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ADVENTURES ON THE AMAZON

BY
DOUGLAS ENGLISH

AUTHOR OF "THE BIRTHDAY CARAVAN," "LUCK OF THE WOODS"
"A BOOK OF NIMBLE BEASTS," ETC.



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ADVENTURES ON THE AMAZON

I.—UNCLE JOCK

THE boy I am going to tell you about in this story had a very curious name. He was called "Luck of the Woods."

This is the sort of name that you can't use all at once—it is too long for shouting with. So he was generally called "Luck" for short. If you try to shout that, you will find it is quite easy.

Who his father and mother were I don't know. Indeed I don't know, and I don't think he himself knew, whether he had any living relations at all. But I do know that he was a gypsy boy; and that, like all true gypsies, he was so used to living in the open air that he did not much mind where he slept, so long as he could coil himself up on something warm and dry; or where he had his meals, or what they were, so long as he was hungry; or how fast, or slow, the time went, so long as he had something to do that he liked doing. What he

didn't like was being cooped up within the walls of a room; or of a house for that matter, for he was an open-air boy if ever there was one.

Though Luck had no relations he had some very good friends. One of them, the best of all perhaps, was a Mr. Harding, who was a great traveller and explorer. He had taken such a fancy to Luck that, at the time this story begins, he had engaged him to come as his servant on a trip up the biggest river in the world, the river which runs right across the top of South America, and is known as the Amazon, or Amazons. The second name is the best, because it includes not only the main stream, but also a number of other huge rivers which run into it, and which, since they help to make it the biggest river in the world, must be considered as forming part of it.

Mr. Harding was not a gypsy himself, but what he did not know about gypsies was hardly worth knowing; for he had spent five years of his life wandering with them when he was a young man. Most of the rest of his life he had spent in travelling in unknown parts of the world, and in finding out what those unknown parts of the world were like. He was, in short, what is called a pioneer.

Now to be a good pioneer you must have all your wits about you, and also be a very brave man, and a very strong man, and a very unselfish man. If you have all these four good qualities, you can hardly fail to be a very popular man; and this Mr. Harding certainly was. He was

known to all his friends as Uncle Jock; and, as we are all going to be his friends presently, I don't think he will mind *our* calling him Uncle Jock; for it is only people who are not quite sure of themselves who "stand on their dignity," for fear, I suppose, lest it should run away. Real dignity never does that.

Uncle Jock did not look like the great man he really was. He was short and rather thick-built, though there wasn't an ounce of fat about him. He had lived so much in hot climates that his face was sunburnt almost to the colour of a nutshell; and he had used his eyes to such good purpose that the wrinkles round them were like spider-webs, and spread over his round brown face in little lines and crannies that made it look rather like a shrivelled pippin. Though he was dreadfully careless about his dress, there was one thing he was most careful about, and that was shaving. Somehow or other he always managed to be clean-shaved, however travel-stained he was otherwise.

Of late his eyes had been giving him some trouble, and he had taken to wearing large tortoise-shell spectacles. But these could not hide the "twinkle" of his eyes, indeed, made one notice it rather more. And this beam and sparkle, over a humorous mouth which seemed always to be on the verge of smiling, if it was not smiling already, was, I think, one of the reasons why he always got on so well with young people. He was, in fact, one of those delightful people who always seem to be of the same age as you are yourself. When such people meet

the world smiling, you feel somehow that they are right, and that you must do the same.

II.—ON THE LINER

At the time this story opens, Uncle Jock and Luck were both in bed; or rather in their berths, for they were in one of the cabins of a great ocean liner, which had started its voyage across the Atlantic the day before. It was about three o'clock in the morning, and both of them were wide awake. Uncle Jock had been asleep for a few hours, but Luck had not slept a wink since he turned in. He was much too excited to sleep; and, if the truth be told, he was a little scared as well, though he would stoutly have denied that. But the place in which he found himself was so utterly unlike any place that he had ever been in before that I think there was some excuse for him.

Luck was fifteen years old nearly, but never before in his lifetime had he felt the thrill and quiver of a ten thousand ton steamship forcing its way through the water. Never before had he sat down to such meals as had been served in the immense dining-saloon. Never before had he seen so many heads bent over plates, and so many hands plying knives and forks, and lifting tumblers and wine glasses. If Uncle Jock had not been sitting next to him I think he would have bounded out of his seat, and rushed away to take cover like some little frightened wild animal, in the first hole that he could find.

As it was, he had scarcely eaten anything, and had been heartily glad when Uncle Jock had finished and the two had been able to get away by themselves. But even this was not for long, for the other passengers had soon finished too; and then it seemed as if the whole of the great ship had turned itself into a gigantic beehive, which had nothing to do with the sea and the sky, except that it was forcing itself, rather rudely, upon their notice.

"Awake, Luck?" said Uncle Jock suddenly. He had known for some time that the boy in the berth beneath him *was* awake, but had thought it best to leave him to himself.

"Yes, sir," said Luck in a whisper.

"Feeling a bit strange, I expect, aren't you?" said Uncle Jock.

"Yes, sir," whispered Luck again. "What's that noise that keeps going on?"

"The screws," said Uncle Jock.

"Will they go on all night?" asked Luck.

"I sincerely hope so," said Uncle Jock. "We don't want to stop here, you know."

"Where are we?" asked Luck.

"Let's see what the time is," said Uncle Jock. "Three o'clock. We've been out about ten hours. Say a hundred and fifty miles. We're getting into the Atlantic Ocean, Luck."

"Where are we going to?" asked Luck.

"Barbadoes," said Uncle Jock. "We shall get out there and go on in a much smaller steamer. I shan't be sorry. I'd as soon be in a seaside hotel as in this thing."

"There won't be so many people in the next steamer," said Luck, "will there?"

"No, you'll be able to run about as much as you like in that steamer," said Uncle Jock; "if it's the one I have in mind."

"How long shall we be in this one?" said Luck.

"Not more than a week, I hope," said Uncle Jock. "Now you try and go to sleep."

When Uncle Jock had said that the great liner was like a seaside hotel he might have gone even further and said it was like a seaside town. There were long, long promenades with people walking up and down them. There was a winter garden. There was a swimming bath. There was a concert room. There was a cinema. There was a band. Indeed everything seemed to be done to make people think they were on shore instead of afloat.

The sea, of course, was there, and the sky; but both of them seemed somehow to be a long way off, and when, about mid-way across, they got into a spell of bad weather, the passengers seemed anxious to take as little notice of them as possible, as if they were naughty children who were being noisy and disturbing their elders. This bad weather, however, *did* give Luck a chance of doing something that he wanted to do. One evening he found the whole length of one of the promenades empty, and he took off his coat and waistcoat and shoes and stockings, and tore up and down it as hard as ever he could, just to get a little steam off. As bad luck would have it he ran full tilt into a stout old gentleman

as he came suddenly out of his cabin to go down to dinner, and a complaint to Uncle Jock led to this kind of exercise being stopped. Luck was very crestfallen, and matters were made even worse by his upsetting the whole of a tray a steward was balancing behind him, as he got into his place for dinner, and getting it into his head that every eye in the dining-saloon was fixed on him, though they were not really. Nor was this all, for at the end of dinner he managed to upset his coffee-cup into the lap of a very stern-featured lady who sat next to him, so that, when at last Uncle Jock had finished, and the two of them had got away together, he was almost in tears.

"Never mind, Luck," said Uncle Jock, when they were sitting together in their cabin. "This kind of travel doesn't suit me any more than it does you. We shall be into Barbadoes some time to-morrow, and then, if we have any luck, we shall get into that small steamer I told you about, and have it practically to ourselves all the way to Pará. Then our adventures will really begin, though I expect you will find something to interest you on the voyage from Barbadoes to Pará. You will not be true to your name, if you don't."

"I'm almost sure the steward said that *this* steamer went to Pará," said Luck.

"Yes, it does," said Uncle Jock, "and we should get there much quicker if we stayed in her. But you'll find, when you've been with me a little longer, that if there's one thing I hate it's hurrying."

As Uncle Jock had expected, they reached Barbadoes the following day; but their stay there was so short that all that Luck can now recollect about the island is that it was there that he first saw palm-trees and niggers. I think the latter had most of his attention. What had happened was that Uncle Jock had sent off a wireless message the day before, and got an answer to it saying that the small steamer bound for Pará was due to start before the liner came in, but that she would be held back an hour or two to give Uncle Jock a chance of getting on board. So when they got into port Uncle Jock and Luck really *did* have to hurry.

Fortunately all their luggage was in the cabin with them, and in less than half-an-hour from the time that the liner's engines stopped, they found themselves on the deck of a very grubby little tramp steamer of the name of *Venus*, who carried a cargo of cotton, sugar and rum, which she proposed to get rid of somehow and somewhere, though where and how didn't much matter. Anyhow she was going to get to Pará, sooner or later, and as her speed was about seven knots, or less than half that of the liner they had just left, there was every prospect of it being later.

III.—LUCK FINDS HIS SEA-LEGS

THE skipper of the *Venus* was an oldish man called Adams, who knew Uncle Jock quite well; and the ship was so small that in a short time

Luck had made the acquaintance of everybody else on board. There were, as well as the mate and the engineer, eight hands all told, the most interesting to Luck being the nigger cook. But they were all so cheery and friendly that Luck was passed from the saloon to the engine-room, and from the engine-room to the forecabin, and in a very short time had learnt to lend a hand where he would be useful; and, what is even more important on ship-board, to keep out of the way where he wasn't wanted. He very soon learnt something about the compass and of how the ship was steered by it; and something of the way each twenty-four hours was divided into watches, so that the whole crew should not have to be working at the same time; and of how there were different numbers of strokes on the ship's bell at different times of the day; and which was the port side of the ship, and which was the starboard; and why she always had a red light on the port side and a green light on the starboard side, and a white light at the mast-head, when she was steaming at night; and how signals came down from the bridge to the engine-room; and a good many other things of that kind.

All these discoveries, had he known it, could have been made on the big liner, but there he had not been able to get on easy terms with them. Here they were staring him in the face, and he would have been a dull boy indeed, which he certainly was not, if he had not been curious enough to find out as much as he could, now that he had the chance. He did not, of course,

learn everything in one day, and I find now that I have missed out the first lesson of all he had to learn, and that was how to get his sea-legs.

Though, as I have told you, the great liner had come into some bad weather, it had not been sufficiently bad to interfere with the comfort of the passengers on such a big vessel as she was. Luck had noticed a few of her passengers looking rather thoughtful on the last day, but, as he was feeling perfectly well himself, it had never occurred to him that this was due to the motion of the ship. This small steamer was very much more lively, and lively in quite a different way.

Once she had left the shelter of Barbadoes Island, she found herself in a choppy cross-sea, and every now and then the crest of a wave curled over her bows, and a great shower of spray fell with a swish in-board, and ran away back to sea through the scuppers, wherever it could find a slope to run down. This happened so often that presently there wasn't a dry patch in the fore-part of the ship.

Luck had settled himself right up in the bows to begin with—and thoroughly enjoyed himself. There was something very fascinating in watching the seas part at the steamer's bows and rush along her sides as she cut her way through, and this he had never been able to see properly on the big liner. Then, *at first*, there had been something soothing in the up and down movement by which she rose out of the troughs of the waves she met, and over

their crests and down the other side. Presently, however, this up and down movement began to be mixed up with a side to side one, as if the ship was trying to turn herself into a corkscrew and bore her way through the waves as best she could, instead of riding over them. And somehow this round and round motion seemed to get first inside Luck's head, and then inside the rest of him. And while he was holding his head in his hands, to keep it still as it were, a wave he hadn't noticed came with a smack against the bows, and he was soused from head to foot in a shower bath of white spray. For a moment this freshened him up, but presently he began to feel chilly, and started working his way aft towards the engine-room, holding on to anything he could to keep his balance.

As he passed the companion leading to the forecastle, the black cook put his head up and grinned. He had his mouth so full that his cheeks were all bulged out, and he held a fork with a large lump of pork fat on it. This, in all kindness he offered to share with Luck. I don't think we need say any more, except that Uncle Jock told Luck he had better lie down in the fresh air on deck; and that he would be all right again soon, as they would be through the race. Luck didn't in the least know what the "race" was—and he really felt at that moment that he didn't want to know what anything was.

Uncle Jock was quite right, though the smooth water seemed to be a long time in coming.

Luck lay down and shut his eyes. All he saw when he opened them was the ship's side opposite going up, up, up into the sky, and then sinking down, down, down so far that a green curtain of water showed above it. And this went on . . . and on . . . and on. At last he fell asleep.

* * * * *

He was awakened by a good slap in the face from a fish's tail. He sat up with a start, but took quite half a minute to pull himself together. It was a bright starlight night, and there was still some spray flying about, though the ship was going on a much more even keel. Looking up, the first thing he saw was the white light at the mast-head. Then he saw the face of the man at the wheel, which was lit up by the light of the binnacle; and then, gradually, other dim lights showed themselves from the skylight of the saloon, and from the forecastle. Putting his hand down on the deck beside him, he felt something slimy and wriggly and alive; and he had scarcely realised that it was a fish about the size of a herring, when another just like it seemed to fall out of the sky on to the deck in front of him, and began flapping about as if it wanted to jump over the side again. Luck looked up, wondering what was going to happen next, and caught the eye of the man at the wheel.

"It's all right, sonny," shouted the man. "It's only flying fish. Chuck 'em back again." "Oh, can't I keep one?" said Luck. He had

hold of the one that had hit him in the face.

"Of course you can, if you want to," said the man laughing. "Get a fill of water in one of those canvas buckets, and put him in it."

Luck got hold of a bucket with a long piece of rope hitched on to it, dipped it over the side, and after one or two failures brought it up pretty full.

"He'll be all right till the morning," said the man. "Skipper said I was to tell you to turn in, if you woke up. So you'd better get down below."

"Shan't I be sick again if I go below?" said Luck.

