat a dot in the centre of immensity.

There was a hush upon the five men. Dick had thrown a piece of canvas over the body of Llewellyn. The captain sat in the stern, his face in his hands. The boat drifted idly. Blood was still trickling down Captain Mitford's bronzed cheek. But he appeared to have forgotten his wound.

The "Boadicea" had vanished. The boat rocked in solitude, alone on a wide, wide sea. Captain Mitford roused himself abruptly. It was necessary to give poor Llewellyn a sailor's burial.

The skipper repeated a portion of the usual service from memory, and the body was committed to the deep, "till the sea should give up its dead."

The mast was stepped and the sail shaken out. The boat glided over the heaving waters. Captain Mitford fixed the course for the coast of Southern Australia, the nearest land by his reckoning, but with little hope of reaching it.

A day of sad silence—a night of grim, heavy sleeplessness—a morning of horror!

Dick first noticed something wrong with the captain. He had asked him twice about the wound without receiving a reply. In the glimmering dawn he saw that the skipper's face was strangely flushed, and that his eyes glittered with unnatural brightness.

"Are you ill, sir?" Dick asked anxiously.

The skipper looked sharply at him and started to his feet.

"All hands on deck!" he shouted. "Tumble up, there!—tumble up!"

The sailors looked at each other in dismay.

"Good Heavens!" muttered the boatswain, "he's mad!"

The shock of losing his ship, grief for the death of Llewellyn, and the untended wound in the head had combined to unhinge the poor skipper's brain. He was delirious.

The seamen, frozen almost with horror, heard his wild ravings in silence. But suddenly Dick cried:

"Hold him, or he'll be overboard!"

The insane skipper was grasped just in time to prevent him from leaping into the sea.

"What—you mutiny?" he vociferated, struggling wildly to break loose.

"A rope—quick!" panted Denton.

But it was not needed. The skipper's paroxysm ended as suddenly as it began. He sank into the bottom of the boat insensible. There was foam upon his lips and a gush of blood crimsoning his face. The boatswain was very white.

"He's dying!"

Dick could not restrain his sobs. The brave, kindly sailor was close to death. And, ere the sun reached the meridian, the skipper, without recovering consciousness, passed silently into the land of shadows.

Like a black dream it all seemed to Dick Trevelyan.

At sunset they buried the skipper. Dick watched the rigid form slide into the heaving sea, and he was blind with tears.

Another night upon the ocean. Snatches of sleep and hours of dull wakefulness. Morning overcast. Dark clouds hung over the southern rim of the ocean.

