

KNAPED!

the strangest adventure I... my twenty years upon... Capt. Nevins, I was during...

My chief delight in those days was the study of navigation, of which I never grew tired. My father, who was a master of that science, being a retired sea captain, took great pains to gratify my desire for knowledge in that direction...

The Jeannette was commanded by Capt. Guy Wentworth, an old friend of my father, and as he had always been kind to me I anticipated a most pleasant voyage.

I was provided with a set of navigator's instruments, including a costly watch, and was to keep a reckoning through the voyage.

In addition to the ship's crew there were on board the Jeannette about twenty Chinamen, who had made large sums of money in the gold fields, and were returning to their native land to enjoy their wealth. Their money, which was nearly all in gold dust and nuggets, was stored on board the ship.

Among the sailors on board the Jeannette was a man by the name of Jack Peters. He could not have been less than 50 years of age, tall, raw-boned, with a complexion as brown as an autumn leaf. From the very first he seemed to take a great liking to me, and seemed greatly interested in my progress in learning navigation. At every opportunity he would engage me in conversation, yet I could not make up my mind to like him.

There was something about the man that caused me to distrust him, in spite of his evident disposition to make me his friend.

We had been at sea nearly five weeks when one night, just as I was preparing to turn in, Peters came to my room and asked me to go with him. Joe Braddon, he said, who was taking his turn at the wheel, wanted to speak to me.

I thought it an odd request, as I had but a slight acquaintance with Braddon, but I followed him, little dreaming of the startling events that were soon to take place.

The night was intensely dark, and a heavy mist hung over the sea. I had not taken a dozen steps after leaving my room when I was suddenly seized from behind by strong arms and borne to the deck. I was about to make an outcry, when a hand was placed over my mouth and a harsh voice warned me that if I made the least alarm I would be knocked on the head and thrown into the sea.

This induced me to remain quiet while my hands were securely tied behind my back. Then some one took me from the deck, and slipping over the rail descended into a boat that had been lowered alongside the vessel. I was thrust down in the bottom of the boat and commanded to keep quiet upon peril of my life.

So astonished and bewildered had I been at the sudden assault that it was some time before I could realize what was taking place. I sat there, like one stupefied, huddled down, while a dozen of the sailors descended from the ship and took their places in the boat, and the ship swept on her course and was soon lost to sight in the gloom.

What does this mean? I cried, as soon as I dared speak. Why have I been taken from the ship?

We'll let you know all soon enough, replied the voice of Peters. We've got you for ye, an' if ye do the right thing I'll treat ye all fair.

If he don't, said one of the threatening tones.

He'll treat ye all fair, said another in a calm voice.

Men now hoisted the sail, turned to the north, then unbound, and about the boat as I mentioned to make no pursued by the Peters said:

use in dis- we've got the his, he con- ve jist, re- little uv her an—and we ay with it. an heathen like the fair t of the coun- we decided and uv an ex- if you'll help do this fair git your part of

of it, I replied in- not be a party to

your robbing scheme, but I suppose I can't help myself about assisting you to get ashore, since I am with you, but don't think that I would not give you all over to the authorities if I could.

"Oh, we'll risk that," laughed Peters. "Only you pilot us to Formosa and we'll do the rest. We'll see that you don't lose nothing, and besides we know you've been waitin' a chance to try your skill at navigatin', and we ain't in favor uv keepin' a boy back when he wants to learn."

This speech brought a hearty laugh from the sailors.

I now began to understand the situation in which I was placed. That the men would have no mercy on me if I failed to do their bidding I well knew, yet I felt it my duty to make some attempt to thwart their plans. But I must have time to think, and to gain this it was necessary for me to appear as passive as possible, not to excite suspicion. As soon as the robbery was discovered I knew that the Jeannette would double on her course and try to run down the robbers, and there might be a chance of my arresting them if I managed matters rightly, but any attempt to deceive my captors would be a dangerous undertaking, and should I be discovered would, in all probability, cost me my life. Knowing this, I recognized the necessity of using the greatest caution in what I did.

The night was still dark, with a heavy mist hanging over the sea, affording an excellent opportunity for the boat to escape the vessel. It was fully two hours before Peters would allow even a match to be lit to look at the compass to ascertain our course. Then the boat was headed for the northwest.

The night passed, and when morning dawned the sea was still covered with a dense fog. On taking my bearing I found, as near as I could calculate, that we were 21 degs. 13 mins. north latitude, and 129 degs. 54 mins. east longitude. This would make our position about 140 miles east by some 30 miles south of the island of Formosa, and nearly 800 miles east of Hong Kong. By keeping on a direct western course I could readily see that we would miss Formosa full thirty miles and follow in the wake of the Jeannette. As I reflected on this fact it suddenly occurred to me that I might mislead the robbers as to our true position, and while pretending to pilot them to Formosa I might induce them to continue on toward Hong Kong, thereby providing a possibility of encountering the Jeannette. But scarcely had this resolution taken place in my mind when Peters approached and began to examine the chart, asking me to show him our position.