"Sick?" said the man. "You couldn't be sick in this. It's a nice following breeze. That's what's made the fish so skittish. They'll be all round us in the morning."

So Luck found his way down below to the cabin shared by him and Uncle Jock, where there were two hammocks; and had no doubt as to which was his, for Uncle Jock was fast asleep in one of them. He managed to get into the other somehow, and was asleep again in no time.

IV.—THE FLYING FISH

When Luck woke up he found he was alone, but he didn't take long in rolling out of his hammock. Indeed he rolled out considerably quicker than he intended, for there are right

and wrong ways of getting out of a hammock, as well as right and wrong ways of getting in. He was not only feeling remarkably well, but also ravenously hungry. Sea-sickness is a very unpleasant experience while it lasts; but after a week's high living, such as Luck had had on the liner, his trouble of the day before had probably done him more good than harm. Anyhow he felt a different person altogether, and he lost no time in getting up on deck, where he found Uncle Jock in the bows looking over into the water.

"Hullo, Luck," said Uncle Jock. "You've found your sea-legs then? That's right. Isn't this a pretty sight?"

It certainly was.

The whole surface of the sea seemed to be alive with little silver birds, skimming like 'ducks and drakes' stones over the water, sometimes for only a few yards, and sometimes almost out of sight. Wherever the eye rested, one of these little silvery streaks seemed to shoot out suddenly with a splash, and then disappear again. Some, however, remained in sight for quite a long distance. Every time they touched the water they seemed to get a little kick which sent them on again, as if the water itself was playing with them, and saying, "No child of mine!" But they all *did* go under sooner or later. Some came out so close to the side of the ship that Luck could clearly make out that they were fish with very long flat fins sticking out from their sides, so that they looked like little aeroplanes.



"ISN'T THIS A PRETTY SIGHT?"

"Flying fish," said Uncle Jock.

"I caught one last night," said Luck rather proudly. "I've got it in a bucket."

"You caught one?" said Uncle Jock. "How did you do that?"

"Well, I didn't exactly catch it fairly," said Luck. "It must have come over the side of its own accord. It fell flop on my face while I was asleep."

"I've heard of them doing that," said Uncle Jock. "Especially at night, when there's a bit of a swell, and there are some big fish after them. Ah, there *is* one! See?"

Luck looked where Uncle Jock was pointing, and was just in time to see a flash like all the colours of the rainbow on the surface of the water, and a swirl that must have come from a very big fish indeed.

"I say, what a whopper!" said Luck. "And what a beauty!"

"It's a thing called a Coryphene, I expect," said Uncle Jock. "Sailors usually call them dolphins, because some dolphins show wonderful colours too. But they aren't dolphins really. Dolphins aren't fish at all. They are animals who have lived so long in the water that they have gradually come to be shaped like fish. Whales and porpoises are animals too, but these Coryphenes are fish. See, there goes another!"

This second one obliged them by showing much more of himself, though, as he was against the sun, they did not see so much of his colours.

"He must be five or six feet long," said Luck.

"Very likely," said Uncle Jock.

"What's the biggest fish there is?" asked Luck.

"That depends what you mean by 'big'," said the Captain, who had just joined them. "If you mean 'long', then the biggest fish I ever saw was a basking shark. He must have been close on fifty feet. But if you mean long and wide too, then it would be one of the big Rays, because, though he mightn't be more than twenty feet long, he might be twenty feet across as well."

"Whe-e-e-w!" said Luck. "How big's a whale?"

"Whales are the biggest things in the sea, or anywhere else," said Captain Adams. "But they aren't fish, you know."

"Shall we see one?" asked Luck eagerly.

"Quite likely," said the Captain.

"Oh, hurray!" said Luck. "What's the smallest fish?"

"I don't know that," said Captain Adams.

"The smallest fish I ever came across," said Uncle Jock, "was a little Goby in Borneo, which I was told was full-grown. He was just a quarter of an inch long, so that you could have had a shoal of them swimming in a tablespoon. Sharks are pretty big fish still, but they are nothing to what their great-grandfathers were. Teeth of extinct sharks have been dug up which must have come from jaws eight or nine feet across, and the owner of a

jaw like that would probably have been bigger than any of our whales of to-day."

Luck opened his mouth very wide to say "Whe-e-e-w" this time.

"Have you had your breakfast, Luck?" said the Captain.

"No," said Luck.

"Cut down and tell the Steward then; I expect it's waiting for you."

When Luck got down to the saloon, he found that breakfast *was* waiting for him.

"Fresh fish this morning," said the steward.

"What is it?" asked Luck, who had lost no time in getting his first mouthful. "It's jolly good."

"Flying fish," said the steward. "We got several over last night. "I don't care for 'em. They're not tasty enough for me."

"It's not the one that was in the bucket, is it?" asked Luck rather anxiously. "I wanted that one."

"No, it's not that one," said the steward. "There's some sauce if you like it."

But Luck had brought some sauce of his own down to breakfast which was better than anything he could have got out of a bottle, and that was hunger. He finished breakfast quickly, however, and hurried up on deck again in case he should miss anything that was passing.

A glance showed him that they had not yet got through the flying fish shoal, and that the Coryphenes were as busy as ever, while some

other enemies had appeared in the air, so that the flying fish were in a very awkward situation. The newcomers were two large dark-coloured birds, with very big wings and forked tails, which, when Luck first caught sight of them, seemed to be flying high and following the ship. Presently one of them swooped past downwards, and swallowed a flying fish as neatly as a bat takes a beetle. Then it soared up again, to drop astern and repeat the same thing a few minutes later. As it passed, Luck saw that it had a hooked beak like an eagle's, with a scarlet patch under it which showed up against its dirty white chest.

These birds were evidently wonderful flyers—once they had a squabble over a fish in mid-air, the larger one knocking it out of the smaller one's beak and catching it before it reached the water—and Uncle Jock told him that they were called Frigate Birds, and that they lived almost their whole lives on the wing, and out of sight of land, like albatrosses.

"Don't these flying fish ever flap their wings?" asked Luck, after he had been watching them very carefully for some time.

"I don't think they ever do," said Uncle Jock, "though there's no doubt they quiver them. Some people think they don't really fly at all, after they've kicked off. And that they do with their tails. They say that, when they seem to turn, or rise, as they meet a wave, it's because they catch a gust of wind and can't help themselves. And if they are just coming to the end of a glide, they drop their tails and give

the water a flick, and that sends them gliding on again, if the wind helps the flick. If it doesn't, they go under, and get up pace again to take off from the water, just like a seaplane. There are a good many different kinds of fish that 'fly' in this way. I remember a little fresh-water one on the Congo that I used to catch in a butterfly net as he skimmed past my boat. Let's have a look at that one you've got in a bucket."

The flying fish in the bucket had its big flying fins so close to its sides that it looked much like an ordinary herring from above, but when they took it out to look at it they saw how big these fins were, and also that it had a very curious and strong tail, the lower half of whose fork was a good deal longer than the upper.

"That's his propeller," said Uncle Jock; "but I don't think he can use it in the air, though it shoots him out of the water. We'll drop him over the side and see if he tries to flap his fins at all. The fish, however, didn't move his flying fins at all as he was dropped over the side. Perhaps he was rather stiff from being in a bucket all night. Anyhow he fell like a stone and disappeared like a stone.

The mate and the chief engineer came into the saloon for dinner, so that the party, including Uncle Jock and Luck, were five altogether; and a very jolly party they were, as they were at all meals.

Luck was sensible enough to keep his mouth shut, except for eating with, and his ears open.

He will never forget the first dinner he had in the saloon, for it ended with a huge roly-poly pudding; and this brought out the captain's story—in fact a roly-poly pudding always did, so that Luck heard that story more than once. The captain used to tell it as something that had happened to himself, when he was a mate; but whether that was so, I don't know.

The story was about a single passenger who was very faddy about his food; and who was having dinner with the captain and mate of a small coasting steamer. This dinner finished, too, with a roly-poly pudding; and, when it was put on the table, the passenger said to the captain, who was just going to help it:

"I like the middle, please."

"Oh, do you?" said the captain. "Well, me and my mate likes the ends!" And he cut the pudding in two halves, and put one half on his own plate and the other on the mate's.

Luck laughed so much when he heard that story that he choked with the first mouthful, and had to go up on deck. By the time he got back he found that his plate was empty, and he was sensible enough to laugh at that too.

V.—EELS AND JELLY-FISH

The second day out was a flat calm; and the water was worth watching, as it was wonderfully clear, and there were all sorts of fishes

and other things quite close to the surface. To oblige Uncle Jock, the captain gave orders that they should go dead slow, so that they could try a little dredging with a net that they had rigged up together the evening before. They caught all kinds of small fishes and other creatures in it, but what interested Uncle Jock most were some baby eels, which, he said, were much further south than anyone else had ever found them. He told them the wonderful story of the eel; how it is hatched as a tiny transparent leaf-shaped creature in some of the deepest parts of the Atlantic; and how it takes three years to cross the ocean, growing all the time more and more like an eel, as we know one, and at last working its way up the European rivers, including our British ones, as an "elver." It stays six or seven years in fresh water, turning gradually into a full-grown black eel; and then it takes to the sea again, and makes its way back to the same deep parts of the ocean where it was born, and lays its eggs there so that more baby eels may be hatched, and cross the Atlantic twice over just as it did itself.

The most curious thing of all, however, was that the baby American eels were hatched out in the same place as the baby European eels. They had to travel west to get to America, while the European baby eels had to travel east to get to Europe, and had much farther to go. But both kinds came back to the same place again, in about ten years' time, to lay their eggs.

"Was every eel I've caught hatched all that way from England?" asked Luck, who was deeply interested.

"Without a doubt," said Uncle Jock. "Every single eel you ever caught had travelled some three thousand miles to get to England, and would have travelled the same number of miles back in time—if you or something else hadn't interfered."

"My word!" said Luck. "I believe I'd have put them back again if I'd thought that."

"Do you think this lot are bound for America or Europe?" asked the captain.

"I can't tell that at this stage," said Uncle Jock; "and I don't know if anyone can, except by catching them bigger and bigger in size all the way across in one direction or the other. That's how their history was first found out."

After the little dredge had been hauled half-a-dozen times it got so hot that Uncle Jock agreed to knock off; and the captain was just going to give orders to go ahead, when Luck suddenly shouted out "What's that black thing floating over there?"

Everyone on deck turned in the direction he was pointing, and the captain and Uncle Jock put up their glasses.

"Looks to me like a turtle," said the captain.

"Yes, I believe it is," said Uncle Jock. "It's the shape of one, anyhow."

"We'll have a try to get him," said the captain.

Then he passed an order, and the ship's head was turned towards the dark object, while four of the hands stood by to lower one of the boats.

"May I go in the boat?" whispered Luck to Uncle Jock.

"Rather," said Uncle Jock. "We'll both go."

"How are they going to try to catch him?" asked Luck.

"I don't know," said Uncle Jock. "I expect they'll try to harpoon him and then tow him."

In a few minutes' time, Luck found himself seated in the stern of the boat, which Uncle Jock was steering, while four hands were pulling very quietly away from the ship's side, and the captain was giving orders from the bows, where he sat with a spare oar beside him, and a sort of trident called a "grain" across his knees.

The shaft of this last had a swivel ring at the foot, to which was attached the free end of a large coil of line.

The men rowed very quietly, indeed only dipped their oars sufficiently to get steerage way; and so it seemed ages before they got any closer, but they *did* get closer yard by yard, and the object got larger and larger, looking like a huge purple umbrella floating on the water.

"Way enough!" whispered the captain.

"I don't know what it is," whispered Uncle Jock to Luck. "but it certainly isn't a turtle."

"Oh, what a pity," whispered Luck.

At that moment the captain in the bows burst into a roar of laughter.

"It's a jelly-fish!" he shouted. "And the biggest one I ever set eyes on. Six feet across, I should think."

There was no longer any need to keep quiet—indeed, everyone burst out laughing together.

"Well, *that* won't dive," said the captain. "Give her a push, lads. I should like to measure him."

A few strokes of the oars brought the boat alongside the jelly fish, and the captain measured its width roughly by holding his "grain" across it.

"It's nearer seven feet than six," he said. "Here, take that, you brute, for not being a turtle, and giving us all this trouble." And he gave it a smack with the flat of the trident, which made the water shoot up all round it.

The blow didn't seem to make the slightest impression on the jelly fish, but everyone in the boat got splashed, and one of the men got a drop in his eye, which was so painful that he let go of his oar. Uncle Jock guessed what was the matter in a moment, and gave him first aid out of a little case he always carried about him.

"Most jelly fish sting," he said, "but I never knew of anyone getting stung like that before—but then I've never known the captain of a vessel hit a jelly fish over the head before."

Everyone laughed at that, and by the time they had got alongside the ship again, the man had quite recovered.

"I should think the sting of a thing that size would almost kill one, if one got the full dose of it," said the captain.

"Yes, I should think it would," said Uncle Jock.

VI.—THE WHALE

Luck turned in early that night, which was just as well. When he had been asleep for about two hours, he woke up with a start to find Uncle Jock shaking him gently, and telling him to get up. "There's something interesting in sight," he said; "and I don't want you to miss it."

Luck was wide awake, and out of his hammock in a moment. When he reached the deck, he found that it was bright moonlight; and that the ship's engines had been slowed down, so that she was only just keeping steerage way. There was no need to tell him which way to look, for all the men of the watch were looking over the port side, and the captain was doing the same.

"He's still there," he said, as Uncle Jock and Luck joined him.

Looking over the moonlit water, Luck saw a huge black shadow which seemed to be floating on the surface, and at the same time stealing slowly forward at about the same pace as the ship.

"Whatever is it?" he asked.

"It's a whale," said the captain. "And he thinks we're another whale. He's been drawing closer and closer the last half-hour. I think he's a hump-back. Yes, that's what he is. See his white flipper?"

The great monster had lolled over on one side, and was swaying a huge flipper up in the air, as though he was fanning himself.