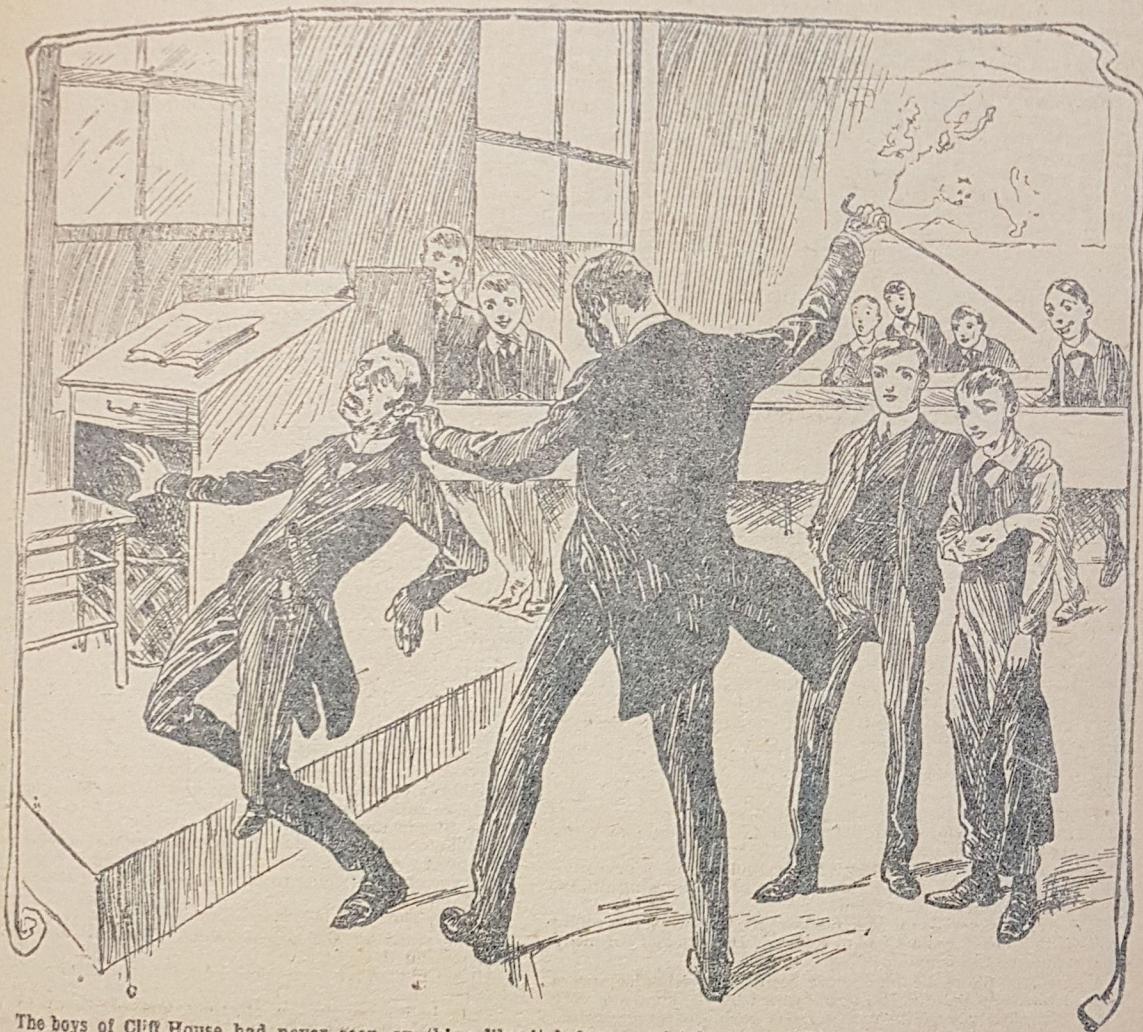
"A gale coming on," said Denton dully. "It will end it the quicker. What are you looking at yonder, Flaherty?"

The sailor turned round, his white face ablaze with excitement.

"A sail, mates! By the holy mother of Moses, it's a sail!"

"A sail!"

They bent eager eyes towards the speck upon the western



The boys of Cliff House had never seen anything like it before—certainly not anything they enjoyed so much. It was not until the captain's arm was fatigued that he desisted.

waves. It was a sail! The sudden revulsion from despair to hope unmanned them.

They shouted, wept, hugged one another in transports of frantic joy.

Hours passed. The topsails came clear into view; but the storm-cloud in the south was growing blacker and blacker and spreading over the sky. A look of savage disappointment came over Denton's face.

"Curse the luck! I know them spars! It's the 'Boadicea!'"

"The 'Boadicea!'" repeated Flaherty and Johnson, in blank dismay.

Dick flung himself down in the boat. It was the "Boadicea," and hope of rescue had gone.

"Curse them! What are they doing here?" the boatswain muttered. "All drunk, I suppose. Having a high old time, and letting things slide. By Davy Jones! they must be drunk, or they wouldn't leave all the canvas set with this here blow coming on."

It was clear that the "Boadicea" was following no regular course. As the seamen watched her she suddenly swerved and stood northward. The helmsman—if there was a man at the helm—must have been half-seas-over.

The topsails were sinking below the horizon again. The danger of the castaways now claimed all their attention.

The storm burst with the fury common to tempests in the so-called "Pacific."

A growling roar of wind, a rush of inky blackness across the sky, and foam-topped waves leaping and tumbling in wild disorder.

Denton had taken in the sail and lowered the mast. But he had no hope of weathering the storm.

"Say your prayers, mates. The game's up."

Like a cork the boat was tossed upon the leaping billows. It seemed a miracle that she was not instantly overwhelmed. The seamen began to bale desperately, fighting off their doom to the last possible moment.

Above the roar of the wind and waves they gradually became aware of a deeper sound—a dull, reverberating boom! boom! The boatswain clicked his teeth.

"Breakers!"

"Land, then!" exclaimed Dick. "There's a chance for us yet!"

Denton shrugged his shoulders.

The boat tore on, escaping destruction, as it appeared to Dick, by a series of miracles.

Louder, deeper, sounded the booming of the breaking waves. Dimly, darkly, through the storm-shadowed air loomed a black mass ahead.

