

The Wings of the Morning

By LOUIS TRACY

Copyright, 1903, by Edward J. Clode

[CONTINUED.]

"This is a change of diet," he explained. "No; we don't boil the leaves or nibble the bark. When I split this palm open you will find that the interior is full of pith. I will cut it out for you, and then it will be your task to knead it with water after well washing it, pick out all the fiber and finally permit the water to evaporate. In a couple of days the residuum will become a white powder, which, when boiled, is sago."

"Good gracious!" said Iris. "The story sounds unconvincing, but I believe I am correct. It is worth a trial."

"I should have imagined that sago grew on a stalk like rice or wheat."

"Or Topsy?" She laughed. A difficult situation had passed without undue effort. Unhappily the man reopened it. While using a crowbar as a wedge he endeavored to put matters on a straight-forward footing.

"A little while ago," he said, "you seemed to imply that I had assumed the name of Jenks."

But Miss Deane's confidential mood had gone. "Nothing of the kind," she said coldly. "I think Jenks is an excellent name."

She regretted the words even as they fell from her lips. The sailor gave a mighty wrench with the bar, splitting the log to its clustering leaves.

"You are right," he said. "It is distinctive, brief, dogmatic. I cling to it passionately."

Soon afterward, leaving Iris to the manufacture of sago, he went to the leeward side of the island, a search for turtles being his ostensible object. When the trees hid him he quickened his pace and turned to the left in order to explore the cavity marked on the tin with a skull and crossbones. To his surprise he hit upon the remains of a roadway—that is, a line through the wood where there were no well grown trees, where the ground bore traces of humanity in the shape of a wrinkled and mildewed pair of Chinese boots, a wooden sandal, even the decayed remains of a palik, or litter.

At last he reached the edge of the pit, and the sight that met his eyes held him spellbound.

The labor of many hands had torn a chasm, a quarry, out of the side of the hill. Roughly circular in shape, it had a diameter of perhaps a hundred feet, and at its deepest part, toward the cliff, it ran to a depth of forty feet. On the lower side, where the sailor stood, it descended rapidly for some fifteen feet.

Grasses, shrubs, plants of every variety, grew in profusion down the steep slopes wherever seeds could find precarious nurture until a point was reached about ten or eleven feet from the bottom. There all vegetation ceased, as if forbidden to cross a magic circle.

Below this belt the place was a charnel house. The bones of men and animals mingled in weird confusion. Most were

les. They wore the clothes of Dyaks. Characteristic hats and weapons denoted their nationality. The others, the first harvest of this modern Gogotha, might have been Chinese coolies. When the sailor's fascinated vision could register details he distinguished yokes, baskets, odd looking spades and picks strewn amid the bones. The animals were, all of one type—small, lanky, with long pointed skulls. At last he spied a withered hoof. They were pigs.

Over all lay a thick coating of fine sand, deposited from the eddying winds that could never reach the silent depths. The place was grewsome, horribly depressing. Jenks broke out into a clammy perspiration. He seemed to be looking at the secrets of the grave.

At last his superior intelligence asserted itself. His brain became clearer, recovered its power of analysis. He began to criticize, reflect, and this is the theory he evolved:

Some one, long ago, had discovered valuable minerals in the volcanic rock. Mining operations were in full blast when the extinct volcano took its revenge upon the human ants gnawing at its vitals and smothered them by a deadly outpouring of carbonic acid gas, the bottled up poison of the ages. A horde of pigs, running wild over the island—placed there no doubt by Chinese fishers—had met the same fate while intent on dreadful orgy.

Then there came a European who knew how the anhydrous gas, being heavier than the surrounding air, settled like water in that terrible hollow. He, too, had striven to wrest the treasure from the stone by driving a tunnel into the cliff. He had partly succeeded and had gone away, perhaps to obtain help, after crudely registering his knowledge on the lid of a tin canister. This, again, probably fell into the hands of another man, who, curious but unconvicted, caused himself to be set ashore on this desolate spot with a few inadequate stores. Possibly he had arranged to be taken off within a fixed time.