This flipper was about twenty feet long, and white on the under side, so that, when the moon caught its wet surface, it shone like silver. Presently he righted himself, and then, all of a sudden, lurched half of his body out of the water, and came down again with a tremendous splash.

Luck was a little scared.

"Will he hurt us?" he asked the captain.

"Oh, no," said the captain. "He's just playing and showing off. If you do that in the water, and weigh about a hundred tons, you're bound to make a bit of a splash, you know!"

"Suppose he fell on the ship?" said Luck.

"He might hurt the ship, but he'd hurt himself more," said the captain. "Ah! I thought he'd do that next. That's called 'sounding'."

The whale had seemed to stop and steady himself for a moment, and then had arched all the middle part of his body, showing a great black fin, which moved in a curve forwards and downwards, as if he was turning very solemnly head over heels. Gradually his tail-end rose until it stood straight up in the air; and then

he sank down quite smoothly out of sight, the tip of his tail being the last thing to be seen.

"He'll be up again presently," said the captain. "And, I dare say, closer."

The captain was quite right. After about five minutes, during which everyone kept a good look out, there was a curious, whistling sound, and a great cloud of vapour appeared about two hundred yards off on the starboard side of the ship, narrow at first, where it left the surface of the water, but spreading out quickly, and looking in the moonshine like a silver tree. This was followed by a loud snort as the whale's nose came up slant-ways; and presently he seemed to be floating on the surface as he had been before. Then he turned, and they could see he was coming straight towards the ship.

"He won't hurt us," said the captain. "He only wants to see if we really *are* another whale." And he gave orders to stop the engines.

"I say, this *is* exciting," said Luck.

The whale changed course as he approached, so that his head and the ship's were facing the same way; and then seemed to let himself drift very gently, until he actually was rubbing his great body against the side of the ship itself.

"Hullo, old man," said the captain, leaning over the rail. "Don't rub all my paint off!"

But the whale seemed to think that though this was evidently not another whale, it was quite a good thing to scratch one's back against; and, as he was making the whole ship quiver, and could easily have staved a plate in if he

got at all ruffled, the captain gave orders to go slowly ahead again.

At the first turn of the screw, the whale's little pig-eyes seemed to start out of his head, but they were clear of him before he had realised what was happening, and this was just as well, for he sounded again, right in the wake of the screw, and this time so quickly that the stern of the ship seemed for a moment to be drawn down after him.

"I've known a hump-back scrape like that before," said the captain, "but that was with a sailing ship when she was becalmed. He hung about her for days. I expect they get all kinds of things clinging on to them, and rub against each other to get them off."

VII.—THE RUBBER SAMPLE

Though not a day passed on this voyage without some more or less interesting adventure, I feel I must skim over the rest of it quickly, as otherwise I should have neither time nor space to tell you what I want to tell you most, that is about Luck's adventures up the Amazon. There is one thing, however, I must not miss out, for it had a great deal to do with some of those adventures. The steamer, as I told you, had a small cargo of cotton, sugar and rum, which she got rid of in various small sea-ports, loading up with other merchandise, and so giving Luck time and opportunity to get ashore and see what, to him, was quite a new world,

You will not find many of these small ports on the map, but they had this in common that they were all situated on the mouths of small rivers, which dented the north coast of South America between the estuaries of two very big rivers, the Orinoco and the Amazon.

The last one they touched at before crossing the mouth of the Amazon, was called, oddly enough, San Luc; and after they had left here the talk at tea one afternoon turned on what Uncle Jock was going to do when he got to Pará.

He told the captain that his present plans were to push along as quickly as he could to the Upper Amazons, then to get on one of the big tributaries, and work his way, somehow or other, over the most unexplored country he could find, into Venezuela, coming out eventually somewhere on the Caribbean Sea.

Uncle Jock spoke of this in much the same way as one would talk of a motor-trip from London to Edinburgh.

"Are you after anything in particular?" the captain asked. "Minerals? or anything of that kind?"

"No," said Uncle Jock. "I'm more after butterflies and plants than anything else. But of course if I *did* find anything of value I should make a note of it."

"And you may get on to the head-streams of the Orinoco, I suppose?" said the captain.

"Quite likely," said Uncle Jock.

"That reminds me of something," said the captain. "San Luc, the place we've just cleared,

reminded me of it, too, because it was there I got it. You know all about plants, I suppose?"

"Well, that would be rather a tall order," said Uncle Jock, laughing. "But I think I may fairly claim to know as much about tropical plants as most people."

The captain got up from his seat, went into his cabin and returned with a wallet, the contents of which he tipped out on the table.

"Do you know what this is?" he asked, opening a dirty yellow envelope and taking out a dried leaf, which he handed to Uncle Jock. "Because, if you ever come across a plantation of it, you might let me know."

"It's from one of the rubber trees I think," said Uncle Jock, after he had looked at it closely with a lens. "But which I don't know. It's certainly not one of the ordinary ones."

"You're quite right there," said the captain. "Now what do you make of this?" He was holding out a small transparent square, looking like dirty glass, which came out of the same wallet.

Uncle Jock took it up in his hands, and found he could bend it about any way he liked, though it always sprang back again into the same shape when he let go. Then he held it up to the light and found that he could see through it; and then he put it on a piece of newspaper and found that he could read through it.

"What is it?" he asked. "It's the queerest stuff I ever handled."

"It's rubber," said the captain.



"IT'S FROM ONE OF THE RUBBER TREES," I THINK

"*Rubber?*" said Uncle Jock. "But it's transparent."

"It's rubber all the same," said the Captain. "And that leaf is off the tree it comes from. I've seen a piece clearer than that even, after it's been treated in some way—as clear as glass."

"Where's the tree found?" asked Uncle Jock.

"Ah, now you're asking me something," said the captain. "All I can tell you about it is that you can start to look for it up the Orinoco, and that it's very rare. The man who gave me that leaf, and that sample, told me that he was the only European who knew where the tree grew, and that he didn't recommend anyone else to try to find out. He was a queer old bird, and I first met him in that place San Luc we've just come from."

"He told me he'd had some seeds of the tree once, but that they had all died. Rubber-tree seeds are queer things, as you know. He told me, too, that, barring one particular spot, he'd only found six of those trees growing in as many years; and he was mad keen to get to Georgetown, but he had no money. Well, to cut the story short, I took rather a fancy to the old fellow, and gave him a free passage to Georgetown, and a bit further. In fact, I took him some way up the Orinoco—I had a smaller boat than this one then—and the last I saw of him was when he started with two Indians up a side-stream. That was about ten years ago, and I've never seen or heard of him since."

"Did he make this sample rubber himself, do you suppose?" asked Uncle Jock.

"Yes, I think he did," said the captain. "But he was very close about things. I've got three or four more of the leaves, and a bigger and better sample of the rubber at home. When the leaves were fresh so to speak, they were a curious bluey-green, and shiny like metal. He told me once that it was no use anyone finding the tree, unless they knew what to do with it when they'd got it."

"Well, that's like a good many other things in this world," said Uncle Jock. "Would you let me borrow this leaf? We'll go shares if anything comes of it, half and half."

"That's a fair offer," said the captain. "Yes certainly you can have it; and a bit of the sample, too, if you like. You can cut it with a knife all right." And to prove this he cut the sample in half, though it was rather tough, and gave one half to Uncle Jock.

Then he seemed to be thinking over things a bit, and all of a sudden he banged his fist on the table, as if he had made up his mind. "Look here, Jock Harding," he said. "I always thought I'd play a lone hand in this business, if I got the chance, and make a fortune. But there's risk in it—not a shadow of doubt of that—and now that I'm getting on in years and have the wife and kiddies to think of, I don't know that I ought to take that risk. But I don't think it would be fair to let you take it with worse chances than I should have myself. Before the old boy left me, he gave me this sealed envelope, too."

"And what's to be done if I don't get there," said Uncle Jock.

"Then you must either destroy the envelope unopened, or return it to me," said the captain. "If *you* don't get there, when you've made up your mind to it, there's no one living in the world who will."

"We'll put the whole thing in writing," said Uncle Jock, after thinking for a few minutes in silence, "and get the mate to witness our signatures. And I'll swear on the Testament too."

"It's a deal," said the captain.

"There *is* a fortune in it," said Uncle Jock, when this had all been done. "Elastic glass that you can bend or cut with a knife! Why, the whole world's waiting for it."

VIII.—THE SEA SERPENT

On the day after this talk they had an experience that showed them that the sea part of their journey was coming to an end. For some time the water had seemed to Luck to be getting browner and dirtier-looking; and this was in fact the case, for they were just entering the outflow of the biggest river in the world, and this outflow makes itself felt for a long distance out in the Atlantic. Now and again dark masses were seen floating in the water, which, as they came nearer, looked like great tangles of leaves and brushwood. Branches and boughs and coconuts also came sailing by,

and even whole trees; while the increasing numbers of gulls and other shore-birds showed that the coast-line could not be very far away.

Luck was watching a mass of boughs and brushwood as big as an island see-sawing slowly up and down on the waves, when, all of a sudden, he saw something alive lift itself out of the water behind it; and this shaped itself into a great flat ugly head which swayed slowly from side to side, and seemed to stare straight at him with cold, stony, yellow eyes. For a long distance behind the head the surface of the water was scrawled with a waving line, as though some huge body was moving just awash; and now and again this line became solid, as a bulging hump, with brown and yellow markings, rose slowly clear of the surface, and then slid slowly back again, as if it was tracing out curves like an S.

More than once during the voyage Uncle Jock and the captain had talked about "sea serpents," Uncle Jock maintaining that there were no such things really, while the captain said that not only were there such things, but that he had seen them with his own eyes; and that they weren't lines of seaweed, or porpoises rolling one after the other, or gigantic squids, or anything else but real serpents.

Luck at once decided in his own mind that this monster *was* a sea serpent, and shouted to one of the men to look. The man was evidently of the same opinion, for he yelled at the top of his voice, "Sea serpent! Sea serpent away on the port quarter."

This, as you may imagine, brought both the Captain and Uncle Jock up from below; and they both pointed their glasses at the monster.

"Well, what do you say now?" said the captain triumphantly. "Isn't *that* a sea serpent? You can't deny that that's a sea serpent, can you?"

"I can, though," said Uncle Jock. "I don't deny that it's a serpent. But I do deny that it's a sea serpent, because it's a land serpent. It's an Anaconda that's got carried out to sea, and I don't suppose he'll ever see his happy home again."

"Well, he swims well enough," said the captain; "and as he's all this way out at sea, I think I may fairly call him a 'sea serpent'."

"I think you may," said Uncle Jock, laughing; "and I shouldn't wonder if that kind of brute hadn't given rise to a good many sea serpent stories. I don't see why he shouldn't stay afloat for a year, if the water isn't too cold for him."

"Is he poisonous?" asked Luck.

"Oh no," said Uncle Jock. "None of these big 'constrictors' or 'boas' are poisonous. They all kill their prey by taking a turn or two of their bodies round them, and crushing them to death. They may pin them with their teeth of course to begin with."

"Ugh, the brutes!" said the captain. "I've a good mind to put a shot into him. I hate all snakes."

"Most people do," said Uncle Jock. "But it's just as well all snakes don't return the

compliment by hating us. One couldn't go far in the Amazon forests if they did."

"Are they all as big as that one?" said Luck, looking a little thoughtful.

"Oh no," said Uncle Jock. "The Anaconda is the biggest of the lot. Last time I was out in these parts I was told of one sixty feet long, but I never came across him."

"I shall run pretty quick, if *I* do," said Luck.

"Well, he won't run after you," said Uncle Jock. "You'll find that you've got to look out for the little things in the forest more than the big ones."

They crossed the mouths of the Amazon without further adventure; and next morning they picked up an Indian pilot, and entered the Pará river. This man was the first real South American Indian Luck had seen, the people at the ports they had called at having been mostly negroes or half-breeds. He was a fine-looking, tall man, with a coppery-coloured skin, and features much more like a European's than a negro's. Luck was very amused by the way he took over command of the vessel. He was wearing an old silk hat, of which he seemed very proud, as he gave most of his signals to the man at the wheel, by giving it a stately wave in his direction, after which he put it back on his head at exactly the same angle as before. Under his orders, they steamed up the Pará river the whole of that day and the following night, zig-zagging

between sand-banks and islands; sometimes in quite narrow channels, and sometimes in wide ones; and cast anchor off Pará itself just as the sun was rising.

Everyone was up on deck, as they usually are at the end of a voyage; and though everyone, except Luck, had seen the beautiful city several times before, they all seemed glad to see it again as the morning mists lifted off it; first showing the spires and pinnacles of the highest buildings, and then the gleaming white houses with red roofs, which were closely packed down to the water's edge, but thinned out as they straggled away into the green forest behind the port. It was this last that Luck, the gypsy boy, could hardly tear his eyes away from. The sea had been a new and wonderful experience, but this forest called to him as to one of her own children, and would have called in the same way to any of his forefathers for hundreds and hundreds of years back, just as great tracts of sand or prairie might have called to *their* forefathers. He was still staring spell-bound when the time came to say good-bye to the steamer.

Luck was, of course, very sorry to leave the good friends he had made during the voyage, and he promised the captain faithfully that he would keep a sharp look-out for the wonderful rubber-tree, and let him know at once when he had found it.

"You might send me a postcard," said the captain, with a wink at Uncle Jock. And Luck promised quite solemnly that he would do so;

and didn't realise for some time afterwards that it might be rather a difficult matter to find a pillar-box.

IX.—MR. ANGELO

As soon as they had stepped ashore from the Captain's gig, and had said their last good-byes, with many handshakes and good wishes, Uncle Jock and Luck walked together up the town, followed by a gigantic nigger porter, who did not seem to find any difficulty in carrying the whole of their luggage in a sort of spider's web of cords and straps that he walked about in.

Uncle Jock led the way, and in a few minutes' time they had arrived at a large office, and Uncle Jock had shaken hands with an old Portuguese clerk, who was evidently delighted to see him; and asked if his cases had turned up, and how many.