It was land, some rocky isle of the lone Pacific, upon the shores of which the billows broke and roared.

"Look out!" yelled Denton.

A thundering wave smote the dancing craft. It was the last straw. Flooded, dislocated, the boat turned turtle. Buffeted and blinded, the four struggled in the raging sea.

Dick clutched at the snapping mast; by sheer luck caught it. Holding it tenaciously he was whirled shoreward along with it. A racing wave flung him towards the land. He felt the pebbles grinding under his feet.

In such blinding, confused commotion no man could have kept his head. Dick simply struggled with the instinct which all living things have to keep alive.

He felt, as we say, the pebbles beneath him. Only for a

Don't miss THE GOLDEN BULLET, a Thrilling Story of Wild Exploits in the Australian Bush, next Wednesday in the MARVEL.

moment. A receding wave sucked him back to the hungry ocean.

Back to the raving billows, only half conscious by this time. Then forward again, tossed amongst the breakers like a ball from a bat.

With every ounce of strength beaten out of him he let go the spar and slipped back to death—to the death that roared and loomed and howled behind him.

A grip upon his collar, an indistinct shout of encouragement, and he was dragged through dashing wave and piling sand, high, if not dry, upon a pebbly beach.

He was too far gone to even feel curious. He had been saved, but he was incapable of emotion then.

He lay still, listening dully to the roar of the storm, panting hard.

Few minutes, and exhaustion passed. Strength came creeping back. He breathed more regularly. He lifted his head, and looked about him.

He saw a stout stake planted in the ground near him. From it ran a rope, which disappeared into the frothing breakers. He understood. The isle was inhabited. His rescuer, whoever he was, had gone out a second time at the end of the rope to attempt to save another life.

"A brave fellow. God bless him."

The rope swayed and swung. From the wild waters came staggering a stalwart figure, right hand clutching the rope, left hand holding to a senseless form. Denton, the boatswain, was laid beside Dick, and the rescuer, panting and exhausted, sank down upon the sand.

He was upon his feet again in a minute or two. Dick could only see in the dimness that he was a white man, of powerful frame. He swept the waters with an anxious gaze. Then he looked at Dick, and, seeing that he was conscious, spoke.

"How many were in your boat?"

"Four."

Again the stranger, with sombre brow, gazed seaward.

"Then two are lost?"

"I thought we were all lost. We should have been if you hadn't fished us out. I'm awfully grateful."

"You do not need to thank me. I would run twice the risk if only to see an English face again. Can you walk?"

"Yes."

Dick rose.

"Come, then."

He lifted Denton in his arms, and moved away. Dick followed him up the beach. Wedged in between two cliffs was a little wooden hut.

There was a dim light within. It proceeded from a primitive kind of lamp—a wick floating in a gourd of oil, burning dimly, but filling the hut with its odour.

The stranger set down the boatswain, who was beginning to come to himself, upon a bed of rushes. Dick looked curiously at the man of the island.

A quainter figure he had never seen. The islander was a man of powerful build. His face, tanned by the sun, was very dark, but clearly a white man's. His garb was nondescript. Remnants of old sailor clothes were eked out with skins and vegetable fibres skilfully woven. His hair and beard were long and thick.

He caught Dick's look, and smiled slightly.

"You are thinking I look like Robinson Crusoe," he said. He spoke good enough English, with a certain hesitancy as of a man unaccustomed to speech. "No doubt. I have been five years upon this island, which holds no soul but myself."

"Five years!" cried Dick, aghast.

The castaway pointed to a log. Its surface was scarred with innumerable notches.

"That is my calendar. Each of those notches represents a day."

"And there are—"

"One thousand seven hundred and ninety-five."

Dick felt a sensation of horror. Had he been saved for this, then, to share this terrible Crusoe life till death closed his eyes?

"And in five years you have never seen a sail?"

"Never. This lonely rock is far out of the course of ships. If I had a boat— Ah, perhaps yours will come ashore." His face became hopeful. "In a boat I believe I could reach the continent of Australia. Good heavens, what would I not give to see old England again, and to learn what has become of my poor boy." He sighed. "I suppose, now, you have never happened to meet a lad—a little younger than you, I should say—of the name of Percy Conway?"

Dick fairly jumped.

"Percy Conway?"

"Yes. Do you know him?"

"He was my schoolmate."

