

DEATH'S SECRET.

I write with a dead man's pencil. But oh! for the dead man's thought! What would it be. Could it come to me By the wafting breezes caught— Caught by the sighing rose at his head, Or the lily's tears at his feet? Oh! for a word from the buried dead, To say that death was sweet.

"LAL" RYDQUIST; A Story of the Land and Sea.

BY WALTER DEANST AND JAMES RICE, IN ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

CHAPTER VI.—CONTINUED.

Then Dick became pensive. He sat huddled up, with his elbows on his knees and his head in his hands, looking straight before him. For the time, as always in this performance, he was Rex himself; the same poise of the head, the same look of the eyes; he had put off the Malay type, and sat there, before them all, pure Caucasian.

"Creditable, my lad," said Captain Zachariassen. "I think you can, all of you, understand so far, without my telling."

They certainly could. Then the Malay sprang to his feet and pointed to some object in the distance.

"Sail ho!" cried Captain Borlinder. Then he sat down again and began the regular motion of his arm which the Patriarch had mistaken for rocking the baby.

"This," said the Venerable, "is plain and easy. Land it is, not a sail—why? Because, if the latter, they would wave their pocket-handkerchiefs; if the former, they would h'ist sail or out sculls. If the mummicker had been as plain and easy to understand the first time, we shouldn't have gone astray and sailed on that wrong tack about the baby."

With the help of the latter the pantomime became perfectly intelligible. The whole scene stood out plainly before the eyes of all. They were no longer in the Captains' room at Seven Houses, Rotherhithe; they were somewhere far away, east of New Guinea, watching two men in a little boat on a sea where there was no sail nor any smoke from passing steamers. Low down on the horizon was a thin streak, which a landsman would have taken for a cloud. The two men with straining faces were rowing with feverish eagerness, encouraging each other, and ceasing not, though the paddles nearly fell from their hands with fatigue.

"Oh! Rex, Rex!" cried Lal, carried away by the acting. "Rest awhile; oh, rest!"

But still they paddled on. Then came the scene of the struggle and the binding of the arms, and the march up country. Next the release and the quiet going up and down; and then the second struggle, with another capture, and a second binding of arms.

"See, Lal," said Captain Holstius, pointing triumphantly to the actor; "who is bound this time?"

Why, there could be no doubt whatever. It was not Rex, but the Malay.

"This is the worst o' mummicking, now," said the Patriarch, as if pantomime was a recognized instrument in the teaching and illustration of history. "You're never quite sure. We've had to give up the baby with the chucking overboard. I was sorry for that, because it was so plain and easy to read. And now it seems as if it was the poor devil himself that got took off to jail. Was his hair cut short, Lal, when he came here two months ago? I can't quite give up the prison, neither, so beautiful as it reeled itself out first time we did the mummicking. You're a stranger, sir," he addressed the doctor, "and you knew Cap'en Armiger. What do you think? For my own part—well, let's hear you, sir."

"There cannot be a doubt," said the doctor, "that the man personated Armiger, and no other, until the last scene, and that there he became himself intentionally. He exaggerated himself. He walked differently; he carried his head differently. There was a flight of some kind, and the Malay, not Armiger, at all, was taken prisoner."

"What is your opinion, Captain Borlinder?" asked Lal, anxious to know what each man thought.

"My opinion," said Captain Borlinder, with emphasis, "is this. They got ashore; no one can doubt that. Very well, then. Where? Not many degrees of longitude from the place where they were wrecked. Who were the people they fell among? The natives. That's what I read so far. Now we go on to the fight at the end. A better fight I never saw on the stage, not even at the

Pavilion Theater, though but one man in it. As for Captain Armiger, he was knocked on the head with a stick, or stuck with a knife, according to the religion and customs of them natives, among whom I never sailed, and therefore do not know their ways. It's a melancholy comfort, at all events, to know the manner of his end. Next to looking forward to a decent burial, people when they are going to be knocked on the head die more comfortable if they know that other people will hear how they came to be knocked on the head, whether a club or a boat-hook or a bo's'n's entlash."

"I think, sir," said the doctor, "that you are entirely wrong. There is nothing whatever to show that Armiger was killed."

But then he did not know that Captain Borlinder spoke according to the desire of his own heart.

Then Lal turned to the only man who had not yet spoken:

"And what is your opinion, Captain Wattles?"