"Three," said the clerk.

"Splendid," said Uncle Jock. "That's the lot. Now I can breathe freely. And how's my good friend Mr. Angelo? He lives in the same place, I suppose?"

"Yes," said the old clerk. "He left word that when you *did* come I was to ask you to come up to his house straight away. That was about three months ago; but he knows that your cases have arrived, so no doubt he's expecting you any day."

Mr. Angelo's house was about two miles away in the suburbs, but the porter made no

objection to carrying the luggage that distance, and so, though there were drivers of all kinds of vehicles shouting to them from all directions, they decided to walk it. This was much the best way from Luck's point of view, as he could see so much more.

As they left the bricks and mortar, he began to notice how very different this part of the world was from England. There was a sort of steamy heat in the air, rather like that of a greenhouse, and with rather the same "plant smell." But it was not unpleasant.

Mr. Angelo gave them a warm welcome, and almost the first thing he said to Uncle Jock was that he had got him the very thing that he wanted. Indeed before he said anything at all he held both his thumbs high up in the air, so that Uncle Jock knew he had good news. Mr. Angelo was a Portuguese, but he spoke perfect English, and he and Uncle Jock were evidently very old friends.

"Well, what have you got?" asked Uncle Jock, as they all sat down on the verandah, Luck with his eyes riveted on a lizard, which was walking back-downwards on the roof above his head.

"A really good boat," said Mr. Angelo.

"Motor, of course," said Uncle Jock.

"Yes, motor," said Mr. Angelo. "Not much to look at—something between a barge and a house-boat. But very strongly built. Can do her nine or ten knots, and carries a small motor-launch, as well as a couple of canoes. Could take a crew of a dozen, but I've only got you

two so far. Old Ebenezer Happy—you remember him? And the Indian Pedro.”

“What, Pedro?” said Uncle Jock, with his eyes sparkling more than ever. “That tall fellow, the hunter, I mean, I couldn’t have a better man, or a better one than old Ebenezer, for that matter. Well, you *have* done well.”

“I’ve done even better than you think,” said his friend, smiling. “I’ve fixed the whole deal up, including two months wages in advance to Pedro and Ebenezer, for a hundred pounds less than the figure you mentioned. You can start off to-morrow, if you like.”

“I shan’t be in such a hurry as that,” said Uncle Jock. “For one thing I want to see a little more of you, as you know quite well, you old humbug. And for another I want this boy, Luck, to get a bit used to the heat. And for another I want to unpack my things and get everything ‘just so’ before we start. Before I do that, I must, of course, see the boat. Can we see her to-day?”

“Oh yes,” said Mr. Angelo. “She’s up the creek at the back, not a mile off. I thought the best thing we could do would be to unpack your cases up here. Then we can get the things in without the crowd at the quay trying to help us. You know what that’s like, don’t you?”

“Do I not?” said Uncle Jock, laughing. “Now, run into the garden, Luck, and see if you can spot a humming-bird.”

Luck did not need to be told twice. He was off the verandah in an instant, and though he

did not see anything that answered to his idea of a humming-bird, he saw a good deal. To begin with there were hosts of butterflies. Never had he set eyes on such big ones, or on such beauties, though most of the best of them were flying so high that he could only guess at their beauty from the flashes of green and azure and orange that they made as they slanted among the trees. Once, at home, Luck had caught a Purple Emperor as it had settled near a puddle. He had caught it in his cap, of all things in the world, and had not had the slightest idea that he had performed a feat that many an old butterfly collector would never have been tired of talking about. Here even the Purple Emperor would have looked dowdy. Luck had never seen a Swallow Tail; and here were Swallow Tails of all sorts and sizes, floating past him like great flower petals. And there were several other kinds of big butterflies, something like those at home, but never quite like. Luck was keen-eyed enough to see that at once.

There were lizards, too, scuttling about with their tails in the air, and always, always eating. Some of them were quite bright coloured, but others matched the rock-work of the garden so closely that you could only see them when they moved; and then it seemed as if a bit of the stone itself had got tired of staying still in the same place, and was off to find somewhere more interesting. Much the same thing happened when he fixed his eyes on the foliage of the trees. All of a sudden a leaf would seem



"SEE IF YOU CAN SPOT A HUMMING-BIRD"

to float off its stalk—and change trees! It was really, of course, some butterfly, or other insect that did this; and Luck found it great fun to shut his eyes a moment after it had settled, and then open them again and try to find it. High up in one of the trees, which had beautiful scarlet flowers on it, what seemed to be a large moth was darting about, poisoning with wings a-whirr opposite one of the flowers, and then slanting off like a hover fly to another one. As it was against the light Luck could distinguish little more than the blurr of its wings, with a dark shadow, which was its body, hanging between them. He certainly didn't realise that he was having his first sight of a humming-bird, and a brightly coloured one, too.

This was certainly a new and magic world. And if it was like this in a town, what would it be like in the great forests they were going to? Luck hardly dared to think.

X.—THE “MANATEE”

After a delicious fruit meal—Luck had never eaten so much pineapple at a sitting before—Mr. Angelo took them to the creek, where the boat was lying. She looked, as he had said, something between a barge and a house-boat. You must imagine a sort of Noah's Ark, with the house part built at the stern, and only reaching half way to the bows, instead of being in the middle of the hull. There was no mast visible, though, when you got on board, you

found that a mast was carried; and the nearest approach to a funnel was a short iron pipe poking out of the roof at the stern.

No motor launch could be seen, but the two canoes were lying behind her.

"I expect the men are on board," said Mr. Angelo; and, hollowing his hands round his mouth, he shouted at the top of his voice something that sounded like "Too-ee-hoy! Too-ee-hoy!"

"What's her name?" asked Uncle Jock.

"*Manatoui*," said Mr. Angelo. "You'd say '*Manatee*.'"

"A jolly good name, too," said Uncle Jock. "Do you know what a manatee is, Luck? It's something between a cow and a mermaid. You may see one before you're much older."

"They must be asleep," said Mr. Angelo, and he hailed again.

This second hail brought two faces over the ship's side. One was that of an old grey-headed nigger, of which little more could be seen than two rolling white eyes, and an enormous grin of pearl-white teeth; the other was an Indian's, and he was also grinning as far as an Indian *can* grin.

The Indian ran to the stern, pulled up one of the canoes by the painter, and, casting off, brought the canoe as lightly as a feather up against the bank where they were standing. Then he jumped out and shook hands with Uncle Jock.

"Get in carefully, Luck," said Uncle Jock. "These canoes are a bit wobbly till you know

them. Put your foot right in the centre of her, like I do."

The Indian got in last, and they were up alongside the *Manatee*, almost before Luck had realised that they had started.

All this time old Ebenezer Happy, the nigger, had been working himself up into a furious state of excitement.

"Massa Uncle Jock! Massa Uncle Jock!" he kept shouting. "Here ole Ebenezer, sah! Here ole Ebenezer Happy, sah! You good massa, sah! You come back to ole Ebenezer! Golly, Golly, Golly! All right! All right!"

And when Uncle Jock stepped on board, and shook hands with him, the old man was so overcome that tears streamed down his face; especially when Uncle Jock said, "Well, I'll look at your galley, Ebenezer, before I look at anything else."

"You come dis way, sah," said Ebenezer. "Dat berry fine galley. You nebber see galley like dat."

The galley, or cookhouse, was right in the stern of the vessel, and, so far as spick-and-spanness was concerned, it certainly bore out what old Ebenezer said. There was a large Primus stove, as well as an oil-cooker with an oven, both of which had evidently been lately cleaned up. You could have used any of the frying-pans as a looking-glass, or any of the kettles or saucepans for that matter, if you didn't mind what kind of face looked back at you. Such oddments as colanders and strainers and knives and forks and spoons were all clipped

to the wall; and the roof space was cleverly fitted to take anything that couldn't be conveniently hung elsewhere.

One got the impression of a place where everything was ready to hand the moment it was needed.

After Ebenezer's galley had been duly admired, it was Pedro's turn to show them over his engine-room; and you can imagine how eager Luck was to explore this; and also to handle the beautiful little engine belonging to the motor launch, which was carried in-board on the foredeck and could be slung over the side at a moment's notice. Forward of the engine-room was the saloon, and, forward of this again, four cabins with a passage between them leading to the men's quarters.

All along the roof were large skylights protected by grids of stout wire, and shutters hinging up and down allowed one either to close the sides of the deckhouse in altogether, or have one or both sides open to the air. All the openings could then be closed by light frames of mosquito netting.

Uncle Jock was more than pleased. "It's exactly the thing I want," he said to Mr. Angelo, "and I can't thank you enough. What's her history?"

"She belonged to a queer old gentleman who collected shells," said Mr. Angelo; "and he died about six months ago. He had her especially built for pottering about in the estuaries, where, as you know, you can get some pretty rough seas. And he used to do

a good deal of dredging from her. His dredges are somewhere on board; under the foredeck, I expect."

"They may come in useful," said Uncle Jock. "Luck, you shall have one of the cabins on the port side, and I'll have the other. We'll keep the starboard ones for my work and my collections. I don't think I shall take many more hands for a start," he went on, addressing Mr. Angelo. "The engines are the only things I'm a little anxious about. I don't know much about that sort of thing myself."

"Oh, Pedro is absolutely first rate at it," said his friend; "and I should think Luck would pick it up pretty quickly. Would you like to be second engineer, Luck?"

"Rather," said Luck.

"I expect he would," said Uncle Jock. "But we may want something more than running repairs, sooner or later."

"Better take a good many spares with you," said Mr. Angelo.

"Yes, we'll do that of course," said Uncle Jock. "Now I really must see about getting my cases unpacked."

"They're waiting for you, I expect, at the house," said Mr. Angelo. "I sent down for them before we started."

XI.—GETTING READY

The rest of the afternoon was spent in unpacking the cases, and I don't know which

of the treasures they contained excited Luck most.

Perhaps it was the two automatic pistols, which, with a heavy magazine rifle, and a light collector's gun, formed the armoury.

"I hope we shan't be called upon to use these a much," said Uncle Jock; "but one has to have means of protecting oneself, and feeding oneself, too. I've long given up shooting things if I can possibly find out what I want to know about them in any other way."

Then there were all sorts of butterfly nets, and fishing nets, and rods and lines; and heaps of store-boxes and setting-boards; and presses and tin cases for plants; and all the other gear of that kind which a naturalist who is interested chiefly in insects and flowers has to have with him. There was a medicine chest and a stock of writing materials. There was a beautiful camera, and a good supply of plates and chemicals and dishes. There was a wireless set with a loud speaker. "The very last word I understand," said Uncle Jock to Mr. Angelo, who was admiring it. There was a chronometer, a sextant and an aneroid; and various other instruments which Luck had never seen before. There was a large microscope. And last, but not least, there was a store of clothes and tinned provisions, as well as a good many pounds of tobacco, for Uncle Jock seldom had a pipe out of his mouth. Altogether there were enough things to fill a fair-sized shop, and everything had been beautifully packed, and had come all the way from

England without a breakage, and almost without a scratch.

"That's the beauty of having your own boat, and being able to travel by water," said Uncle Jock. "You can take things with you that you may want. On some of my expeditions I should have had to have fifty or sixty porters to carry this lot; and then half of it would have got broken in a week. I don't think I've forgotten much."

"I don't think you have," said Mr. Angelo. "What do you think you are going to pick up on the wireless?"

"It'll be interesting to find that out," said Uncle Jock. "Big Ben, perhaps. If I can do that I shan't want the chronometer."

After unpacking they had to consider the question of engaging more hands, and here again good fortune attended them. As soon as he knew what kind of an expedition it was going to be, Pedro suggested of his own accord that he should take his son with him, a lad called José, of about Luck's age, who had already been more than once up the river with his father. And when this bargain had been clinched, old Ebenezer, not to be outdone, recollected that one of his grandsons, Pompey, ("Berry good nigger, sah! Bes' class grown-up nigger!") was getting fatter than he ought to for want of work, and so it was arranged that he should come too, and make himself generally useful.

"I think that will be enough, what do you think, Angelo?" said Uncle Jock.

"I think it will be quite enough to start with," said Mr. Angelo. "Pedro and his boy will easily manage the steering, watch and watch about—you know how these Indians can stick it; and any of you could look after the engine once you've settled down. I don't think you could take fewer hands very well, and I really don't see that you need take more, at any rate for a start."

So it was settled that the *Manatee* should get under weigh with a crew of six, two Europeans, two negroes, and two Indians; and that they should start off in two days' time.

"Why don't you come, too, Angelo?" said Uncle Jock. "There's lots of room."

"I wish I could," said Mr. Angelo. "I'd like to see the upper river again, but I'm afraid my travelling days are over."

José and Pompey presented themselves on the following morning, José coming first by himself. He was a very quiet, silent lad, but evidently had a head on his shoulders, and was a skilled carpenter. He started work at once, fitting up a table and shelves in one of the starboard cabins, while his father was doing the same thing in the other. José spoke only a few words of English, and so it was some time before he and Luck could exchange ideas except by signs; but, as little but English was spoken on the boat, Pedro being able to talk it quite well, and Ebenezer having originally come from the Southern United States (he had been a slave as a boy), he picked up enough to get on with very quickly.

While José's arrival was quite a quiet one, Pompey's was just the reverse. He seemed to have brought all his relations with him to see him off, and old Ebenezer's grin was repeated in quite a dozen black faces on the bank, as he came off in a canoe which had been left there for him. Moreover he was not the only passenger. Accompanying him was a large monkey which he begged to be allowed to bring on the voyage. "Him berry good monkey," he explained. "Him always come wid me." Even if Luck had not added his entreaties to Pompey's, I think Uncle Jock would have agreed. It was one of the kind called spider monkeys, because of their long skinny limbs, which may be reckoned as five in number rather than four, since they use the ends of their tails for grasping branches with just as nimbly as they use their hands and feet.

