

# THE BEACON LIGHT

BY M. T. CALDOR.  
INTERNATIONAL PRESS ASSOCIATION.

## CHAPTER II.—(CONTINUED.)

"Yes, sir, that ere bread-fruit tree is good for more'n the fruit. The fibers inside the bark, ye see, can be wet and pounded, and then dried. I know jest how to do it. Now I guess we'll show you how to braid and splice it together, and we'll have a dress fixed for all of us. We must make a tent-top too, for the night-dews in these forin places are a powerful sight like rain, and mawtly unhealthy, too. I don't see as my old bones can rest yet, there's so much to be done afore night."

"You shall not work alone, my noble fellow," said Mr. Vernon, energetically. "Between your experience and my scientific knowledge it's a pity if we cannot go to housekeeping in tolerable style, since nature has spread everything around us in raw material."

Tom opened his eyes and a look of deference mingled with his expression of good fellowship.

"And don't you think," asked he, "we had better keep pretty close to this spot for tonight anyhow? When we've turned in and had a watch below, we shall feel more like finding out what kind of a home the old canoe brought us to."

"I shall always abide by your judgment, and I agree with this. Now, then, Tom, for the palms; you shall teach me to plant a native garment for Walter and myself, and after we have obtained dry clothes we will think about a bunch of bread-fruit, sauced with banana and seasoned with cocoanut."

Tom's oriental experience was of invaluable benefit. He knew precisely how to work, and in far less time than would be imagined by a novice, the broad palm-leaves were woven into an Eastern suit neither unpleasurably nor despicable, and their own drenched garments spread out to dry in the warm sunshine. Returning to their charges, they found both patient and nurse fast asleep. Tom soon improvised a bamboo couch, over which he spread a matting of palm, and the exhausted children were laid carefully upon it, and their wet clothing removed without disturbing their slumber in the least.

"We're lucky not to have landed alongside of the icebergs," said Tom, dryly, as he bent the boughs of a Hibiscus tree to shade the sleepers more effectively. "We needn't fear freezing nor starving."

"Nor could we have selected a fairer spot," replied Mr. Vernon, looking around admiringly upon the close-wooded heights, rising in a succession of hills from the shore, and showing in profuse luxuriance the most valuable woods and fruits, as well as the gorgeousness of tropic blossoming; "and we have not yet seen signs of ferocious beasts or unfriendly inhabitants."

"I calculate we're safe from both them here. I kept one eye pretty sharp around, and all I've seen is an albatross, a petrel, and two or three heron. I remember hearing old Pete Jones, a gone-by shipmate of mine, who was in these parts a good while, say that no beast of prey was ever seen around in these islands, which, as near as I can reckon, are in the part of the chart they call 'Polynesia.' We'll be careful till we're sure."

"Now suppose we go down to the canoe and set it up for a bedroom for the children—what do you say, Tom?"

"We'd best save it, anyhow, if only to remember the old 'Petrel' by."

So they went down to the beach, and with their united effort turned over the shattered shell. Mr. Vernon began to think Tom was growing insane as he saw him dart inside and seize something with the most frantic expression of joy.

"Tom, Tom, my good fellow, what ails you?"

"Good heart, sir, I can't half tell you, I'm so pleased. Only see what I've found! It's worth more to us than a heap of gold and diamonds."

Mr. Vernon bent forward and beheld a small hatchet, which, fastened by a stout cord to a nail, had resisted the effort of wind and wave, only twisting itself more securely around the brass head of the nail.

"It is indeed an invaluable treasure," said he, with emotion. "Tom, Tom, who knows but this frail ark has brought us to an Eden we shall be sorry to exchange for the hollow frivolities and sordid selfishness of the world?"

## CHAPTER III.

Tom was detaching the hatchet from the nail; he paused a moment, and his clear gray eye wandered over wave and sky to the verdant heights behind them; a sober, tranquil, melancholy, entirely undefinable look swept over his face.

"I don't know, sir," said he, slowly. "I can't say, but something seems to tell me I shall have my grave here on the island." He waited a moment, overpowered by a nameless presentiment, and then added cheerfully: "But if it is to be so, sir, so man living now will have a pleasanter one than can be scooped out a little beyond the spring there, under the Hibiscus tree. Ye mind it, sir, if anything happens, there's where I'd like to be laid."