In response to his request I pointed to a spot one degree north of our true position, venturing the remark that we would reach the island the quickest by keeping in a due western course.

He made no reply to my remark, but after asking a few questions as to the probable distance to the island he turned to his men and gave orders for the boat to be headed for the north.

My heart sunk within me at this, and for a moment I believed that my deception had been discovered. However, the next moment he explained to the men that it was his object to get as far out of the track of the Jeannette as possible before making for the island.

Being thus reassured, I ventured to suggest that the Jeannette would most likely search for us among the Boshier islands that lay close to us on the south, but Peters cut me off with the pertinent remark that I was not brought along to give advice. This left me with no alternative but to quietly submit to being carried away beyond the possibility of encountering the Jeannette.

My knowledge of the island to which we were bound was of the most meager character, and all I could recall regarding it was that it lay some thirty leagues off the coast of Fu-Kina, a province in southeastern China, and was infested with a tribe of savage and warlike natives.

All that day we continued our course to the north, then turned westward, and two days later sighted the rock bound coast of eastern Formosa. Continuing our course northward for several leagues we entered a narrow inlet, and passing up this for four or five miles, we landed in a secluded spot, where we disembarked and concealed the boat under a clump of trees that overhung a narrow neck in the little bay.

In a level spot about 300 yards from the shore a camp was made, and here we remained for three days before I learned anything regarding the future plans of my captors. Then, from what I overheard from Peters in his conversation with the others, I learned that we were to remain in concealment there for three or four weeks, perhaps, when a small vessel—a smuggler on the Chinese coast, I gathered—commanded by an old friend and pal of Peters, would arrive and carry us to Australia. In order to carry out this plan one of the con-

spirators had been left aboard the Jeannette, and on his arrival at Hong Kong he was to see the smuggler, whose ship would probably be at that port, and acquaint him with the business on hand, and pilot him to the place agreed upon on the west coast of Formosa. What disposition was to be made of me in the meantime I was unable to learn, but I had the gravest apprehensions that it was their intention to leave me on the island.

However, I was allowed my freedom, and went and came as I pleased. Sometimes I would venture quite a distance inland, wandering over the hills and through the deep canons, in which grew abundance of tropical fruit, while birds of rare and brilliant plumage flew about me through the perfumed air.

It was about a week subsequent to our landing on the island. I was returning one evening from one of my short excursions inland, when, on crossing a little hill, a strange, startling sound, coming from the camp in the valley below, reached my ears.

Hastening to the top of the hill I looked down into the little valley, where a strange sight met my gaze. Coming swiftly from a strip of deep forest to the north, leaping over the jagged rocks that covered the hill, I saw a horde of Formosa savages rushing furiously down upon the sailors at the camp, brandishing their spears and gesticulating wildly as they ran.

For a moment I was almost stupefied with surprise and fear. So suddenly had they appeared upon the scene that it seemed as if they had sprung up from the very earth. I recognized in a moment that I as well as the sailors was in the most deadly peril, for the natives of Formosa are as fierce and warlike as the Sioux and Apaches of our own country.

I heard the voice of Peters shouting to the men to run for the boat, but before the order could be obeyed the savages were upon them. I heard the rapid discharge of firearms as the sailors rallied about their leader and sought to repel the advancing foe. Then the line of screaming, maddened natives closed in upon them, and nothing could be seen but a mass of struggling humanity. It would be impossible for me to describe the fearful scene that followed, in which the boat's crew were every one cut down and literally hacked to pieces before my very eyes.

At the first appearance of the savages I had sunk down behind a clump of bushes, and, lying there upon the ground stupefied with horror, I witnessed that awful scene, the horror of which can never be erased from my memory.

How long I lay there I cannot tell, for I must have swooned at the terrible sight I had been compelled to witness. The next I remember was of lying there among the bushes trying to recall the past. As soon as I could realize the situation I arose and peered down into the valley. The savages had all disappeared as mysteriously as they had come. The sun was low in the horizon, and a deathly stillness had fallen over the scene.

For half an hour I stood there, waiting and listening for sounds of the savages, but at length, hearing nothing to excite my fear, I stepped from the thicket of bushes and stole cautiously down to the little grove where the camp had been.

There amid the rank shrubbery lay the mangled remains of the ill-fated sailors, disfigured beyond recognition. For several moments I stood there almost paralyzed by the horror of my situation. Then the deadly peril that surrounded me roused me to the knowledge of the necessity of immediate action. It would not do to linger there a moment, as there was no telling when the savages might again appear upon the scene; but what was I to do?