The castaway's sombre face became eagerly animated.

"He is alive, then—he is well?"

"Alive! Certainly, and"—Dick hesitated as he recalled

the conditions of life at Cliff House under the sway of Elizabeth Carter—"and fairly well. But you—who are you?"

"I am Captain Conway."

"Percy's father!"

The Way of the Transgressor.—The Wreck of the "Boadicea."

Dick slept soundly that night—soundly, though the storm roared with ever-increasing violence.

Morning broke dim and drear. The ocean was still lashed to fury by a raving wind. Still the breakers rushed, foaming upon the pebbly beach of the lone islet.

The sun struggled to appear through heavy clouds, but only a dim half light fell upon the troubled waters.

Captain Conway produced cassava bread, boiled fish, yams and bananas and coconuts for the breakfast of his guests, and, in spite of their late experiences, they contrived to make a substantial meal.

The captain asked endless questions, mainly about Perry, and although Dick wanted to avoid giving him pain, he was too closely cross-examined to be able to conceal the truth about Cliff House School.

His own story he told, and Conway listened with deep interest. He wrung Dick's hand a dozen times.

"Heaven bless you for being a friend to my boy," he exclaimed, with emotion. "So he thinks me dead?"

"Yes. It will be a surprise to him if we ever get home to England."

"We must," said Captain Conway feverishly. "We must. We shall."

The boatswain had gone out to look at the sea. A sudden shout from him startled Captain Conway and Dick. They hurried out.

The bosun's finger pointed seaward.

A large vessel, with a mast gone and her rigging hanging in tatters, was driving helplessly towards the shore.

Dick uttered a cry.

"The 'Boadicea'!"

"We are lost," said Bjornsen sourly. "Let us drink, and die a merry death."

Daniel Yorke scowled.

"Yes, you drunken hound, you and your filthy set have brought us to this pass. If you had let the drink alone we should be safe ashore now."

The Swede muttered a curse.

"Who could guess that infernal storm was coming on so suddenly? Anyway, it's no use growling now. We are lost, and I, for one, am going to make the best of it. Better do the same."

And he slouched below.

Yorke stood by the lashed helm. His brow was wrinkled with painful thought.

All his plans had been spoiled by the mutineers getting out of hand.

They had soon thrown off their first obedience to their leaders. Yorke and Bjornsen had striven to keep order in vain. And soon the Swede had yielded to the temptation and joined in the drinking and brutal revelry.

Most of the time Yorke had been the only sober man aboard. The storm, swooping down suddenly, found the "Boadicea" utterly unprepared.

The foremast went by the board. The canvas was blown to rags. The rigging was in tatters. The "Boadicea," helpless now even with a sober crew, drifted to her doom; and the crew drank only the more deeply to drown consciousness of their peril.

"It's all over," muttered Yorke. He was staring moodily towards the looming island ahead. "In half an hour we shall be among the breakers. It was a bid for fortune, and it costs life."

The ringleaders had urged on the mutiny mainly with an eye to the contents of the strongbox in the captain's cabin, well-filled for trading purposes in the southern seas. The money was in their hands now. It would go to the bottom of the sea with them. It was the irony of fate.

Heaving, rolling, pitching, the disabled vessel drifted on, ever nearer and nearer to the roaring breakers.

"We shall be drowned," groaned Samuel, clinging to the binnacle. "I know we shall."

Yorke looked at him grimly.

"No doubt of that," he said. "But what matters? It will save you from the rope later on."

But that did not console Samuel.

From below came the sounds of revelry, clinking of glasses and pannikins, stamping of feet, tuneless yelling of a ribald chorus.

Crash!

Yorke reeled, and clutched the binnacle.

"She's struck!"

Down came the masts with a crash. Heavy seas swept the deck.

Half a mile from the shore the "Boadicea" had driven upon a sunken rock, and as the cruel points tore her timbers the waves beat and pounded her with giant blows.

The song below died away in gasping cries of terror. Drunken seamen came reeling on deck, to be helplessly swept away by the billows that now made a clear breach over the ship. And below was no safety, for the water was pouring in fast through huge gashes in the hull.

Yorke kicked off his boots. He meant to make a last fight for it. A pair of hands clutched him convulsively.

"Save me! Save me!"

It was Samuel, blind with fear. Yorke uttered a curse, and would have shaken him off. But all at once his expression changed.