The time came when, with overflowing eyes and outgushing heart, Paul Vernon recalled these words and dwelt fondly upon the memory of the picture then before him. That stout, athletic form, that plain, homely face, but most of all that cheery, hopeful, resigned expression that lent such a vivid charm to the otherwise unprepossessing countenance of Tom Harris.

After a night's rest and a bountiful breakfast from that most skillful of all culinary artists, Dame Nature herself—albeit the butler who collected and set out the savory dishes was none other than honest Tom—our little company began to feel less like benighted outcasts, and to look upon the beautiful little island as a home establishment.

The little girl wept bitterly when her childish mind was made to comprehend the sorrowful fate of her nurse and protector, yet with the versatility of infancy entered also into the keen delight of Walter Vernon, who capered around his father and Tom as they were busily felling the trees needed for their permanent habitation, loudly rejoicing at the beautiful sights around them.

On the third day they commenced an exploring expedition along the shore and some distance back into the interior. They found they were upon a small isolated island, yet evidently one of a group, since from the top of a tall cocoanut tree on the summit of the highest hill Tom declared he could see a dim line beyond the water that marked the land, probably of a similar island. He made another discovery at the same time which he believed more important to them, which was that the wreck of their ship had not sunk, but was lying evidently caught between the jagged points of a reef underneath the water.

Boundless sources of wealth were disclosed to them, but no sign of human habitation. The bread-fruit, cocoa, cocoanut, yams, banana, plantain and sugar-cane grew in spontaneous abundance, while Tom pointed out to them the Abia-tree, bearing its delicious pulpy fruit, and won Walter's heart completely when he handed him a handful of the sweet native chestnut, Kata. Upon the elevated land they found forests of stately trees, whose names were mostly familiar to Tom's experience or Mr. Vernon's botanical knowledge.

"Ah," said the former joyfully, pausing beneath a group of apapa and faifai trees, "here is the stuff, Mr. Vernon, for our canoe. We will visit the old ship soon, and find out what's left for us."

While they were examining the generous supply of valuable timber the children were gathering flowers. Suddenly came a scream from the little girl, and a loud shout for help from Walter. Both Mr. Vernon and Tom turned in alarm. A trampling, rushing noise came from a thicket of tangled vines and underbrush, and out darted a strange-looking animal, upsetting the courageous boy, who had flung himself in front of his weaker companion.

While little Eleanor—she had given so much of her name to Tom before the shipwreck, but could not now be made to recall the rest—clung frantically to Tom's neck, Mr. Vernon in much alarm assisted his son to rise.

"Oh, father, father, what was it—a bear or a lion?" gasped Walter.

Tom's cheery laugh rang out boisterously.

"It was better than that, my boy—it was our pork-barrel still on its legs. Bye-and-bye the old fellow will give you a sausage to pay for this fright."

"What a pig!" ejaculated Mr. Vernon, much relieved.

"Nothing else, sir. Wild hogs find good living here, and so shall we. Indeed, sir, all the wants of a decent human creature are supplied here. See there, behind the sandal, is a candle-tree. We needn't stay long in the dark."

Mr. Vernon sighed.

"Ah, Tom, show me a tree where my books, my precious books, grow, ranged ready in a row for a hungry mind."

Tom scratched his head.

"You've got me there; but if we can't find any left in the old hulk, I hope it ain't bold in me to say I mistrust you can write some for yourself."

"You are an admirable fellow, Tom, for expedients. I think I'll try. Of course you'll provide plenty of paper and ink."

"Just as much as you want," answered the old sailor triumphantly, delighted to see his random suggestion was likely to work profitably in averting the melancholy he dreaded so much. "I'll show you some beans bye-and-bye that will give better ink than any you can buy in London. I'll be bound, for sun and water can't fade it out; and for paper, bleach out some of my native cloth for the strong, or make some of the tender, like Chinese rice-paper—it's just what you want."

The raft looked like a frail, unseaworthy thing when it was done, without a nail to secure it, only bound together with great thongs of bark; but Tom was quite satisfied, and had no fear, and early one fine morning, as they sat round their palm-leaf breakfast cloth, announced his intention of starting immediately.