Spider monkeys make very affectionate and amusing pets, being much less nervous than other kinds, and much less uncertain in temper. Their chief fault is that, like magpies, they are very fond of picking up small unconsidered trifles, and hiding them. This little failing we shall hear more of later, but, on the present occasion, Rastus, as the monkey was called, had evidently been instructed to be on his best behaviour, for he clung close to his master, with his arms round his neck, and his legs round his waist, and his tail round anywhere it could get, as much as to say, "It must be both of us or neither." So José had to put up an extra shelf in the men's quarters for

him to have his bed on, and, I think, was just as pleased as Luck to know he had been duly "signed on."

The whole of the next two days were spent in giving the finishing touches to fitting out. There were two large storage tanks for petrol under the fore-deck, which had already been filled, but a number of tins were taken on board, too, and several gallons of lubricating oil as well.

At last everything was in its place, and Uncle Jock gave orders that they should be ready to up anchor at six o'clock on the following morning so as to get the help of the tide on the first stage of their journey, and be actually on the Amazon itself sometime on the following day.

XII.—ENTERING THE AMAZON

The reason I said at the close of the last chapter that they hoped to be on the Amazon itself sometime on the following day, is that Pará, though the most important port for the Amazon districts, is separated from the main stream by a very large island called Marajo. Vessels leaving Pará for the Amazons go westward to begin with along the river Pará, and then turn north through one of the channels connecting this river with the main stream.

To his intense disgust Luck found himself seasick barely two hours after they had started. Once they were clear of the islands and banks

immediately in front of Pará harbour, they entered an expanse of water which was more like a sea than a river; and, with a strong wind blowing against the tide, there was quite sufficient swell to make the *Manatee* roll and pitch heavily. Most good sea boats are lively, for, if they were not, they would ship seas instead of riding over them, and then they would not be good sea boats. The only other passenger, however, who was affected, was Rastus. He got more and more miserable and frightened, so much so that he even left his master, and cuddled up to Luck's side as if they were friends in misfortune, as indeed they were.

This unhappy state of affairs lasted until they had crossed the estuary of a large river called the Tocantins, which flowed into the Pará river about fifty miles west of their starting point.

Here with the change of the tide matters improved; indeed, once they were clear of the mouth of the Tocantins, they found themselves in smooth water, and the *Manatee* became quite staid again.

Rastus showed his approval of this by bounding up on to the roof of the deck-house, while Luck pulled himself together to swallow some Worcester sauce, which old Ebenezer gave him, saying that it would put him right in no time. Then he joined Uncle Jock at his mid-day meal, which he was just commencing. That was Luck's last experience of seasickness for many a long day. He ate a good dinner, and began to enjoy life once more. As they turned

north the land on either side of them began to close in, the channel gradually narrowing from about five miles wide to about four hundred yards, and then becoming narrower and narrower, and more and more thickly wooded on its banks, until they seemed to pass into the heart of the forest itself, and could see nothing on either side of them but trees and trees and trees. These grew sheer from the water's edge, forming almost solid walls about seventy feet high, with here and there a tower where some giant raised his head thirty or forty feet higher still. The noise of the motor echoed and re-echoed among their branches, from which trailed such a tangle of creepers and climbing plants that one could only see through it a few yards, even when the passage narrowed to barely fifty yards across. Apart from the commotion of echoes made by the *Manatee* herself, this jungle seemed, to Luck's surprise, to be quite lifeless. There were hardly any birds and hardly any flowers. Wherever there was a slight break in the wall of trees he strained his eyes to see back as far as he could, but presently even these vistas were blotted out, as, after only a few minutes of twilight, the night of the tropics closed on them.

Over their heads there was now a long street of stars, whose brightness was heightened by the gloom of the forest walls. It was as though they were stealing through a long, long railway cutting carved out of solid black rock and only open to the sky. Presently, however,

some dancing lights appeared ahead of them, as though some of the smallest stars had dropped down into the water. But they were not stars; they were fireflies. They appeared at a place where the trees grew slightly away from the water's edge, almost as if they had meant to give them a playground, for the banks, as well as the surface of the water, were spangled with gleams and sparkles that glowed and paled away again, and swayed so softly to and fro that one almost had to hold one's breath for fear of blowing them out. Luck will never forget his first sight of fireflies, nor old Ebenezer's explanation of what they were.

"Dey's piccaninnies' dreams," he said; "dat's what dey be! You watch piccaninny dreamin' wid a lil' smile. Den dat smile float away. Dat's what dey be."

Pedro stayed at the helm all that night, rejecting with scorn Uncle Jock's suggestion to have a head-light up in the bows, for his eyes were like a cat's. As soon as they had passed through the fireflies, Luck turned in; but he was up with the sun the next morning to find that they had left the forest channel, and were heading westward instead of north. There were still a good many palm trees to be seen, but apart from these the country was rather dull and flat, while the water, which was now surging against their bows, was a dirty mud colour.

"Are we in the Amazon now?" he asked Uncle Jock, who had been up some time already.

"Practically," said Uncle Jock; "though you don't see anything like the full breadth of it here. That land on our right is really a long island, and there are other islands and banks behind that again. The banks will be beginning to show up all the way now, as the dry season is coming, and that means that the main stream will be some thirty feet lower.

"Are we going to stop anywhere to-day?" asked Luck.

"Not unless we see anything worth stopping for," said Uncle Jock.

XIII.—THE BUTTERFLIES

They pressed steadily on for two days, first on one side of the river and then on the other, and were passed by a good deal of other shipping, including a big liner bound for Manaos, a thousand miles up-stream. The coasts, though still forested, were rather flat and desolate-looking, but, whenever they drew in towards them—and sometimes Pedro took them through more or less inland lakes and channels to avoid the full force of the current—they found that the cliffs were higher than they looked from a distance, and were broken by landslides, covered by fallen trees and brushwood, which would sooner or later be swallowed down by the river, or carried away into the Atlantic. At these places a sharp look-out had to be kept for snags, which might have caused them a

good deal of damage if they had driven full tilt on to the top of them. Anything that was floating they of course could easily see, and anything large like a tree-trunk was usually crowded with snow-white storks and egrets which flew up screaming and squawking as they approached; and, after circling over them, settled down for another ride when they had passed by. On the third day the appearance both of the surrounding country and of the river itself began to change. A range of curious table-topped mountains appeared to the north of them, and the river was split up by low wooded islands. It was still four to five miles broad, but along its shores the rugged land-slips had given way to stretches of sand, while the upper ends of the islands which were, in fact, sand-banks which in course of time had got covered with vegetation, were also as fresh and clean-looking as sea-beaches at low tide. One of these beaches especially attracted their notice because of its colour. As far as eye could see it seemed to be a brilliant yellow; and they altered course to have a closer look at it. All of a sudden the whole beach seemed to rise into the sky like a golden cloud, and as they passed under this they found that the yellow was that of thousands and thousands of butterflies, scores of which settled on the *Manatee* herself.

Everyone was delighted with the beautiful sight, while Rastus went beside himself with excitement. He leapt about the ship in all directions, catching them and stuffing them

into his mouth! Not that he was hungry in the least—he could hardly have been hungry, for a meal never passed on board without his being in attendance and helping himself either with a quick grab, with his hand, or, if that was too obvious, by a very stealthy one with his tail, to anything that took his fancy. No, I am afraid it was pure greediness on Rastus' part, and he had his reward. Presently he began to spit out almost as much as he had eaten, making very wry faces and chattering; and then he got up on the top of the deck-house, and sat down looking very thoughtful indeed.

"He berry sick monkey," said Pompey.

"Are the butterflies poisonous?" asked Luck of Uncle Jock.

"No, I don't think so," said Uncle Jock. "But this is very curious. Monkeys are usually very careful indeed about what they eat, and I saw him sniff the first one before he put it in his mouth. I think castor oil is plainly indicated. Catch a few of them, Luck, while I'm getting it. We'll have a good look at them."

Rastus was duly dosed with castor oil, much to his disgust, and Luck got a net out of the cabin, and caught half-a-dozen beauties in a very short time, which he brought in separate pill-boxes to Uncle Jock. Uncle Jock then got out his lens and began to examine them one by one. Five were exactly alike, but the sixth, as he saw at once with his practised eye, was a little different from the others.

"Ah-h-h!" said he, "that's fine. I thought it might be something of that kind." And he explained to them the secret.

"These five," he said, "are all of the same kind which is not uncommon; but the sixth one, which I have never seen before, belongs to a different family of butterflies altogether, and it was probably one of these that poor old Rastus was unlucky enough to sniff first. It is a new case, at least it is new to me, and it was certainly new to Rastus, of what is known as 'mimicry'; and this particular kind of mimicry was first brought to light by the studies of a great traveller-naturalist, called Bates, which were actually made in this part of the world some seventy years ago. What happens is this. Generally speaking, insects, and other things for that matter, which are poisonous, or at any rate very nasty to eat, are very brightly coloured; and in the case of insects the bright colours are generally yellows and reds often on a black ground. Birds and lizards and monkeys would usually avoid eating insects showing these bright colours, because they would have learnt by experience that they are nasty. So these colours are useful to their owners, because they as good as say to the hungry bird or lizard or monkey, 'It's no good your eating me, because I am not fit to eat, as you can see quite well.' Very well. Somehow in the course of long ages, insects, which are *good to eat*, have managed to 'mimic', not only in colour, but also in shape, insects which are *bad* to eat. And we evidently have a case of

that kind here. The first butterfly Rastus happened to catch was good to eat in spite of its bright yellow colour. He decided that point by smelling it. Then he began to gobble at random, and that's how he got into trouble, for he has evidently had a mouthful of the nasty kind as well as of the nice kind, not being able to tell one from the other. I can't blame him for that, but I don't suppose he'll do it again. Now Luck, look here a moment. How many legs has this butterfly got?" and he held up the one he had been examining.

"Six," said Luck.

"That's right. Now how many has this one got?"

Luck looked at it closely. "Four," he said. "No, six; but two are just stumps."

"Right again," said Uncle Jock. "That shows they belong to quite different families. Now I want about a dozen of each kind. Tell José and Pompey what is wanted and give them each a net and see what you can do."

The boat was stopped for the butterfly hunt, which was successful though it took some time. There were at least five of the nasty kind to one of the nice kind, so that poor old Rastus must have been very unfortunate indeed with his first sniff.

On the evening of that day they reached a place called Santarem at the mouth of one of the great tributary rivers from the south, called the Tapajos, and here they dropped anchor to take in fresh vegetables and meat. They stayed the night at Santarem, and weighed anchor the first thing in the morning bound

for a small town called Obydos, where Uncle Jock wanted to do some collecting.

XIV.—THE CAIMAN LAKE

Above Santarem the river narrowed considerably until they reached stretches of it which were barely a mile across, and so had to stem a very strong current. Pedro, however, seemed to know the best course to an inch, and brought them along so well that they reached Obydos in the course of the afternoon. As soon as they had moored, they got the launch over the side, and her engine into her, and gave her a short trial run. She went beautifully, and they all turned in early to have a good night's rest in view of a launch expedition on the following day. Luck will always remember Obydos for two things—one was the mosquitoes, and the other was his first experience of the howling monkeys. These last, though evidently a long way off, had no difficulty in making themselves heard, and their howling at sun-down was like nothing he had ever heard before—it was as though a lot of babies were "roaring" with grown-ups' voices. Fortunately they quieted down in time, but the mosquitoes carried on *their* concert all night. While they had been on the move mosquitoes had been bad enough—indeed they had always had to put up the mosquito shutters—but here, as at Santarem the night before, they swarmed, and though only one or two were

cunning enough to get inside the netting-frames, these few were quite enough to give everyone a restless night. Later on Luck was to find there was a tiny fly called a pium, which was even worse than a mosquito, because it gave no warning of its presence until it had finished its work. While they were sitting outside on the fore-deck old Ebenezer had shown Luck *one* way of catching a mosquito. This was to get it to settle on the back of your out-spread hand, and then suddenly to close your fist, when the mosquito, who had his proboscis dug into your flesh, would be caught by the nose so that he could not get away. Mosquitoes, however, found Luck much more attractive than they found old Ebenczer, and he had no time to spend killing one on his hand while he had one on his nose and one on each ear too. By the time he had been a few more weeks in the tropics he had sampled a good many other insect-bites. There was a big gadfly for example whose lancets gashed the skin like a knife, causing blood to flow quite freely, and there were ticks and ants and other creeping things innumerable, all of whom bit with a will.

The party in the launch the next morning consisted of Uncle Jock, Luck, José, who was in charge of the engine, and old Ebenezer who proposed to do some fishing while the rest explored ashore. They went about six miles westward along the northern bank of the river, and then turned northwards into a small stream which led straight into the forest. This was

Luck's first really close-at-hand acquaintance with the forest, and you can imagine how excited he was, especially when he was told by old Ebenezer that this place was very celebrated for its monkeys, and that Rastus himself had come from the district.

"How do you get them?" asked Luck eagerly.

"Oh! you shoot him wid de blow-gun. Dat bring him down berry sick. Den you rub in lil' bit salt. Dat make him well again."

"What does he mean by the blow-gun?" asked Luck of Uncle Jock.

"He means the blow-pipe," said Uncle Jock. "It's a long narrow tube which you blow darts through, and which is used by the Indians. The darts are poisoned, and I have heard that salt is an antidote for the poison, and I dare say it is so, if the poison isn't too strong. Pedro is certain to have a blow-pipe with him. I never knew an Indian hunter who didn't have one."

"Oh, can't we borrow it and get a monkey like Rastus for ourselves?" said Luck. "I'm sure I could tame him."

"Well, I don't much fancy the method," said Uncle Jock. "But if we *do* find this is a good monkey place, I'll talk to Pedro about it. Hullo, this is pretty."

The stream they were ascending had taken a bend westward and had then suddenly widened out into a small lake about three hundred yards across. On either side were sloping beaches of sand, while at the head of it the ground evidently rose abruptly, for they could see that a large

waterfall, which fed the lake, was toppling over there from a considerable height. Probably the beaches were to be accounted for by the lake being below its ordinary level owing to the commencement of the dry season, for they were fringed on the shore-side by a tangle of reeds and rushes, which looked as if they formed the real boundaries of the water.