"After all, blood's thicker than water. Cling to me so, and I'll save you. Careful, you lubber! Don't choke me!"

He waited his opportunity. A huge billow swept over the "Boadicea," and rolled on shoreward. Yorke let go and went with it.

He had calculated well. It carried him within a cable's length of the beach before its force was spent. Then he fought fiercely to win his way further.

But with the helpless Samuel clinging to him like a limpet to a rock, what was his chance of winning his way through that dim chaos?

Beaten, blinded, flung to and fro by the whirling waters, his senses left him, and he sank into black oblivion.

"I can see a swimmer, captain!" Dick cried excitedly. Captain Conway nodded.

"Him, at least, we may save."

Bravely he plunged into the foam. Samuel, torn from Yorke by the force of the sea, was at the last gasp when strong arms seized him and bore him to the beach.

But Yorke—where was he?

As they stood anxiously watching the sea a white-topped wave came rolling up the beach and flung a body almost at their feet.

"It is Yorke!" cried Dick. "And he is dead!"

Captain Conway bent over him.

"Dead? No, but at death's door! Help me carry him to the hut."

A Mystery Solved—Homeward Bound.

David Yorke opened his eyes and stared wildly at the faces around him.

"Dick Trevelyan! Good heavens!"

"How do you feel now?" Dick asked gently.

"I feel that I have not long to live."

There was silence for some minutes. Then Captain Conway said gravely:

"I will not conceal the truth from you. You have but a short time to live."

It was in fact a marvel that Yorke still breathed. The force with which he had been dashed upon the beach would have killed almost any man. His spine was fearfully injured.

"Dying!" murmured Yorke. "So this is the end? Well, it serves me right—it serves me right! I, Dick Trevelyan, come here! I've got a good deal to say to you."

Dick, wondering, stepped nearer.

"You've wondered why I took your part on board the 'Boadicea.' You wondered how I knew your face when we met. Well, I had a reason. I knew your father. I wronged him!"

Dick looked at him.

"Do you remember the murder of Vincent Eversley—the crime of which Mr. Trevelyan was accused?"

The boy started. What did Yorke know about that, then?

"I remember it," he said, in a low voice.

"Mr. Trevelyan was acquitted by the jury. But he was believed guilty by many people in spite of that."

"And it killed him."

Yorke gave a groan.

"Yes, yes, I know it! Haven't I suffered tortures of remorse since? I never meant that he should be accused!"

"You—but you!" stammered Dick.

"I was the guilty man!"

"Good Heaven!"

"My name is not Yorke. It is Roger Carker! I am the brother of Elisha!"

Dick was lost in amazement.

"I never meant it! I was the least guilty of the three! I swear that!" moaned the dying seaman.

"The three? What three?"

"Gadsby, Elisha, and myself!"

"What had Mr. Gadsby to do with it?"

"Hear the story. I killed Vincent Eversley on the Bideford road. I had robbed him. He tracked me down, and I killed

him! I must have been mad when I struck the blow. Heaven knows how I repented it! I did not mean to kill him—a moment of madness made me a murderer!"

"Gadsby and Elisha knew of my guilt. I believed it was friendship dictated their offers to help me to escape. The deed done, I was helpless, overcome with remorse and terror. With the horrible image of the gallows ever before my eyes, I was as wax in their hands. I did all they told me, scarcely knowing what I did."

"You know the result. They cunningly contrived to cause suspicion to be directed against Robert Trevelyan. Gadsby and Elisha were very fiends for cunning. From the papers—for I was far away by that time—I learned of Robert Trevelyan's arrest and trial. And I dared not speak."

"His acquittal came as a great relief to me. I left England then. Two years later I came back. I saw Elisha. Then for the first time, from his lips, I learned Gadsby's motives. How he hated Robert Trevelyan, and had set himself to ruin him; and how Trevelyan had escaped the hangman only to die of a broken heart."

"Then I made a resolve. I wrote out a full confession; explaining and detailing my own guilt and that of Gadsby and Elisha. This I sealed and placed in charge of a lawyer at Bristol, giving him instructions to open it in the event of my death, or if five years should elapse without his hearing from me. It was the only atonement in my power. I dared not face the gallows. But after my death the name of Trevelyan would be cleared!"

Dick's face brightened.

"And this confession still exists?"

"Still."

"Heaven be praised! My father's name will be cleared at last!"