Mr. Vernon wished to accompany him, but to this Tom would not consent.

"No, no," said he. "Wait till I find out what is the risk. Suppose we both go, and are lost—what's to become of the children? Tom's the one to go."

"Tom is a hero," replied Mr. Vernon, with emotion. "I wish you would let the children call you Mr. Harris. It pains me to hear them so familiar with you, who are in reality our leader and king."

Tom laughed.

"Lord bless you, sir, I shouldn't know how to act with a handle to my name. I've allers been Tom from the time I went to school to 'Iarn my letters, and faith I've enenmost forgot 'em it's so long ago, and Tom I shall keep on. You can't teach an old dog new tricks, and I should feel as silly as a land-lubber in the shrouds during a blow if anybody called me Mr. Harris. Now, then, I'm off."

## CHAPTER IV.

ANXIOUSLY and eagerly the little party watched Tom's raft paddled slowly around the reef, disappearing behind the cliff, and with feverish impatience Mr. Vernon paced to and fro the interminable four hours of his absence. The earnest, refined, fastidious man of the world—the deep thinker and laborious student—marveled at the utter dependence he had come to rest upon that simple, unlearned, unpolished nature.

"There is but one thing genuine," he muttered, as he saw the children forsaking their play and fruit to watch anxiously in the direction the raft should return. "Tom's good heart is more than all my scientific knowledge, my laboriously acquired heritage. Even here, on this deserted island, am I taught my own worthlessness. Oh, the past, the past—if it were in the power of mortal man to undo it!"

A black cloud settled on his face. His thoughts were evidently with some painful scene in his past life, for his teeth gnawed impatiently at his pallid lip, his eye flashed, and on his high forehead the veins knotted themselves like cords.

A cheery hallo, answered by glad shouts of the children aroused him from the painful reverie. He hurried down to the beach, thankful to see Tom paddling back to the shore.

"Here I am," shouted Tom, "safe and sound, you see, and bringing you good news. Oh, but, sir, I couldn't help thinking if our folks had only trusted the old hulk, and not tried the boats, how many it would have saved. But what does a poor weak cretur know about it?—the Lord's the best judge."

As he drew the raft on shore he went on in a livelier tone, while he unloaded its contents.

"There, sir—there's a keg of spirits of some kind. It may come handy when the rainy season sets in. Here's a chest of clothes, and this 'ere, I think, is mighty fortunate, for I know all about it. I brought this trunk out of the cabin myself and put it in the hold, and I heard the maid say it belonged to Lady Eleanor's mother, that she was going to meet. You know they was mighty particular to call the little thing Lady Eleanor, so I s'pose she is one of the nobility. Here, little Ellie, it's yours; and when'er older maybe you won't be sorry to have some pretty clothes to wear—better than Tom can manufacture. Ye must be nice with 'em, though, for maybe they'll prove some time who you be."

He turned then to hand Mr. Vernon a small clasped Bible—the Beacon Light of their deliverance.

"Here, sir, I thought you'd be thankful enough to see this. I calculate you'll comfort us all out of it when the blue days come."

He was stooping down, ready to lift out another chest, and astonished that the book was not taken as joyfully as he expected; he raised himself and looked at his companion keenly.

## (TO BE CONTINUED.)

## Meanwhile the Building Might Fall.

Mayor Hooper has received a legal opinion from City Solicitor Elliott as to the power of the city authorities to close a school building which is considered dangerous to the lives of occupants. Mr. Elliott states that it is the duty of the fire commissioners to examine the building to see whether its condition is in violation of the law and if it be so found to report to the inspector of buildings, who, with the approval of the mayor, is authorized to make the repairs necessary. If, pending the making of the repairs, the mayor is of the opinion that the occupancy of the building is hazardous to the lives of the scholars it would seem to be his duty to request the board of school commissioners to make immediate provision for the housing of the scholars elsewhere and, in the absence of such provision, to close the school.—Baltimore American.

## Miss.

"What are you a-cryin' for?"

"Me teacher kep me in an' called me a ass."

"Cheer up, ole man; that ain't nothin' to cry for."

"Oh, I ain't a-cryin' for myself; I'm a-weepin' cause it's so rough on me father!"—Truth.