"I think," replied Barnabas the Consoler, "that Cap'en Armiger landed on some island, and worried through the first scrimmage. I know them lands, and I know that their ways to strangers may be rough. If you get through the first hearty welcome, which means clubs and knives and spears mostly, there's no reason why you shouldn't settle down among 'em. There's many an English and American sailor livin' there contented and happy. P'raps Cap'en Armiger is one of them."

"Not contented," said Lal, "nor yet happy."

On the other hand, there's fights among themselves and drunken bouts, and many a brave fellow knocked on the head thereby."

"Do you speak from your own knowledge?" asked the doctor.

"I was once," he replied unblushingly, "a missionary in the Kusai station. Yes; we disseminated amongst us the seeds of civilization and religion among those poor cannibals. I also traded in shirts and trousers, after they had been taught how to put them on. They are a treacherous race; they treasure up the recollection of wrongs and take revenge; they are insensible to kindness and handy with their arrows. I fear that Cap'en Armiger has long since been killed and eaten. They probably spared the Malay on account of his brown skin, as likely to disagree."

Then Captain Holstius rose and spoke. "Friends all," he said, "and especially Captain Borlinder and Captain Wattles, here is a message comes directly from Captain Armiger himself, though now nigh upon three years old. And it comes close upon the heels of that other message brought us by this poor fellow who gave it as he knew best, though a difficult message to read in parts. Now we know, partly from Dick, and partly from the letter, what happened and how it happened, and we are pretty certain that they must have landed, as Captain Zachariassen has told us, in one of the islands lying to the north-west of the spot where she struck."

Here he paused. Captain Borlinder blew great clouds of tobacco and looked straight before him. Captain Wattles listened with impatience. Then the Norwegian went on: "I think, friends all, that here we have our duty plain before us. Here are three men in this room, Captain Borlinder, Captain Wattles and myself, who have been in love with Lal, who is Captain Armiger's sweetheart, and therefore has no right to listen to us so long as there is any hope left that he is alive. If no hope, why, I do not say myself that she has no right—"

"No right, Captain Holstius," said Lal; "no right to listen to any other man, whatever happens."

"Very well, then. But for us who love her in a respectful way, and desire nothing but her happiness, there is only one duty, and that is—"

Here Captain Wattles sprang to his feet.

"To go in search of him. That is what I was going to propose. Miss Rydquist, I promise to go in search of Cap'en Armiger. If he is alive, I will bring him home to you. If he is dead, I will bring you news of how and when he died. I ask no reward. I leave that to you. But I will bring you news."

This was honestly and even nobly spoken. But the effect of the speech was a little marred by the allusion to reward. What reward had Lal to offer, except one! and she had just declared that to be impossible.

Then Captain Borlinder rose ponderously and slapped his chest.

"Nick Borlinder, Lal, is at your service. Yours truly, to command. He hasn't been a missionary, nor a dealer in hand-me-down shirts, like some skippers, having walked the deck since a boy. And he doesn't know the Caroline Islands. But he can navigate a ship, or he can take passage aboard a ship. Where there's missionaries there's ships. He will get aboard one of them ships, and he will visit those cannibals and find out the truth. Lal, if Cap'en Armiger is alive, he shall be rescued by Nick Borlinder, and shall come home with me arm-in-arm to the Pride of Rotherhithe. If he isn't alive, why—then—"

He sat down again, nodding his head. Lal turned to Captain Holstius.

"Yes," he said; "I thought this brave Englishman and this brave American would see their duty plain before them. I will go in search of him, too, Lal. I know not yet how; but I shall find a way."

"Gentlemen," said Lal, "I have nothing to give you except my gratitude. Nothing at all. Oh! who in all the world ever had kinder and nobler friends than I?"

She held out her two hands. Captain

Wattles seized the right and kissed it with effusion, murmuring something about Barnabas, the Son of Consolation. Captain Borlinder followed his example with the left, though he had never before regarded a woman's hand as a proper object for a manly kiss. He took the opportunity to whisper that, in all her troubles, Nick Borlinder was the man to trust.

"Now," said Captain Holstius, "there is no time to be lost; we all have things to arrange, and money to raise. Shall we all go together, or shall we go separate?"

"Separate," said the Son of Consolation.

"Separate," cried Borlinder firmly. "If the job is to be done, let me do the job single-handed."