But a sampan laden with Dyak pirates came first, and the intrepid explorer's bones rested near the well, while his head had gone to decorate the hut of some fierce village chief. The murderers, after burying their own dead—for the white man fought hard, witness the empty cartridges—searched the island. Some of them, ignorantly inquisitive, descended into the hollow. They remained there. The others, superstitious barbarians, fled for their lives, embarking so hastily that they took from the cave neither tools nor oil, though they would greatly prize these articles.

Such was the tragic web he spun, a compound of fact and fancy. It explained all perplexities save one. What did "32 divided by 1" mean? Was there yet another fearsome riddle awaiting solution?

And then his thoughts flew to Iris. Happen what might, her bright picture was seldom absent from his brain. Suppose, egg hunting, she had stumbled across this valley of death! How could he hope to keep it hidden from her? Was not the ghastly knowledge better than the horror of a chance ramble through the wood and the shock of discovery—nay, indeed, the risk of a catastrophe?

He rushed back through the trees until he caught sight of Iris industriously kneading the sago pith in one of those most useful dish covers.

He called to her, led her wondering to the track and pointed out the fatal quarry, but in such wise that she could not look inside it.

"You remember that round hole we saw from the summit rock?" he said. "Well, it is full of carbonic acid gas, to breathe which means unconsciousness and death. It gives no warning to the inexperienced. It is rather pleasant than otherwise. Promise me you will never come near this place again."

Now, Iris, too, had been thinking deeply. Robert Jenks bulked large in her day dreams. Her nerves were not yet quite normal. There was a catch in her throat as she answered:

"I don't want to die. Of course I will keep away. What a horrid island this is! Yet it might be a paradise."

She bit her lip to suppress her tears; but, being the Eve in this garden, she continued:

"How did you find out? Is there anything nasty—in there?"

"Yes, the remains of animals and other things. I would not have told you were it not imperative."

"Are you keeping other secrets from me?"

"Oh, quite a number."

He managed to conjure up a smile, and the ruse was effective. She applied the words to his past history,

"I hope they will not be revealed so dramatically," she said.

"You never can tell," he answered. They were in prophetic vein that morning. They returned in silence to the cave.

"I wish to go inside with a lamp. May I?" he asked.

"May I come too?" she demanded.

He assented, with an explanation of his design. When the lamp was in order he held it close to the wall and conducted a systematic survey. The geological fault which favored the construction of the tunnel seemed to diverge to the left at the farther end. The "face" of the rock exhibited the marks of persistent labor. The stone had been hewn away by main force when the dislocation of strata ceased to be helpful.

His knowledge was limited on the subject, yet Jenks believed that the material here was a hard limestone rather than the external basalt. Searching each inch with the feeble light, he paused once, with an exclamation.

"What is it?" cried Iris.

"I cannot be certain," he said doubtfully. "Would you mind holding the lamp while I use a crowbar?"

In the stone was visible a thin vein, bluish white in color. He managed to break off a fair sized lump containing a well defined specimen of the foreign metal.

They hurried into the open air and examined the fragment with curious eyes. The sailor picked it with his knife, and the substance in the vein came off in laminated layers, small, brittle scales.

"Is it silver?" Iris was almost excited.

"I do not think so. I am no expert, but I have a vague idea—I have seen—"

He wrinkled his brows and pressed away the furrows with his hand, that physical habit of his when perplexed.

"I have it," he cried. "It is antimony."

Miss Deane pursed her lips in disdain. Antimony! What was antimony?

"So much fuss for nothing," she said. "It is used in alloys and medicines," he explained. "To us it is useless."

He threw the piece of rock contemptuously among the bushes. But, being thorough in all that he undertook, he returned to the cave and again conducted an inspection. The silver hued vein became more strongly marked at the point where it disappeared downward into a collection of rubble and sand. That was all. Did men give their toll, their lives, for this? So it would appear. Be that as it might, he had more pressing work. If the cave still held a secret it must remain there.

Iris had gone back to her sago kneading. Shouldering the ax, he walked to the beach. Much debris from the steamer was lying high and dry. It was an easy task for an athletic man to reach the palm tree, yet the sailor hesitated with almost imperceptible qualms.

"A baited rat trap," he muttered. Then he quickened his pace. With the first active spring from rock to rock his unacknowledged doubts vanished. He might find stores of priceless utility. The reflection inspired him. Jumping and climbing like a cat, in two minutes he was near the tree.