## IN A PIT OF SNAKES.

### JOE PENLOE HAS A HARROWING EXPERIENCE.

Stands Five Hours in a Gloomy Cave Surrounded by Copperheads and Afraid to Move a Muscle—Roasted the Snakes.



JOHN PENLOE, of Noelville had an experience with copperhead snakes on Tuesday which almost unbalanced his mind, says a Bellefonte, Pa., special.

Penloe, accompanied by Nero M. Pouch, went into the Seven mountains north of Musser's valley in search of huckleberries. They remained together in the morning, when, finding the berry crop short in their vicinity, they separated. Pouch continued picking berries until late in the afternoon, when, having filled the basket, he lay down under a tree and fell asleep.

At 5 o'clock he awoke and started for the place agreed on for meeting, and, not seeing Penloe, he went home. At about 10 o'clock that night a member of Penloe's family came and informed Pouch that his father had not yet returned.

Pouch dressed and secured a lantern and proceeded to climb the rugged side of Jack's mountain. After tramping two hours he reached the place of the appointed meeting. He hoped to find Penloe there sleeping, but no trace could be found, and although he called at the top of his voice, he received no answer.

Pouch had scarcely sat down, when he was startled by a muffled cry. It seemed a great distance away, over against the side of another mountain. He called again, and was answered by a faint response. Picking up his staff and lantern, he made haste in the direction from which the sound came. Nearer and nearer, each time a little more distinct, came the sound of a voice, until finally it seemed that it came from beneath his feet.

"Where are you?" inquired Pouch.

"For God's sake, come; I am alive with snakes," was the answer.

Pouch had stopped at the edge of an old ore pit, which had long been disused. A flood of moonlight revealed Penloe standing on the bottom of the pit, his eyes glaring and his face distorted almost beyond recognition.

"What's wrong?" asked Pouch.

"Don't you see these snakes? I feel them crawling all over me. I tried to climb out, but on every shelf of rock I placed my hand to pull myself up I would press my fingers on the cold body of a snake. For God's sake, be quick and help me out; I am going crazy."

Pouch lowered his lantern into the pit and then beheld a sight that made his blood run cold. One monster copperhead lay in a graceful curve almost encircling the feet of the frightened man. Another that seemed to be almost as large as an old-fashioned bread-wicker was coiled in a pile not two feet away, while on every shelving rock that extended into the pit were several pairs of glimmering eyes and as many wicked tongues playing like lightning in the darkness of the fowl cavern.

Pouch got a long pole and dropped it into the pit. Penloe grasped the pole and was pulled out of the den of snakes. On reaching the surface he fell exhausted to the ground.

The five hours' strain, during which time he stood erect afraid to move a muscle, had been too much, and it was several hours before he could even tell how it had happened. He had waited until dark for his companion, and, being familiar with the trail, started home alone. He lost his way, and while trying to get out of the woods had fallen into the pit.

A crowd of men went to the deserted ore hole the next day and found it to be fairly alive with copperheads. They filled the pit with brush and logs, and setting fire to it, roasted the snakes alive.

## You Pay Your Money.

They have a queer telephone system here in Chicago. You go into a booth, find out the number of the person that you want to talk to, and then ring for central and tell her about it. You wait about ten minutes, at the end of which time a voice says: "Drop in your dime." You ask "What?" and the voice repeats, "Drop in your dime." Then you look around, and in front of you you see a lot of little slots. They are marked nickels, dimes, quarters, half-dollars and dollars. You call back, "What is it you want me to do?" and the voice answers immediately, "Are you deaf, or what? I told you to drop in your dime." "Drop it in where?" you ask, and the answer comes, "In the hole. Where do you suppose I want you to drop it?" You drop it in one of the holes, usually whichever one is the handiest, and in an instant you are rewarded with, "There you have put it in the wrong hole, and your money is gone." The voice adds: "Put in another dime and drop it in the hole marked dimes." If you are not already disgusted you may follow the instructions of the voice, in which case you are rewarded with, "There, see how easy it is? Now, wait a minute." You wait several minutes and at last the connection is completed.—Chicago Special.

## Too Dear.

"Aren't the old songs dear?" she asked.

"Yes," he said feelingly, "dear at any price."—Detroit Free Press.

Having faith in Christ is the most religious thing anyone ever did.—Ram's Horn.