"Very well," said Captain Holstius; "then how shall we go?"

"We will go," said Captain Wattles, "in order. First one, and then another, to give every man a fair chance and no favor. And to get that fair chance we will draw straws. Longest straw first, shortest last."

He retired and returned with three straws in his hand.

"Now, Borlinder," he said, "you shall draw first."

Borlinder took a straw, but with hesitation.

The doctor, who was rather shortsighted, thought he detected a little sleight-of-hand on the part of Captain Wattles at this moment. But he said nothing. Captain Holstius then drew. Again the doctor thought he observed what seemed to be tampering with the oracle of the straw.

On the display of the straws it was found that the longest straw was Captain Borlinder's; the shortest, that of Captain Holstius. The order of search was therefore, first, Captain Borlinder. He heaved a great breath, struck his hands together, and smote his chest with great violence and heartiness. You would have thought he had drawn a great prize instead of the right to go first on an extremely expensive voyage of search. The next was to be Captain Wattles. The third and last, Captain Holstius.

Captain Zachariassen called for glasses round to drink health and success to the gallant fellows going out on this brave and honorable quest.

Outside the house, presently, two of the gallant seekers stood in discourse.

"You don't think, Wattles," asked Borlinder, "that he's really alive?"

"I can't say," replied the ex-missionary. "I shouldn't like, myself, to be wrecked on one of those islands. You see, there's been a little labor traffic in those parts, and the ungrateful people, who don't know what's good for them, are afraid of being kid— I mean recruited. And they bear malice. But I suppose he's one of the sort that don't easily get killed. I shall be going Sydney-way about my own business next year, or thereabouts, I expect, so it's all in my day's work to make inquiries. As for you—"

"As to me, now, brother?" Captain Borlinder spoke in his most insinuating way. "As to me, now? Come, let's have a drink."

"As to you," said the Consoler, after a drink at his friend's expense, "I'm sorry for you, because you've got to go at once, and you've got no experience. Among cannibals, a man of your flesh is like a prize ox at Christmas."

Captain Borlinder turned pale.

"Yes—that is so. They would put you in a shallow pit, and with a few onions and some pepper, cover all up snug with stones, and make a fire on top till you were done to a turn!"

Captain Borlinder shuddered.

"You are going first, you are, like a brave Briton. I will tell you a little story. There was once a man who promised to go over Niagara in an India-rubber machine of his own invention. A beautiful machine it was, shut up tight, with air-holes so as the man inside could breathe free and open when so disposed."

"Well?"

"Wal, sir, he was cert'n'y bound to go. But after looking at the falls a bit, he concluded to send a cat over first."

"Well?"

"Yes, Cap'en Bolinder, the cat went over and that man is still waiting below the Horseshoe Fall for the critter to turn up again."

Captain Borlinder looked after his friend with pale cheeks and apprehensive heart. What did it mean—this parable of the cat and Niagara?

Now, after the glass round was drunk, and the three men gone, the doctor found his way round the table and looked under it on the floor, and there found two short bits of straw lying on the carpet. He picked them up and considered. "What did he do it for?" he asked. "Longest first. They were, I suppose, all the same length, so that the man with the red face should go first. Easy, then, to nip bits off the straw and make the Norway man take the shortest. What did he do it for?"

And the knowledge of this fact made him uneasy, because it looked as if the search for Armiger would not be altogether fair.

CHAPTER VII. CAPTAIN BORLINDER AMONG THE CANNIBALS.

When Captain Borlinder sought the privacy of his own chamber that evening, he gave way to meditations of a very unpleasant and exasperating nature. Was ever a man more forced into a hole than himself? Was ever proposition more ridiculous? Why, if as Holstius truly said they were all after the same girl, what the dickens was the good of going out of the country, all the way to the Eastern Seas, at enormous expense, to say nothing of the danger, in order to find and bring home the man who would cut them all out and carry the girl away? He would

rather fight for the girl; he should like, he thought, to fight for the girl. That slow and easy Norwegee would pretty soon knock under, though the little Yankee would be more difficult to tackle. But actually to go and look for the man! Why, since he was happily disposed of, and if not dead, then missing for three years, what madness to disturb so comfortable and providential an arrangement! As for such disinterestedness as to desire the happiness of any woman in the world as the first consideration, that was a thing to high for Nick Borlinder's understanding, a dark saying, a flight into unattainable heights, which appeared to him pure unmitigated nonsense. Should his own happiness, should any man's happiness, be wrecked to save that of any woman, or man either, on the whole earth? What is the happiness of another to a man who cannot himself be happy?