He could now see the true explanation of its growth in a seemingly impossible place. Here the bed of the sea bulged upward in a small sand cay, which silted round the base of a limestone rock so different in color and formation from the coral reef. Nature, whose engineering contrivances can force springs to mountain tops, managed to deliver to this isolated refuge a sufficient supply of water to nourish the palm, and the roots, firmly lodged in deep crevices, were well protected from the waves.

Between the sailor and the tree intervened a small stretch of shallow water. Landward this submerged saddle shelved steeply into the lagoon. Although the water in the cove was twenty fathoms in depth, its crystal clearness was remarkable. The bottom, composed of marvelously white sand and broken coral, rendered other objects conspicuous. He could see plenty of fish, but not a single shark, while on the inner slope of the reef was plainly visible the destroyed fore part of the Sirdar, which had struck beyond the tree, relatively to his present standpoint. He had wondered why no boats were cast ashore. Now he saw the reason. Three of them were still fastened to the davits and carried down with the hull.

Seaward the water was not so clear. The waves created patches of foam, and long submarine plants swayed gently in the undercurrent.

To reach Palm Tree rock—anticipating its subsequent name—he must cross a space of some thirty feet and wade up to his waist.

He made the passage with ease. Pitched against the bole of the tree was a long, narrow case, very heavy, iron clamped and marked with letters in black triangles and the broad arrow of the British government.

"Rifles, by all the gods!" shouted the sailor.

The Sirdar carried a consignment of arms and ammunition from Hongkong to Singapore. Providence had decreed that a practically inexhaustible store of cartridges should be hurled across the lagoon to the island. And here were rifles enough to equip half a company. He would not risk the precious



Homeseekers' Excursions

From Here to There

On First and Third Tuesdays

OF

May, June, July, August, September, October and November

TO

Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Indian Territory and Texas

One Fare Plus \$2 for Round Trip

J. C. LOVREIN, Ass't Gen'l Passenger Agent, KANSAS CITY, MO.

A. HILTON, Gen'l Passenger Agent, ST. LOUIS, MO.



For Twenty Years...

During all these years A. B. CHASE Pianos have been acknowledged to be of the very highest grade. The most critical and expert musicians find them unsurpassed in

Tone, Action and Durability

We are district distributors of the A. B. CHASE Pianos, and will gladly put you in touch with one of our representatives, or mail you catalogues and special prices.

OLNEY-GASTON
MUSIC CO.
St. Joseph, Mo.



Send for our convincing booklet, "WHY."

Successors to T. J. WASHBURN, Established in 1868.



The place was a charnel house.

mere skeletons. A few bodies—nine the sailor counted—yet preserved some resemblance of humanity. These latter were scattered among the older rel-

ax in an attempt to open the case. He must go back for a crowbar.

What else was there in this storehouse thrust by Neptune from the ocean bed? A chest of tea, seemingly undamaged; three barrels of flour, utterly ruined; a saloon chair, smashed from its pivot; a battered chronometer. For the rest, fragments of timber intermingled with pulverized coral and broken crockery.

A little farther on the deep water entrance to the lagoon curved between sunken rocks. On one of them rested the Sirdar's huge funnel. The northwest section of the reef was bare. Among the wreckage he found a coil of stout rope and a pulley. He instantly conceived the idea of constructing an aerial line to ferry the chest of tea across the channel he had forded.

He threaded the pulley with the rope and climbed the tree, adding a touch of artistic completeness to the ruin of his trousers by the operation. He had fastened the pulley high up the trunk before he realized how much more simple it would be to break open the chest where it lay and transport its contents in small parcels.

He laughed lightly. "I am becoming addle headed," he said to himself. "Anyhow, now the job is done, I may as well make use of it."

Recoiling the rope ends, he cast them across to the reef. In such small ways do men throw invisible dice with death. With those two lines he would within a few fleeting seconds drag himself back from eternity.

Picking up the ax, he carelessly stepped into the water, not knowing that Iris, having welded the incipient sago into a flat pancake, had strolled to the beach and was watching him.

The water was hardly above his knees when there came a swirling rush from the seaweed. A long tentacle shot out like a lasso and gripped his right leg. Another coiled around his waist. "My God!" he gurgled as a horrid sucker closed over his mouth and nose. He was in the grip of a devilfish!

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

MODERN WOODMEN IN SESSION.