"Berry good place for fishing, sah," said Old Ebenezer.

"Yes, I expect it is," said Uncle Jock, "and as it is a good place for walking, too, and for seeing anything there is to see, for it's just the place that wild creatures would come to, I think we'll get out and stroll round it, while you catch what you can. You can manage with the oars I suppose."

"Oh yes, me manage him wid de oars, sah," said Old Ebenezer, proceeding to fit in the rowlocks, as the launch was very slowly headed towards the shore, until they felt her bows just grounding.

José jumped out on the starboard side, and waded up to the bank, and Luck proceeded to follow him from the port side, but instead of going towards the shore seemed to slide backwards suddenly, as if his feet had slipped from under him. He tumbled into the boat again, looking rather scared.

"I say," he said, "I stepped on something alive. I felt it moving under me."

Uncle Jock peered over the side into the water. "You're quite right, Luck," he said. "There he goes!" and he pointed to what

seemed to Luck to be a large cloud of mud moving away from the side of the launch.

"Whatever is it?" said Luck.

"Alligator," said Uncle Jock, "and a fair-sized one, too. I expect you trod on his tail-end, which is perhaps just as well."

"My word," said Luck, "are there any more, do you think?"

"Yes, there are quite a fair number of them," said Uncle Jock, who had been swinging his glasses round the edges of the lake. "Sec, there's your friend's nose poking up over that bit of weed on your right. And there are two or three beyond him, towards the waterfall."

Once Luck had made out what he had to look for, which was the hump of the reptile's eyeball, standing up from the rest of its head, he easily picked up the others, though he certainly would not otherwise have guessed that these black, slimy-looking masses, lying motionless on the water were anything but logs of wood.

"*You* don't mind them, I suppose?" said Uncle Jock, turning to Ebenezer.

"Huh!" said Ebenezer scornfully. "Me gib ole massa caiman good smack on de head if he come near me."

"Is a caiman the same as an alligator?" asked Luck.

"Very nearly, but not quite," said Uncle Jock. "These things really are *caimans*. I was wrong when I told you they were alligators. As a matter of fact I'm very glad to see them, for it means that there must be lots of fish



HE TUMBLED INTO THE BOAT AGAIN, LOOKING RATHER SCARED

about, and wild fowl, as well as other things coming down to the water. They wouldn't be here otherwise. Now then have another go, but, before you do, prod the water about with one of the oars. It's not a bad habit to get into in these parts." Luck did so, and then waded ashore pretty quickly, for which I do not think we can blame him.

XV.—BIRDS, BUTTERFLIES AND MONKEYS

As soon as old Ebenezer had backed the launch off successfully with the oars, they joined José, who was waiting for them on the bank, and proceeded to walk along the sand, looking up at the trees which formed an almost solid wall all round the lake. For the first hundred yards or so they saw nothing to detain them, and so Uncle Jock decided that they had better wait until old Ebenezer, who was paddling about looking for a good place to put his lines over, had settled down. They accordingly all lay down on a little spit covered with scrub, from which they had a very fair view all round them without being too visible themselves. Presently they saw old Ebenezer drop his anchor, and a few minutes after that he was as quiet as they were. Then things began to happen, just as Luck had seen them happen on a smaller scale in Mr. Angelo's garden at Pará.

The first creatures to bestir themselves were the birds. Uncle Jock lent Luck his glasses,

and told him to sweep the circuit of the trees with them, and see what he could see. He had not gone very far before he began to pick up rows of gorgeously coloured birds sitting together as if they were half asleep, though now and again one floated off its perch to catch an insect, and floated back again, making one movement of the whole action as it were. Then some largish birds, some of them with long streaming tails, began to cross the water to and fro, always seeming to fly in pairs. These Uncle Jock told him, were parrots, and he was surprised to see how dingy they looked flying, though he caught a glimpse of their brilliant plumage now and then, as they swerved low down and showed up against the dark green of the forest. At last, to his great delight, as he was scanning the highest branches on the opposite side of the lake, he saw a monkey. Indeed, he saw four together, and plainly enough to be certain that they were exactly the same kind as Rastus. Full of excitement he handed the glass to Uncle Jock for him to have a look, too.

"Yes," said Uncle Jock, the moment he had fixed them. "They're the same kind—Coaitas."

"Oh, do let's try and catch one," said Luck; "so as to have one of our own. Old Rastus would love to have a chum, I'm sure."

"Yes, I expect he would," said Uncle Jock; "but I don't like this blow-pipe business. I tell you what I think we'll try. I meant to do it anyhow, quite apart from catching monkeys."

We'll bring the wireless gear over to-morrow evening and try the effect of the loud speaker. We might bring Rastus, too, and see what he thinks of his long lost relations, and what they think of him."

"Oh, I say, what sport it would be," said Luck. "But what shall we get on the wireless?"

"Goodness only knows," said Uncle Jock. "It may be a foxtrot, or it may be the children's hour. We shall have to chance what we get, as long as we get something, but I should prefer it to be in English. Ah, those are fine things, look."

He was pointing to some enormous butterflies, quite seven inches across the wings, which were planing rather than flying high up on their right. There were two kinds, one that flashed a brilliant azure blue, and another that seemed almost transparent like a piece of silver gauze.

"They're morphos," said Uncle Jock; "and the lighter ones are rather rare. I must try and get some to-morrow, but I expect they'll take a bit of catching. Sooner or later they'll glide down to the water's edge for a drink, and as they usually like the same place, we must watch where they go."

For a long time the butterflies didn't seem to want to do anything but float about, fifty feet up; but at last one of them came down and settled on a patch of stranded weed on their right, and he was followed by another.

"Mark the place carefully, Luck," said Uncle Jock. "It's our best chance of getting one

to-morrow; and we must remember the time, too. They are pretty regular in their habits."

José now pointed out another party of monkeys up a very tall tree behind them. The glasses were not needed for these, as they were fairly large, and Uncle Jock said that they were some kind of howler monkey. "You can tell that at once," he said, "by the flat shape of their heads and their big under-jaws."

"Was it those we heard last night?" asked Luck.

"Probably," said Uncle Jock.

So long as they remained still, hardly a minute passed without their noticing some strange bird, or insect, or lizard. The birds that interested Luck most were the toucans. They came across a flock of them close by the waterfall, a place which swarmed with insect life as well. These quaint and top-heavy-looking creatures were all feeding on fruits, and Luck was interested to see the way they sat over their meals on some fairly thick branch, and bent their enormous sickle-shaped bills down to pluck what was hanging beneath them, after which they threw their heads up to swallow it. There were kingfishers, too, whose bills ran those of the toucans pretty close in size, though, so far as plumage went, none of them were anything like so resplendent as our British kingfisher; and there were scores of different humming-birds, poising just like moths in front of blossoms with their wings a-whirr, and drinking the nectar with their long bills, just as moths do with their trunks. Uncle Jock

told them that they liked red flowers best; and that the flowers depended on their visits to be fertilised just as they do in England upon the visits of bees and other insects; and that in some parts of the world even such unlikely creatures as bats did the flowers the same good service.

It was from the waterfall that they saw that old Ebenezer had landed at least *one* big fish, for he waved it in the air to attract their notice, and when they turned round after waving back to him, to see where José had got to, they saw him coming towards them with four fat toucans which he had knocked over with a branch, and which he explained by signs were going to be eaten. Uncle Jock tried to show him that he disapproved of this, but the deed was done, and there was no getting the poor toucans back to life.

"Why is it worse to eat a toucan than a fish?" asked Luck, who, even now, could not quite understand Uncle Jock's point of view.

"It isn't worse," said Uncle Jock. "It's just as bad, though. I am afraid what it really comes to in my case is that I hate eating anything that I have seen alive, and don't mind so much eating something which I have not seen alive; which I know is quite illogical, but there it is."

"But you kill things for your collections don't you?" argued Luck.

"Yes, I do," said Uncle Jock; "and I know that, strictly speaking, that can't be defended either. But I *can* say that I never kill any-

thing nowadays without some definite object in view other than making a collection. I got you to catch those mimicking butterflies for me, for instance, because I am working out a theory which I think may explain a number of little troubles in our own lives, which could be avoided if we knew more about their first causes. In this particular case they are troubles connected with our eye-sight, which I needn't go into. You can't do work of that kind without a good deal of material. But I'm glad to say I don't think I shall want much more."

XVI.—LUCK FINDS A STRANGE NEST

The stream immediately below the waterfall was full of large boulders; and there was only one place in the middle too wide to jump and too deep to wade. Rather than disturb Ebenezer they all stripped and swum across it, José going first and catching their clothes, which they did up in bundles and threw to him.

On reaching the far side they sat down to dry in the sun, and watched a number of small tortoises who seemed to enjoy tumbling about in the shallows where the stream began to widen into the lake.

Then they made for the tree where they had seen the spider monkeys, keeping close under the cover of the forest border, so that they could not be sighted, and making the best of this opportunity to have a snake-hunt. Uncle Jock pointed out quite half a dozen

of the long, slender kinds, known as whip-snakes, not one single one of which would Luck have seen, if it had not been shown to him. Even when they were pointed out he had to follow them up to the head, so to speak, and notice their bright eyes, before he could convince himself that he was not looking at some long twining green or brown creeper. But a touch of Uncle Jock's hand showed him that the creeper could flow like a thin stream of oil. None of them were poisonous; indeed Uncle Jock told him that for one poisonous snake there were half a dozen harmless ones, even in the tropics. Until one had learnt to distinguish them, however, it was as well to bear in mind that any snake *might* be poisonous, and to be prudent accordingly. There were a few very dangerous kinds, but he did not know of any that would attack a man unless it was hurt or frightened; not even the rattle-snake would do that. Indeed, the use of the rattle and the hiss both seemed to be to warn all and sundry that they might be bitten if they weren't careful.

During the snake-hunt Luck had the good fortune to make the most interesting discovery of the day. He found a frog's nest. While exploring a hollow tree he caught sight of what looked like a little cup lined with wax in which something alive was wriggling about. Putting his finger in he found that the cup contained water in which tadpoles were swimming; and he at once called Uncle Jock's attention to it. "Yes, they're certainly tadpoles," said Uncle

Jock; "and I've heard of tree-frogs doing this sort of thing, though I've never come across the nest before. You can see what it's lined with—bees' wax. Different kinds of frogs have all kinds of different ways of looking after their eggs—one African kind glues leaves together, and makes a sort of froth inside for the eggs to be laid in, but this, I think, is even more ingenious."

"How do they get the water in?" asked Luck.

"I can't think," said Uncle Jock; "unless they carry it up inside their mouths, and spit it in. Or perhaps they may make several nests, and trust to one or another getting filled with rain-water."

When they got on a level with the monkey tree, they found, to their disappointment, that it was impossible to see up into the top of it from where they were. So they decided to force their way through the undergrowth until they got to the foot of it. This was Luck's first experience of what the interior of the forest was like, and he was amazed to find how difficult it was, to force one's way through. It seemed to be an almost solid mass of thorns and creepers climbing up out of sight. Many of these he found were not growing *up* at all, but growing *down* from the boughs of the trees far away above. This, however, did not make them any less tangled when they got to the ground, and it took the three of them half an hour's hard work, slashing with their hunting knives, to reach the tree they were bound for;

and when they got to it they found that, though they could see into the upper branches from certain positions, there was nothing there. No doubt the monkeys had heard or seen them working. However, they had done one thing, and that was cut a path to the foot of the tree; and Uncle Jock was satisfied with this, as he said the monkeys were pretty certain to come back to their old perch, and that they would now be able to get up underneath them quietly.

Coming out again on to the shore they hailed old Ebenezer, and when they got on board the launch found that he had very good sport, and that there was fish in plenty for several meals on the *Manatee*, which they reached before sunset.

Uncle Jock told Pedro that evening that he would like to get hold of a Coaita monkey alive and uninjured, and although Pedro immediately produced his blow-pipe, and told him that that was far the easiest way to do it, if they could apply the antidote to the wound the dart had made in time, he asked him to devise some other scheme. Pedro accordingly set to work to make some running nooses, like those used for snaring rabbits, and told old Ebenezer to put one of the largest and brightest coloured fish he had caught on one side, explaining that spider monkeys simply loved fish, and often caught them by dangling their tails in the water, and whipping them out when the fish nibbled at the tip.

"Oh, I say," whispered Luck to Uncle Jock, "Is that true?"

"I've never seen it happen," said Uncle Jock, "but I've heard of it a good many times. I've got past the stage of saying that anything *can't* happen in the forest."

XVII.—THE JAGUAR

On the following day Pedro came in place of José, bringing with him his rifle, which was so much a part of him that he was hardly ever to be seen ashore without it. This was slung across his back, while a long light piece of chain attached to his waist had at its other end a little leathern girdle which encircled the willowy figure of Rastus. They started rather later in the day this time, Luck steering, and Uncle Jock nursing the wireless apparatus on his knees. On the previous evening they had rigged this up and given it a very successful trial. It was a seven valve super-heterodyne, and one of the kinds which can be worked without high poles for the aerial. After several experiments, in the course of which they sampled most of the possible jangles and interruptions which *can* annoy the listener, they decided on a short wave from some North American station, perhaps Philadelphia, which was providing a miscellaneous programme such as Uncle Jock thought the animals at the lake might appreciate. There was a little gossip with the children to commence with, several lively band pieces, a violin solo, an edifying lecture on the gold standard, a patter comedian, and the usual sporting, weather

and general news. And it was in English. They had a taste of what was likely to happen on the following day by the effect of the violin solo on some howling monkeys, which they judged must be fairly close to them. At first their howlings checked, as if they had broken off to discuss the situation; then they let themselves go to such good purpose, that the violin was drowned altogether. Rastus gave tongue at the same time in a way that they had never heard him do before—indeed they had never suspected him of any musical talent at all. But here he was throwing back his head and giving vent to what may be best described as an enormous wind sighing among enormous trees. It was not exactly a loud note, but there seemed to be a great deal of it, and its quality was most mournful. In sheer self-defence they had to put the loud speaker out of action.