Who, thought honest Nicholas, without putting the thought into words, is the most important person, the central person, of the whole universe; the person about whom the stars do revolve, for whom the sun shines and the rain falls, for whose protection governments exist, for whom all people who on earth do dwell continually toil, so that this person may receive good things without cessation? Who is it, but—moi meme? Was, then, Captain Borlinder to labor and be spent for the promotion of another's happiness? Was he to give up his ship in order to find a man who would destroy his own best chance of good fortune? The thing appeared more preposterous every moment!

"Who, in fact," he asked, giving full vent to his feelings, "but a Norwegee could be such an enormous, such an incredible ass?"

Then he remembered again the Yankee's apologue.

"Sniggerin' beast!" he said; "I hate him! I wish he'd fall overboard of a dark night and blowin' great guns. What did he mean? I'm to be the cat to go over among the cannibals, am I?"

Then a beautiful and comforting thought crossed his mind.

"I know now," he said, "what I ought to have replied. I should have said there was a man cleverer than that man. For he promised to go over the falls in a bathing-machine, or a sewing-machine, or a reaping-machine, or something, and he went away and presently he came back and said 'he'd done it.'"

This happy repartee pleased him so much that he repeated it twice, and then sat down and thought it over with intention.

"Why," he said to himself, reasoning as a Christian of the highest principle, "man was told to stand out of the reach of temptation, and if I were to meet that man, I might be tempted to knock him on the head. If it wasn't for Holstius and Wattles I would knock him on the head. But to kill a fellow for other fellows to reap the advantage of, it doesn't seem quite worth while. Still, there's the temptation, and I oughtn't to go any of it. As for searching for him, again. Where am I to look for him? Am I to land on every island and pass the word for Cap'en Armiger? Naked black savages don't know about Cap'en Armiger. At him up, no doubt, long ago. Am I to put up a signal at every port for Cap'en Armiger? Do these ignorant natives know a signal when they see one? Very well, then. This Norwegee is all the bigger fool."

As for the allegory of the cat, again. He was himself the cat. Pleasant thing for a man of his position to be compared to the cat which led the way over the Falls and was smashed and never returned again! Work that thing out as much as you please, and it always came to this, that he, Nick Borlinder, was to go out first, get devoured by the cannibals, and never get back again.

Then the Yankee, himself out of the way, would try another way.

"I shan't go at all," he murmured. "Yah! for cheating and dishonesty give me a Yankee! I shall pretend to have been there!"

"As for finding him," he went on with his meditations, "it's a thousand to one you don't light on the island where he put foot ashore; and if you do find him, a million to one at least that he's dead—and all the journey, with the expense of it, for nothing."

"To say nothing of risk and danger. Shipwreck; I suppose that goes for nothing. Fever; I suppose we needn't reckon that. Oh, no, certainly not. Sunstroke; that never kills in tropical climates, does it? Oh, no; don't reckon that. Natives; they're a mild and dove-like race, ain't they? Everybody knows that. Don't reckon natives."

It was, after all, very well to propose a pretended voyage, but what would the Yankee do? And what did he really mean about the cat and the India-rubber ball?

This doubt puzzled him not a little. The plan he proposed to himself was simple—beautiful in its simplicity. But he could not help feeling that his American cousin had some other and some deeper plan, by means of which he would himself be circumvented and anticipated.

Nothing more disturbs the crafty and subtle serpent, or more fills him with virtuous indignation, than the suspicion that his brother serpent is more crafty and more subtle than himself.

Everybody knows how the two burglars, friends in private, but strangers in profession, met one night in the same house, proposing independent research.

His plan involved no expense, no danger, no possible privations. It was nothing more nor less than to wait awhile, and then to present himself with the report of a pretended voyage.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

—Kisses by people who no longer love each other are merely collated yawns.

FACTS AND FIGURES.

—The waste of water every cold day in New York—due to leaving faucets open to prevent freezing—is 20,000,000 gallons.

—Massachusetts has 3,148 miles of railroad track representing, with rolling stock, \$122,155,614. Last year 184 persons were killed and 115 injured.