The seaman was rapidly sinking. His face was the hue of chalk.

"Can you forgive me? I have striven to help you in atonement for the wrong I did your father. Can you forgive me?"

It was only for a second that Dick Trevelyan hesitated.

"I do forgive you!" He took the almost lifeless hand.

"I forgive you, as I believe my father would if he were here!"

And in a little while the eyes of Roger Carker closed, and his spirit fled to meet its Judge.

For the castaways the wreck of the "Boadicea" had provided the means of salvation.

Among the wreckage cast up by the waves was the longboat, staved in and much damaged, but capable of repair.

Upon its repair they hopefully set to work.

Of the mutineers of the "Boadicea" many were washed up by the sea, but all were lifeless before they were cast ashore.

At length, upon a sunny day, the boat put off from the shore, well-stored with such provisions as the island afforded.

They steered for Australia, and upon the fifth day the smoke of a steamer was seen lying black against the sky.

The boat, with mainsail and jib drawing, skimmed over the sunny waters, nearer and nearer to the smoke-trail.

"We are saved!" It was Captain Conway who cried out the words in accents of joy. "She is heading for us!"

Half an hour later Captain Conway and Dick, Denton and Samuel, were treading the deck of the s.s. "Cloncurry Castle," homeward bound.

Cliff House Again—The Thrashing of Elisha—Exit Mr. Gadsby—Conclusion.

"Percy Conway!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Come here!"

Percy rose from his seat and advanced reluctantly towards the desk of Mr. Carker.

Elisha held a cane in his hand, and was making it swish through the air with the sound so well known to the ears of the boys of Cliff House.

"Mr. Skimp tells me that you are incorrigible."

"Yes, sir," said Percy hopelessly.

Elisha always said that when he was in a spiteful mood and lacked a legitimate excuse for expending his spite upon the boys.

"Ah, so you do not even deny it? You glory in it, probably! You wish to set an example of sloth and disobedience to your fellow-scholars! I have had my eye upon you! Remove your jacket!"

With the patience of long suffering, Percy quietly obeyed.

"Swish—slash!"

A low cry of pain followed the first cut. Then a disturbance at the schoolroom door made Elisha glance angrily thither.

He could scarce believe his eyes.

Two persons had entered—one a tall gentleman, looking like a sea-captain; the other—Dick Trevelyan!

The former was making big strides towards the schoolmaster, his face dark with just anger.

If you are fond of a Grand, Breezy Story of the Sea, get this week's BOYS' REALM (One Penny) and commence "In Nelson's Day."

Percy, looking at him, uttered a cry of joyous amazement.

"Father!"

"It is I, Percy! What is this hound doing?"

Mr. Carker recoiled before the threatening aspect of the sailor.

"I—I—a little correction," he stammered.

"You brute!" cried Dick. "You were ill-using Percy, as you have always done!"

"Mr. Carker," said Captain Conway very quietly, "give me that cane!"

"Really——"

"Give me that cane!" roared the captain.

Mr. Carker looked round hastily, like an animal seeking an avenue of escape.

In a moment the captain's grasp was upon his collar, and the cane was wrenched from his hand.

"Now," said Conway grimly, "I am going to give you the soundest thrashing you ever had in your life!"

Elisha vainly wriggled in his grip.

"I'll have the law of you!" he screamed.

Slash! Slash! Slash!

The schoolmaster uttered yells that were positively fiendish. He struggled, screamed, raved, threatened—all in vain! Still the pitiless rain of blows descended.

The boys of Cliff House had never seen anything like it before—certainly not anything they enjoyed so much.

It was not until the captain's arm was fatigued that he desisted.

Then he flung down the cursing, weeping wretch.

"Dick! Percy! Come!"

Elisha was still wriggling and moaning when they left the schoolroom.

"So you have come back!"

Mr. Gadsby fixed his eyes upon his stepson with an expression of malignant satisfaction.

Dick Trevelyan nodded.

"Yes, I have come back!"

Mr. Gadsby glanced at Captain Conway and Percy, who had entered the library at Trevelyan Grange along with Dick.

"And these—er—persons?" he began.

"Are my guests," said Dick calmly.

A cold sneer crossed Mr. Gadsby's face.

"Indeed! But——"

"But now the question is—how are you going to get out?" said Dick. "There are two modes of exit, Mr. Gadsby. Which do you prefer—the door or the window?"