"I presume it will be the same kind of programme to-morrow," said Uncle Jock, "and my only regret is that we can't broadcast its reception back."

They reached the lake about midday, and noticed at once that the Coaita monkeys were in the same tree-top. So the launch was headed towards them, and Pedro stepped over the side with Rastus, having some difficulty in keeping his hands and tail off a large fish which he carried. He also had his rifle and his nooses to look after, but he got ashore without mishap, and, as soon as he had disappeared up the small ride they had cut out the day before, they backed a little

way off with the oars so as to watch events in the tree-top.

About a quarter of an hour after Pedro had left them, they noticed a considerable liveliness among the monkeys. They were all of them looking down, but they didn't seem at all inclined to descend—indeed rather the reverse.

"They're frightened," said Uncle Jock, who was watching them through his glasses. "I can see them chattering." The words were scarcely out of his mouth when a rifle shot rang out.

For a moment they all looked at each other. Then Uncle Jock gave a sharp order. "Back her in!" he said. "Quick!"

Luck seized one oar and old Ebenezer the other, while Uncle Jock stood up in the stern, and, the moment he saw his chance, stepped overboard with his little collecting gun in his hand, waded as fast as he could ashore, and ran up the ride, closely followed by Luck.

They quickly reached the tree. Pedro was standing with his rifle in his hand, and Rastus chattering behind him. In front of him, on the side of the ride farthest away from the tree, lay a magnificent jaguar, stone-dead.

"A clean kill, Pedro," said Uncle Jock. "But I'm sorry in a way, all the same. What a beauty!"

The great spotted cat was certainly a magnificent specimen. He was quite six feet long from the tip of his nose to the tip of his tail, very stockily built, with rather short legs, but huge paws. His golden-red fur, which was in splendid order, was dappled with black rings, each of

which contained some small black spots. As a trophy he could hardly have been more perfect, for Pedro's shot had gone right into his brain through one of his eyes, killing him instantaneously.

"Well, you didn't expect this, did you, Pedro?" said Uncle Jock.

"No," said Pedro rather grimly. "Never expect, but always ready." And then he told them how it had happened.

Rastus, he said, had seemed very nervous as they came along the ride, and he had almost had to drag him up to the tree. However, he had proceeded to tether him by the chain, putting the big fish out of his reach a little way off the bottom of the tree, and setting his nooses in the branches which seemed likeliest to be a stairway for a monkey coming down from the top. Then he had wormed his way into the undergrowth until he was completely hidden, and lain down to watch events. At first all his attention had been taken up by Rastus, who seemed to be beside himself with fright. He leapt and tugged at his chain, not towards the fish, but towards the tree, as if his one idea was to get up it. Pedro thought at first there must be a big snake about, and from his hiding place he scanned all the trees round very carefully. At last he thought he saw a slight movement on a bough which stretched from a tree almost opposite to the monkey-tree, right across the ride on which Rastus was jumping up and down. He watched very carefully, and all of a sudden he saw the jaguar's eyes looking over the edge of it straight

into his own. The rest of his body was tightly welded to the bough, and except for one paw, and the tip of his tail, quite invisible from where he was lying. He immediately levelled his rifle and fired as the great brute was in the act of springing from the bough, whether at Rastus or himself he couldn't say, but he wasn't taking any chances.

"Well," said Uncle Jock, "we should certainly have lost poor old Rastus if you hadn't fired—he evidently smelt the brute all along—and we might have lost you, Pedro. So it's as well you did kill him. Now what shall we do with him?"

"I skin him very quick?" said Pedro.

"Yes, I think you might as well," said Uncle Jock.

"Wait a bit, though. If we left him where he was, wouldn't the monkeys be sure to come down in time to have a look at him?"

"They come if he's alive," said Pedro. "He catch them that way."

"I've heard that," said Uncle Jock; "just as I've heard of snakes fascinating birds. But I've never actually seen a case of it. However, here's rather a good chance for an experiment. I suppose the monkeys are still there?" All three of them tried various positions from which they might get a view of the upper branches, and at last Pedro found a good one.

"There they are," he said, "all huddled together right up at the top."

Uncle Jock came and stood in the same place. "Yes, there they are," he said. "Now we'll drag the jaguar here so that they can't

miss seeing him, and prop him up a bit to make him look attractive."

This they accordingly did, and saw almost immediately, from the behaviour of Rastus, that the plan might succeed. He was still evidently very frightened, but his fright was overcome by his curiosity, or by something very like fascination, for he continually crept towards the dead jaguar, as far as his chain would allow him, and then started back again. Once he even stretched out a long skinny arm so as just to touch the dead animal's fur.

"We may as well leave him, I think," said Uncle Jock. "There won't be anything in the way of big cats round for a good long time after your rifle shot, Pedro. And I presume you'll have another ready if there is. We'll leave you here again, and you can give us a shout if anything happens."

XVIII.—PEDRO'S CATCH

Uncle Jock and Luck had scarcely finished telling old Ebenezer about the jaguar when a glance at the tree-top showed them that the monkeys had left it; though where they had gone it was impossible to see.

"They'll take their time, I expect," said Uncle Jock.

Five minutes passed, and then ten, and then fifteen; and they were beginning to think that the scheme was going to be a failure, when a welcome whoop was heard from Pedro. Uncle

Jock and Luck did not take long in getting ashore; and, running up the ride, met a smiling procession. At least Pedro's usually grim face was softened into what for him was quite a broad smile, and Rastus was chattering at the end of his chain as though he was rather pleased with himself. There were two others in the party, both of whom Pedro was carrying. One was a coaita like Rastus himself, who was kicking and struggling all the time to get away, but who was held partly under Pedro's left arm, and partly by a noose drawn tight round his elbow, whose free end was between Pedro's teeth; and the other was a tiny marmoset, whose puckered little face peered out from the hollow of Pedro's left hand.

"How on earth did you catch them both?" asked Uncle Jock.

Pedro explained that he had not really caught either. The coaita had been one of a party of four who had come down, evidently to look at the jaguar, and suddenly got startled before they had actually reached the ground. As they turned to scuttle up the tree again, the last had made a wild grab at one of the other's tails, and, unluckily for himself, had shot his arm straight through one of the nooses. The tail, of course, had gone on, and, as he had not let go of it, the noose had tightened in an instant and he was caught. Pedro had dashed out of his hide to secure him, and, when he got back again, had found that Rastus had the marmoset in his hands and was examining it as if he thought it was something good to eat. Where

the marmoset had come from he had not the slightest idea—he had not seen a sign of it before, but, of course, he had lost no time in making Rastus part with it.

“Well, for strange happenings,” said Uncle Jock, “give me the forest. No one, of course, will believe this tale when they hear it. But there it is, and we can’t get over it. A dead jaguar is evidently a good bait for monkeys—but it’s not the sort of bait one can depend on having by one.”

“I better skin jaguar quick now,” said Pedro.

“Yes, I think you had,” said Uncle Jock.

“We’ll take the monkeys.”

So Pedro was relieved of his captures, and Uncle Jock and Luck took the three monkeys back to the launch, leaving Pedro to skin the jaguar.

The noose was so tight round the wild coaita’s elbow that it had to be cut off; and he was so wild, and scared by his strange surroundings, as well he might be, that they had to tie his limbs together and stow him away at the bottom of the launch, as they had nothing in the way of a box big enough to put him in. The marmoset, however, seemed, like many tiny animals, too small to be much frightened, and a temporary cage was made for him out of one of Uncle Jock’s store-boxes lined with moss, where he curled himself up and went to sleep. By the time all this had been settled, Pedro re-appeared on the bank carrying the jaguar’s skin, and most of the afternoon was spent in pegging this out and giving it a dressing, which

had to be done very thoroughly to prevent mould as well as the attacks of flies and ants, which swarmed all over them during the operation. The carcass was sunk in the lake, and the muddy swirls round it showed that the alligators knew what a good thing was, from their point of view.

"Now I want to get a few butterflies, if I can," said Uncle Jock. "Just before sundown is a good time for the morphos to settle. And then we must think about starting the concert."

Luck and he accordingly went round one side of the lake with their longest-handled butterfly nets, while Pedro went round the other examining trails to see what kind of creatures came down to the edges, if any. Luck, to his great delight, succeeded in taking not only two of the silvery morphos which Uncle Jock particularly wanted, but also two smaller long-tailed butterflies, which Uncle Jock said were not only new to him, but also, he thought, new to science altogether; while Uncle Jock himself captured the biggest praying mantis he had ever come across, and also one of the big bird-eating spiders, a horrible furry thing, all fangs and jaws and bristling legs, whose eight pimply eyes seemed to be some hideous scalp disease on the flat of its loathsome head. Luck, whose nerves in such cases were pretty strong, was fairly scared by it; and nothing would have induced him to do what Uncle Jock did, that is coax it into his net with a stick, and then put his hand inside to get it up into a corner and box it. When they got back to

the launch they found that Pedro had also been successful.

"Plenty paca," he said, "one tamandua."

"Tamandua?" said Uncle Jock. "Sure?"

Pedro nodded.

"Good trail?" asked Uncle Jock.

"Last night," said Pedro, who did not waste words.

"By Jove, Luck," said Uncle Jock. "That's a thing that I *do* want to see in the open. I never have yet. It's the great ant eater."

"Whereabouts?" he went on, addressing Pedro.

Pedro pointed to a little sloping bay not a hundred yards from where the launch was anchored.

"We'll have a good view if he comes," said Uncle Jock, quite excitedly for him. "What time?" he asked Pedro.

"About dawn," said Pedro.

"We'll have to stay here all night then," said Uncle Jock. "I wouldn't miss the chance for anything. Now then let's rig up the wireless."

"Here, chain Rastus up farther off," he went on. "He'll have the whole thing to pieces." The warning was only just in time, for the various shiny gadgets were just the sort of thing that appealed to Rastus' monkey-heart, and he already had his tail round one of the valves with a view to removing it for a closer scrutiny. However, he was checked in time, and tethered in the bottom of the launch alongside of his wild cousin.



"DEY GWINE TER BE FRIENDS," SAID OLD EBENEZER

"I think we might undo this one a bit now," said Uncle Jock. "He must be getting a bit stiff, poor beggar. What do you think, Ebenezer?"

"You undo him arms," said Ebenezer. "He be quite all right. He cuddle up to Rastus. I keep eye on him."

So the wild monkey's arms were untied, and a little girdle made for him by which he was tethered to Rastus. It happened just as old Ebenezer had said. The two monkeys cuddled up together with their arms round each other's necks.

"Dey gwine ter be friends," said old Ebenezer. "I tame him berry quick."

"Now we must see what we can get hold of," said Uncle Jock, fitting on a head-piece, and fiddling about with various plugs and handles. Everyone kept quiet.

"I'm getting it," said Uncle Jock, "the same place as last night."

XIX.—THE WIRELESS

Two thousand miles away a world famous violinist was being received like royalty in a broadcasting studio. He was in evening dress, as he had just come from a concert, with the applause of a huge and fashionable audience still ringing in his ears. His violin, which seemed almost to be a part of him, was held lightly by the long tapering fingers of his left hand. Presently he raised it, and it whispered

back to one or two gossamer strokes of his bow. He seemed to think for a moment as to what he was going to play, and then he took up his position. He was ready to begin. He had done this before, and had realised, perhaps, that two million ears were strained to hear him; but I feel sure he did not realise that this time he was going to play to such a mixed audience as he had never played to in his life. He decided that he would play a simple melody and trust to his genius suggesting such higher flights as he might be in the mood for. He chose "*When we come to the end of a perfect day.*"

"Good gracious!" said Uncle Jock half to himself as he caught the first bars. Another scene came into his mind—a scene of ten years ago, which he could never recall without the tears coming into his eyes. A filthy mess of shell-holes and barbed wire and mud. Verey lights shooting up in the sky. Dark shadows labouring feverishly to dig themselves in. Shrapnel bursting overhead. Corpses of friend and foe on every side. Whizz and scream. R-r-r-rip and bang. The earth shooting up in black clouds, blacker even than the sky above them. And—in the midst of it all a wag's voice uplifted cheerfully in song . . . "*When we come to the end of a perfect day.*"

Had Uncle Jock been in the War? you ask. Of course he had. *All* Uncle Jocks had been in the War—and not only in the War, but in the line, which is different.

"Hitch the loud speaker on, Luck," said Uncle Jock in a curiously husky voice.

Twilight in the tropics is so short that there is no time which is common both to the things that are abroad by night and to the things that are abroad by day.

And the same applies to the sounds of the tropical forest. The day sounds and the night sounds do not overlap; and there may be a period of almost complete stillness between them.

This evening was stiller than most, since there was not a breath of wind. The plash of the water-fall went on continuously, and the waters below it were of course in a continuous ripple, but, apart from this, the surface of the lake was like a sheet of glass, mirroring the shadows of the trees in inky blackness on a sheen of pale indigo, which itself was the reflection of a moonlit sky. The melody that was being so exquisitely played two thousand miles away could have had no more perfect setting; and as the magic of it stole over the water and was caught and re-echoed by the trees, the occupants of the launch, European, Indian and Negro alike, sat in absolute silence. Presently the melody itself ended, flowing as it were into a torrent of silvery bell-like notes, which were strung about it like beads on a thread of gold. But this broke the spell, which till now seemed to have silenced the voice of the forest as it had silenced the voice of man. A great alligator upreared his snout from the water and gave vent to a hideous bellow, which was taken up as a challenge by every other large alligator in the lake. Not to be out-done, the howler monkeys

joined the chorus, and the parrots, who must have been roosting by hundreds on the trees round, added their discordant screechings and cat-calls to the general babel. It was pandemonium. Uncle Jock promptly switched off with a remark which, perhaps fortunately, no one could hear; but some time elapsed before the tumult died down, the howlers carrying on bravely for more than the twenty minutes which they usually allowed themselves, whether there were rival voices to contend with or not.