## COLORS OF RATTLESNAKES.

### They Take on a Hue of the Rocks Where They Have Dens.

A few days ago a Mexican was exhibiting on the streets of Pomona a rattlesnake that he had captured in one of the neighboring canyons. He was leading the snake around by a cord of horse hair fastened about its neck and tied to the end of a sharp rod or walking stick. Some Mexicans are experts at catching rattlers. They always take them alive if they can, and they seldom fail, for it is a lively snake that can escape them when they are armed for the fray.

If they cannot sell their captive alive they kill it and sell the skin at a good price for a hatband or a belt. The snake in question was a rare specimen. It was about three feet long, plump and sleek, and almost as black as coal. Nobody had ever seen a black rattler before. One man declared that it was no rattlesnake because it was black.

One of the interested spectators, who had been looking the snake over carefully, but had said nothing, was Jacob Morency, an old mining prospector, who had traveled over nearly all of the mineral regions of Southern California and Mexico. The man who scouted the idea of a rattlesnake being black turned to Morency and said: "What do you think about it, Jake?"

"Well," said the latter, "you'd better not let him bite you, unless you're ready to pay your debts, say your prayers and die; for he's a rattler all right enough. Rattlesnakes are not like chameleons exactly—they can't change their color in the twinkling of an eye—but they are of a greater variety of colors than cows are. I have seen them of every color imaginable and always of the same color as the soil or rocks in which they are found, and the diamond-shaped spots on their sides and back are sometimes lighter and sometimes darker than the rest. I once saw a rattlesnake, caught in a canyon in Lower California, near San Fernando, that was almost as black as jet, and the diamond spots were lined with white. Two years ago I killed a rattler in Paria valley, in northern Arizona, that was three and a half feet long, and of deep red color, with diamonds of jet black. I think it was the handsomest snake I ever saw. I have his skin yet. In another valley not more than forty miles from there I saw rattlesnakes as yellow as ochre, with reddish diamonds. Brown rattlesnakes with dark spots are the most common. But the queerest-looking rattler I ever saw a friend of mine and I caught in Lower California five or six years ago. We were riding along the western coast of the peninsula, about opposite Guadalupe, when we came upon a rattlesnake as white as milk, with faint black lines outlining the diamond spots. It was the only white one I ever saw, though I have seen many light colored. It had simply taken on the color of the white rocks and sands where it lived. We captured it alive and took it to San Diego, and sold it for \$25 to a man named King, who was gathering rare specimens of reptile and insects for some eastern institutions."—San Francisco Call.

## To Cleanse the System Effectually yet gently, when constive or bilious, or when the blood is impure or sluggish, to permanently overcome habitual constipation, to awaken the kidneys and liver to a healthy activity, without irritating or weakening them, to dispel headaches, colds, or fevers, use Syrup of Figs.

## The Mystery of the Pearl.

The usual source of pearls found within the oyster appears to be the intrusion of some small foreign body which sets up an irritation of cuticle. The only means of defense open to the mollusk is to deposit a layer of nacre around the irritating particle, and thus cut it off from the soft, tender skin. A grain of sand or a small crustacean may slip in between the lips, and setting up irritation, provoke the cuticle to deposit around it a series of thin films of nacre. These are added from time to time, the little nucleus is completely encysted, and a pearl is the result.

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## Telling a Horse's Age.

"The popular idea that the age of a horse can always be told by looking at his teeth," said a veterinary surgeon, "is not entirely correct. After the eighth year the horse has no more new teeth so that the tooth method is useless for telling the age of a horse which is more than eight years old. As soon as the set of teeth is complete, however, a wrinkle begins to appear on the upper edge of the lower eyelid, and a new wrinkle is added each year, so that to get at the age of a horse more than eight years old you must figure the teeth plus the wrinkles."

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## A Fatal Shock When the Tire Burst.

A little girl named Helen Latham, 9 years old, died from fright in Mystic, Conn. She was playing with her mates about the streets when she stopped to watch some boys at work on a bicycle. All at once a loud report was heard. The pneumatic tire had exploded from pressure of air. This frightened the girl so she fainted. As she did not revive, Drs. Purdy and Barber were called and endeavored to revive her. In this they had partially succeeded when the girl again became comatose and died.—New York Sun.

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