—New York streets have 23,521 public lights of an evening, 55 of which are electric. The consumption of gas by the street lights last year was 17,169,600 cubic feet.

—Canada has 107,722 Indians, for whose benefit a sum of \$3,089,798 has been set apart. There are about 4,000 Indian children on the school rolls of the dominion.

—The Australian colonies are the richest in the world. Among their possessions are 80,000,000 sheep, and the total population is only 3,000,000 souls.

—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

—The Fish Commissioners of New York have planted 77,667,080 young fish and 695,156 mature fish in the lakes and streams of the State during the last ten years. There is good fishing in many waters now where there was none before they were restocked.—N. Y. Sun.

—The number of words transmitted by the Western Union Telegraph to the 355 daily papers it serves for the census year is stated at 611,199,930, while the total number of words transmitted by the Government telegraph of Great Britain to all the papers of the country for that period was 313,500,000.

—Mr. Vanderbilt appears to be making money in some of his little outside speculations. It is said he owns \$60,000,000 of Government 4's, bought within the last two years. During that time these bonds have advanced 10 per cent. in price, and he has received 8 per cent. interest, or an increase to Mr. Vanderbilt's fortune of \$11,000,000.—New Haven Register.

—The importation of Mediterranean fruit at the port of New York during the year 1881 consisted of 117 cargoes by English steamers and 25 cargoes by Italian and Norwegian sailing vessels, and comprised 819,223 boxes and cases of oranges, and 868,241 boxes of lemons. The trade in Mediterranean fruit, in a pecuniary point of view, did not meet the expectations of those engaged in it.

—N. Y. Herald.

—Lovers of statistics will hear with interest that 5,800,000 fowls, 2,500,000 rabbits, 2,500,000 pigeons, 1,000,000 larks, 297,000 partridges, 260,000 hares, and 9,000 head of deer were sold at the Paris Halles Centrales in the course of a single year. In the same period 29,600,000 kilos (roughly 30,000 tons) of butchers' meat changed hands in the Halles and this immense quantity hardly represented a fifth part of all the butchers' meat sold that year in Paris.

—N. Y. Herald.

—Though flattery blossoms like friendship, yet there is a great difference in the fruit.—Socrates.

—Anthony Trollope's new story is entitled "The Fixed Period." It is probable that a sequel will appear called "The Movable Semicolon."—Norristown Herald.

—"Pa," asked little Johnny, "what does the teacher mean by saying that I must have inherited my bad temper?" She meant, Johnny, that you are your mother's own boy.—Boston Transcript.

—It is better to yield a little than quarrel a great deal. The habit of "standing up," as people call it, for their little rights, is one of the most disagreeable and undignified in the world.

—Scientists say that the best brain food is corn meal. For years thousands of persons have been laboring under the impression that it was corn after being converted into whisky. They will see their error now.—Norristown Herald.

—Dentistry has improved wonderfully in twenty years past. Ten years ago a dentist who broke a man's jaw wouldn't even pay his car fare home. Now he has to come down with four dollars damages.—Detroit Free Press.

—"Edward, what do I hear—that you have disobeyed your grandmother, who told you just now not to jump down these steps?" "Grandma didn't tell us not to, papa; she only came to the door and said: 'I wouldn't jump down those steps, boys; and I shouldn't think she would—an old lady like her!'"

—The Life Saver.—Forester—"Unthankfulness is of the world pay. See you, of this man there have I the life saved, and he bids me the time not once." Second Huntsman—"How, on what way may have you him the life saved? Have you him out of the water pulled?" Forester—"No; by one hunt shot I him a whole load duck-shot in the fur cap, had I a little deeper shot, it would out with him have been."—Detroit Free Press.

—Why she doesn't count the years: In the green room of a Parisian theater the conversation turned upon the delicate subject of age. Presently a gentleman visitor ventured upon the indiscreet query: "Now, what age are you, my dear friend?" addressing his remark to Mlle. X., who certainly can no longer be considered in her first youth. "What a question, indeed!" said the lady; "how can that possibly interest you?" "Simply curiosity," responded the visitor.

"Well, then, I will be frank with you. Really I do not know. One counts one's money, one's jewels, and one's deeds of value, because it may happen that they could be lost or stolen, but as I am absolutely certain that nobody will take a year from my age, and that I shall never lose one, why, where is the need of counting?"—London Era.