Suddenly I thought of the boat. Was it still there, or had it been taken away by the savages? With a beating heart I fairly ran toward the place where it had been left. I could hardly suppress a cry of joy as I pushed through the thick branches to the water's edge and found the boat still there unmolested by the natives. A glance told me that nothing had been removed from the boat save a small portion of the provisions, and I at once resolved to put to sea in that trust to chance to be picked up by some passing ship.

It only required a few moments for me to board the boat and push out into the little bay. I was well skilled in its management, and soon had the sail hoisted to catch the strong off shore breeze that was now blowing. Taking the rudder, I ran swiftly down the inlet to the open sea. A mile farther on I rounded a headland, and was standing out toward the middle of the bay when I heard the sound of many strange voices coming from the shore. Glancing toward a narrow peninsula that lay on my left I saw a band of savages running swiftly toward the water's edge, brandishing their weapons and uttering savage exclamations as they ran.

A shudder passed over me as I thought

of what my fate would be should I fall into their hands. But as I could see no boat in which they could pursue me upon the water I felt that I was safe beyond their reach. However, my feeling of security was of short duration, for scarcely had the savages reached the water's edge when I saw them scramble down among the rocks and disappear into what seemed to be a kind of grotto. A moment later a long canoe filled with the natives shot out into the bay and came swiftly in pursuit. Then another and another followed in quick succession till half a dozen had joined in the chase.

Although I was fully a quarter of a mile in advance of them now, I recognized the fact that there was the greatest danger that I would be overhauled by them.

There were no weapons in the boat with which I could defend myself, but even if there had been I would have stood no chance of repelling a score of blood-thirsty savages. There was but one chance of escape, and that lay in flight. Recognizing this fact I held the little craft full before the wind, which was now growing stronger as I neared the open sea.

But in spite of this I could see that the pursuing canoes were slowly but surely gaining on me. Nearer and nearer they drew, till, glancing back, I could see the fierce look of exultation on the hideous faces of the savages, and hear their wild ejaculations of triumph as they bore rapidly down upon me. Fifteen minutes more and they would be within reach of me. With a feeling of despair I lashed the rudder in place; I grasped a plank from the bottom of the boat—the oars had been removed by the robbers—and began to row with it as best I could.

We had now left the inlet, and were out in the open sea. I cast a hasty glance across the water with the hope of seeing some passing ship, but there was no sign of a sail in sight.

But now for the first time I noticed that an ashly pallor was stealing over the mist covered sky, and with a feeling of joy I knew that the night, which comes down so rapidly in the tropics, was near at hand. A few moments later the darkness had deepened so that only the dim outlines of the pursuing canoes were visible through the gloom. A few minutes more and they were lost to sight in the black night that settled rapidly over the sea.

Throwing down the plank with which I had been rowing I now grasped the rudder again and changed my course to the southeast, while I listened intently to the sound of the pursuers' paddles. A few minutes later I heard them pass to the north of me, while with a strong wind filling the sails of my boat I bore swiftly and noiselessly away to the south. The noises of the paddles died away in the distance, and I knew that I was safe.

I continued my course southward until daylight, when I could see the coast of Formosa lying some four or five miles to the west. The next day I rounded South Cape and was picked up by the Jeannette, which had returned and was standing up the Formosa coast in search of the robbers.

I was handsomely rewarded for the part I had played in restoring the treasure to its owners, and my adventures were the all absorbing topic of conversation during the voyage.

On my return to San Francisco I was appointed second mate on the Jeannette. —Will Leisenbee in Detroit News.

Disappointed. Niece Estelle (to her mamma)—There, Aunt Miranda's toilet mats are finished, and really they are prettier than I expected. I must send a card with "Very little, but with a heart full of love," or something like that, and I do hope her present will be a check again this year. I've counted on it and gone frightfully in debt.

Aunt Miranda (rheumatic and an east wind blowing, to companion two days later)—And, Barnes, for Miss Estelle you may select a scarf for the piano I gave her last fall. —New York Times.

Feathers Always the Proper Thing. It always delights the female heart when feathers are in vogue. This season they are used on all garments, from the tea gown to the outside wrap and hat. This fondness for feathers is not to be wondered at, for they are always becoming. A pretty girl in a large hat with black ostrich feathers is twice as fascinating as with any other style of hat, and a trimming of feathers about the neck of an older woman softens all the lines of the face. Mrs. Stanley affects large hats and ostrich feathers. —Exchange.

A Paradox. Jinks—What are you doing now, old man? Blinks—who has married a temper—Well, I'm—running a—a—hothouse. Queer, too, for it's scold from morning till night. —Pittsburg Bulletin.

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