"Why, you whelp——"

"Listen, Mr. Gadsby. Roger Carker has confessed the truth about the murder of Vincent Eversley, and the plot to throw suspicion upon my father!"

Gadsby turned a ghastly white, and clutched at the table for support.

"To-morrow there will be a warrant out for your arrest as an accessory after the fact."

"I—I——"

"Perhaps you wonder why I tell you so? It was my desire at first that you should go to prison. But your punishment would not benefit your victims now, and I have decided to be content with clearing my father's name. That will be done completely, and you—you are free to go if you go at once."

And Mr. Gadsby went. Without a word of thanks, but with a last bitter look of hatred, he left Trevelyan Grange—for ever.

He crossed the sea for safety, as Elisha Carker also did; and both of them passed out of the life of Dick Trevelyan.

As a fugitive from justice could no longer remain the guardian of the heir of Trevelyan Grange, the Court of Chancery appointed Captain Conway in his place, much to Dick's delight.

Both Dick and Percy have taken to the sea as a profession, under the guidance of Captain Conway, and Trevelyan Grange is their home whenever they return from a cruise.

THE END.

(Next Wednesday the MARVEL will contain "The Golden Bullet," a splendid thrilling tale of exciting exploits among Bushrangers in Australia. PLUCK, One Halfpenny, now on sale, contains "Never Say Die!" a Story of Convict Life.)

OUR GRAND NEW DETECTIVE SERIAL.

COMMENCE IT TO-DAY



A Story of the Thrilling Adventures of Royston Gower, Detective, whilst Engaged in Solving a Deep Mystery.

By ALEC G. PEARSON,

Author of "The Adventures of Dr. Messina," &c.

NEW READERS BEGIN HERE.

This thrilling and absorbing detective drama tells of the adventures of Royston Gower, the great London detective, who is called in by Jack Ingram, now master of Merlin Grange, to solve the mystery of old Squire Ingram's death, which seems in some way connected with an Eastern charm in the shape of a Golden Lizard. The house is set on fire, but Gower escapes through the agency of Ruffles, his pupil. The great detective sees an advertisement for a pageboy, and, suspecting the advertiser to be connected with the mystery, Ruffles applies for the situation. Ruffles gains the Golden Lizard, and brings it back to Gower. Gower's investigations lead him to an old cottage, and here the Mandarin, a mysterious Chinaman seeking the Golden Lizard, lies in wait for Gower with the dwarf. The detective is struck down from behind.

Dr. Majendie Has a Surprise—The Opium-den of Wung Fu—The Poison of the Pinaheya.

Dr. Majendie, the eminent scientist, was thorough in all that he did. In following up some experiment in chemistry, in endeavouring to ascertain the properties of some little-known drug, in trying to discover the antidote to some deadly poison, or, again, in experimenting with the poison itself, he would go to any amount of trouble or suffer any amount of inconvenience and fatigue.

The ordinary deadly nightshade, from which belladonna is obtained, is tolerably well known to everybody who lives in the country, but there is a certain variety of this plant which is

extremely rare, and from which a particularly virulent poison can be distilled.

For many years no specimen had been obtained, but by the merest chance Dr. Majendie had found a tiny branch of the plant among some dry heather which had been sent to him from Ottersham, in Surrey.

He knew where the heather had been gathered, and forthwith he determined to hunt over every square yard of the heath in search of the original plant from which the tiny branch had been accidentally broken.

With this object in view, he alighted from the train at nine o'clock one morning at the quiet little station of Addlestone. It was a walk of about five miles from the station to the heath, but he didn't mind that in the least.

As he walked down the narrow, railed-in path leading from the station entrance to the road, a man, hurrying in the opposite direction, brushed against him.

Dr. Majendie half-turned, and glanced after him, and then resumed his way. An ordinary observer might have supposed that the scientist was not possessed of very keen eyesight, for he blinked out of his narrow, greenish-hued eyes like an owl in the daylight; but the supposition would have been a very much mistaken one.

Dr. Majendie rivalled Royston Gower himself in the hawk-like keenness of his vision.

The man that brushed past him was a dwarf—that, of course, was patent to anyone—but his features were so much concealed by the aid of a turned-up coat-collar, a muffler wound over the

Another Grand Tale is in PLUCK, now on sale, One Halfpenny. It is called NEVER SAY DIE! and is a Thrilling Drama of Real-Life Mystery and Adventure.