Work of the Order Shown in Statements of Officers.

Milwaukee, June 21.—The head camp of Modern Woodmen of America opened its fourteenth biennial convention at the Davidson theater, with between 600 and 700 delegates, representing over 11,000 camps and nearly 700,000 members, present.

The report of Head Consul A. R. Talbot was devoted to a review of the work during the biennial term. Speaking of the centralization of the work, he favored the discontinuance of state head physicians, all applica-

tions to go to the supreme medical director at the head office. During the biennial the new members numbered 121,639, and 1,482 new camps were chartered. The society, he said, now includes 14.53 per cent of all those eligible for membership in the states in which it is organized.

This was followed by the report of Head Clerk Hawes. The insurance in force at the close of the biennial term aggregates \$1,136,678,500. The society paid 7,951 death claims, amounting to \$12,663,003, as against 5,860 claims, amounting to \$10,736,435, during the term preceding.

Foresters' prize drills—Senior class: Lincoln, No. 190, Captain A. C. Herrick, 97.502; Kansas City, No. 1,990, Captain William Walker, 98.585; Kansas City, No. 1,412, Captain J. A. Beggs, 96.363; Des Moines, No. 111, Captain L. B. Tillotson, 94.06. Junior class: Lincoln, No. 969, Captain H. J. Gildersleeve, 72.20; Des Moines, No. 3,124, Captain A. E. Brunnett, 82.03; Mason City, Ia., No. 709, Captain W. G. Wells, 58.14.

Features of the Day's Trading and Closing Quotations.

Chicago, June 20.—Wet weather in the northwest induced active buying by shorts in the wheat pit here today. A report that France will be a heavy importer of American wheat augmented the demand. The market closed practically at the highest point of the day, with July up 1/16¢. Corn was up 1/8¢. Oats showed a gain of 1/4¢. Provisions were down 2/16¢. Closing prices: Wheat—July, 80 1/2¢; Sept., 84 1/2¢; Dec., 84 1/2¢. Corn—July, 54 1/2¢; Sept., 52 1/2¢; Dec., 48 1/2¢. Oats—July, 31 1/2¢; Sept., 29 1/2¢; Dec., 30 1/2¢. Pork—July, \$12.82 1/2; Sept., \$12.85. Lard—July, \$7.22 1/2; Sept., \$7.40. Ribs—July, \$7.40; Sept., \$7.75.

Chicago Live Stock.

Chicago, June 20.—Cattle—Receipts, 6,000; steady; good to prime steers, \$5.50; 6,000; poor to medium, \$2.75; 5,35; stockers and feeders, \$2.75; 4.70; cows, \$2.50; 4.00; hogs, \$2.50; 4.75; canners, \$1.40; 2.40; hogs, \$2.25; 4.00; calves, \$3.00; 6.25; Texas fed steers, \$4.00; 4.75. Hogs—Receipts, 20,000; 5c lower; mixed and butchers, \$5.25; 5.42 1/2; good to choice heavy, \$5.35; 5.42 1/2; rough heavy, \$4.75; 5.10; light, \$5.25; 5.40; bulk of sales, \$5.32; 5.37 1/2. Sheep—Receipts, 13,000; lower; good to choice, \$3.50; 4.00; western sheep, \$4.00; 5.00; native lambs, \$4.75; 6.50; western lambs, \$5.00; 6.45.

Kansas City Live Stock.

Kansas City, June 20.—Cattle—Receipts, 2,000; 10¢ to 25¢ lower; top, \$5.70; choice beef steers, \$4.85; 5.70; fair to good, \$4.00; 4.75; western fed steers, \$4.25; 5.25; stockers and feeders, \$3.00; 4.40; cows and heifers, \$2.25; 4.00; hogs, \$2.25; 4.00; calves, \$3.00; 6.25. Hogs—Receipts, 17,000; 5c lower; top, \$5.30; bulk of sales, \$5.20; 5.27 1/2; heavy, \$5.20; 5.25; packers, \$5.20; 5.27 1/2; pigs and light, \$5.15; 5.30. Sheep—Receipts, 5,000; steady to 10c lower; lambs, \$5.75; 7.00; fed ewes and yearlings, \$4.25; 5.50; stockers and feeders, \$2.50; 4.00.