"Try something else," said Luck, as soon as anyone could hear himself speak. "Perhaps they'd like something jollier."

The next turn was a patter comedian who was promptly howled down, and he was followed by the lecturer on economics who met with the same fate, while the gentleman with the fruity voice who told them the general news hardly got beyond his two first syllables. "They don't seem much interested in the outside world," said Uncle Jock; "and I'm not sure that I blame them, though I'm sorry the first thing was spoilt. If it hadn't been for that beast of an alligator, I believe we should have heard the whole of that. I only hope they haven't upset the tamandua—I wouldn't miss seeing him for anything."

"Jaguar kill caiman. Tamandua kill jaguar," said Pedro. "Jaguar kill tamandua same time," he added as a sort of after-thought.

"Sort of Kilkenny cat business," said Uncle Jock. "How does tamandua kill jaguar?"

Pedro held out his hands with the fingers held wide apart, and then crooked his arms at the elbows and brought them slowly together until his fingers met.

"I see," said Uncle Jock. "He's got enormous claws on his fore-limbs, Luck; and he gets these home in some soft part of the jaguar, and doesn't loosen his grip till the jaguar kills him. But then the mischief has been done."

"How big is he?" asked Luck.

"Oh, he's a big brute," said Uncle Jock, "perhaps four feet long, but with a very long thin nose and an enormous bushy tail. He has no teeth, and his only weapons are those great claws on his fore-feet, which he uses for ripping up ant-hills, and which, I expect, are always pretty sharp, as he walks on the backs of his hands, as it were, and so doesn't wear them down. He has a tremendously tough hide, and hard skull, so that I daresay that what Pedro says about his killing the jaguar may be quite right."

"I do hope we shall see one," said Luck.

"I daresay we shall if we keep quiet," said Uncle Jock. "They only walk about at night."

XX.—THE TAMANDUA

Both Pedro and old Ebenezer preferred a good night's rest to the possible sight of a tamandua walking abroad, so they curled themselves up in the bottom of the launch, leaving just room for the two monkeys, while Uncle Jock and Luck

stayed up to watch. After the excitement caused by the wireless the lake seemed strangely silent. The caimans lay absolutely motionless; now and again a rustle in the reed-beds showed that some small animal, probably a paca, was grubbing about stealthily for anything it could pick up; and now and again a short scream or whistle in the forest showed that some bird was for the moment wakeful. About two in the morning the moon went down, and the stillness seemed more profound than ever, indeed it was only broken by the ripple of the waterfall, and old Ebenezer's snoring, the two combining into a steady rhythm. Luck got drowsier and drowsier, and presently he dropped off, too. Just before sunrise Uncle Jock woke him very quietly. He had caught a rustle in the reeds which his quick ear told him belonged to some much heavier creature than a paca, and he signed without a word to Luck towards the little bay where Pedro had noticed the spoor of the tamandua.

Presently a dark mass stole forward out of the tangle, as if a small walking haystack had detached itself, and was uncertain which way to go first. It seemed to be swaying itself from side to side as if it was shifting its weight first to the right feet and then to the left to make certain of its balance. It was so dark that it was not possible to distinguish any more than this see-saw movement, but presently a glow behind the eastern trees showed that the sun was rising, and, as the light grew stronger, they were able to make out that the sway was that of a very long

tapering nose, which swept slowly from side to side rather like an elephant's trunk.

"That's him," whispered Uncle Jock—and the whisper, light as it was, was fatal. The creature had been facing them, but it immediately swung sideways, giving them a momentary glimpse of an enormous bushy tail, bigger and bushier than any tail Luck had ever seen in his life, and of about the same length as its body. At the same time, but only for an instant, they saw that it had two white lines in its coat, starting rather widely apart on its throat and coming close together towards the tail; and that it had a short hog mane, but this was almost immediately covered up as it cocked its great tail right over its back, completely hiding the outlines of its limbs and body. In this bunched up attitude, which made it seem only half the length it had been before, though considerably higher, it lurched with a curious rolling action back into cover.

"Well, we have seen him," said Uncle Jock, "but that's about all we can say. He must have pretty sharp ears."

"Hadn't he got a snout on him?" said Luck. "Does he catch ants with it? It's more like a bird's beak than an animal's nose."

"His nose is just a sheath for his tongue," said Uncle Jock; "and he catches ants with that, just like our green woodpecker at home. You can hardly say he's got a mouth at all. He has no teeth, as I told you, and there is just a little hole at the end of his snout for his tongue to work through."

"I wonder he ever gets enough ants for a meal," said Luck.

"He must work his tongue pretty hard," said Uncle Jock; "for ordinary ants and termites and their grubs are the only things he eats."

It was now broad daylight, and they roused Pedro and old Ebenezer to tell them of their adventure, and then went to sleep themselves. Ebenezer promptly got a line over, and by the time they had woken up had a splendid breakfast of fresh fish and fruit ready for them, after which they pulled up the anchor and made their way back to the *Manatee*, the richer by a jaguar hide and two live monkeys, not to mention the experience. Uncle Jock was so pleased with the lake as a hunting ground for insects that he stayed in the neighbourhood for several days photographing and collecting, after which, rather reluctantly, he decided that they must push on; for he was particularly anxious to get his journey up the river Negro, which was to be the next chapter of their adventures, accomplished before the rains came.

XXI.—ANTONIO DIAZ

By the time that they were feeling the out-flow of the Negro, which is one of the Amazon's big tributaries, even Luck had got a little tired of the Amazon itself. It was always the same yellowish water streaming past their bows, always the same low, forested coasts to north and south of them, broken by tributaries at times, but too far off

to see much on, always the same kinds of islands in mid-stream, and the same kinds of flotsam dancing past them. It was quite a relief at times to get a squall and a downpour, which made the water change its appearance for an hour or two, and made the *Manatee* show that she could still pitch and roll if she had the chance.

All this part of the voyage Uncle Jock was very busy in his workroom, getting his insects set and classified; and he also put in some time making sections of the rubber-tree leaf and the rubber sample, and examining them under the microscope to see if he could find some clue to their secret. The leaves, however, were so old that he could make little of them, except that they were not off any of the ordinary rubber-trees, and he was not good enough chemist to do much with the rubber itself.

Once they were well on the move they were not long, thanks to Pedro's knowledge of the river, in reaching the town of Manaos, which is at the entrance of the Negro River, and here Uncle Jock got a letter from Mr. Angelo, which, as it turned out, was to have a vital influence on their voyage. It was to the effect that Uncle Jock might expect a call from a very old friend of his, a man called Diaz, who had a plantation some considerable way up the Negro, and who had been down to Pará on business. He had had an urgent letter from his wife telling him that his little boy was very ill, and begging him to come back at once, and this he was trying to do. So far as getting to Manaos was concerned there was no great

difficulty, as there was a regular service of steamers between Manaos and Pará; but beyond Manaos nothing could be depended on, as the steamers were few and far between towards the place he wanted to get to, and he would probably have to be content with some small sailing vessel, which might be a month on the voyage. Under these circumstances, and knowing that Uncle Jock proposed to take the *Manatee* up the Negro, Mr. Angelo wrote that he would regard it as a great personal favour if Uncle Jock would give his friend, who was an ex-pilot, and knew the lower Negro well, any help he could. Uncle Jock, of course, did not think twice about it. He would be only too glad to give the man a passage in return for his services, and he did not mind how quickly he passed through the lower Negro, as, quite apart from his quest for the rubber-tree which was going to lead him to 3°3'N. 63°3' W., his main object was to explore the unknown water-shed between the Orinoco and the Negro, with a view to getting on to the former if all went well.

He accordingly awaited the call from Mr. Angelo's friend with some eagerness. They had scarcely been moored for an hour when Antonio Diaz presented himself with a letter of introduction from Mr. Angelo. He was in considerable distress, as he had already been in Manaos three days, and no steamer was starting up-river for a week, so that he was on the point of taking a passage in a sailing vessel when the *Manatee* came in. In a very short time matters had been arranged between him

and Uncle Jock, and it had also been decided to send Pompey back to Pará with the three monkeys and the collection of specimens that Uncle Jock had so far made. Apart from his skill in taming monkeys, Pompey had not been a remarkable success, having passed most of his time in sleep, and broken more of the crockery than his grandfather thought reasonable. Uncle Jock decided that they would start as soon as they had seen him and his charges safely on board the Pará steamer; and as one was due to leave that day, they did so almost immediately. Since Ebenezer had already spent a couple of hours on shore, replenishing stores and getting in fresh provisions and petrol, sunset found them clear of Manaos, and heading north on the inland sea into which the Negro widens before it pours itself into the Amazon.

Uncle Jock found Antonio Diaz a most valuable addition to the crew. He was a Mameluco, that is to say, half-Indian and half-Portuguese, who not only knew the left side of the lower Negro inside out, but also was an extraordinary linguist, speaking as well as the *lingoa geral*, a patois which will carry one almost anywhere among the more civilised Indians, several of the dialects which are peculiar to certain of the still wild tribes. Moreover, he was a man of considerable intelligence, who had not allowed his mind to be entirely engrossed by trading in rubber, which was his livelihood; but had acquired a considerable knowledge of other products in the raw and therefore of the

plants they came from. It was not long before Uncle Jock had got him on to the subject of rubber, and found out from him that there was a tradition of rubber of a peculiar quality, though what it exactly was he did not know, growing far away north in the mountains and connected in some way with the serpent-worship of a tribe of Indians, who had a very bad reputation. He had never been near the place himself, and he could not say how much of the story was true. You can imagine that Uncle Jock pricked up his ears when he heard this.

XXII.—THE MYSTERIOUS INDIAN

The first stages of their voyage up the River Negro passed without incident, apart from short, sudden squalls, which were very violent while they lasted. Luck was, of course, deeply interested in the colour of the water, from which the river takes its name, and which appeared to him blacker even than he had been led to expect. Where they passed a shoal of white sand which was just covered, it took on a curious golden tint, but in the deep places it was inky black, and so, vastly different in appearance from the buff-coloured water of the main Amazon. He was impressed too by the enormous width of the stream—they never saw both sides of it at once—and by the innumerable islands they passed, before turning northward up a large tributary called the Branco, where the water was quite light-coloured. Antonio's

plantation—he was such a good fellow that everyone was calling him by his Christian name in no time, and so we must do the same—was about a hundred miles up the Branco, and on reaching it he found, to his great delight, that his boy, though dangerously ill, was still alive.

Uncle Jock immediately offered his services and his medicine chest, and after a few days' skilled treatment, for Uncle Jock had, in his extraordinarily busy life, found time to become a qualified doctor, though he never practised, was convalescent. The gratitude both of Antonio and of his wife knew no bounds. Uncle Jock was entreated to regard the plantation, which was almost a village, as his own home, and one of the largest palm-thatched houses was placed at his disposal, as well as the services of as many Indians as he wanted, should he care to explore the surrounding forest. Nothing could have suited Uncle Jock better; and the next fortnight was spent in observing and collecting on a new and delightful hunting ground. All this time a sharp look-out was kept for any sign of the mysterious rubber-tree; and many inquiries were made not only of the Indians, who were settled in the neighbourhood, but of those who came down from the interior to trade. Little more was learnt for a long time beyond several different versions of the legend that Antonio had already mentioned, to the effect that there *were* curious rubber-trees in some inaccessible spot far away north in the mountains. One version stated that they were jealously guarded by a tribe of cannibals;

another that they grew in a subterranean forest belonging to the Curupira, or Wood Demon, who would instantly slay anyone who took a single leaf off them; another that they grew in a mountain gorge full of serpents larger than any anaconda, and more poisonous than any jararaca, the latter being the most deadly snake in the forest.

The point which all these stories had in common was that the trees were so situated that any expedition after them would be attended with considerable risk; and this made Uncle Jock all the more anxious to try his luck. For the present he kept his "sealed orders" to himself. At last, however, on returning from one of his expeditions into the forest, he found that an Indian had arrived who really did seem to be able to throw some light on the matter. He was a tall, very handsome man, who had appeared entirely by himself, and in his own canoe, two evenings previously. The arrival of a single individual in this way was not so very unusual, it being the habit of some of the more uncivilised tribes to send a spokesman who had some knowledge of the *lingoa geral* in advance of a bigger party. Such an envoy would find out what trade there was to be done, and then return to his own people, who might be fifty or sixty miles away, and arrange, if necessary, for some of them to present themselves later.

What had struck Antonio, however, about this particular Indian, was that he was of a different type altogether from the ordinary Indian of the north. He was a magnificent

figure of a man, with a fine natural dignity, and though by no means talkative spoke the *lingoa geral* so well that it was easy to converse with him. Incidentally he had rubber to dispose of, or, at any rate, his people had, and this naturally led to Antonio inquiring whether he knew anything of the particular tree which Uncle Jock was in search of. His answer, given quite simply, was that not only did he know of the tree, but could lead Antonio to it, though it was a long journey. It was with this news that Antonio greeted Uncle Jock on his return. Uncle Jock lost no time in arranging for a palaver, in which Antonio acted as interpreter; and the upshot of this was that the Indian, after a very close scrutiny of Uncle Jock and Luck, agreed to act as their guide, after he had seen his own people, and professed himself ready to start in a week's time. He also, so far as Uncle Jock could understand from his mention of various rivers, put the place within a hundred miles or so of $3^{\circ}3'N$. $63^{\circ}3'W$.

"Now," said Uncle Jock, as soon as the palaver was over:

"You're coming too, Antonio, of course."

"You want me?" said Antonio, smiling.

"I insist," said Uncle Jock. So that was that.

"There must be pretty difficult rapids upstream, I suppose?" he went on.

"Rather," said Antonio.

"How far?" said Uncle Jock.

"The first lot are about thirty miles above us," said Antonio.

"Possible for the *Manatee*?" said Uncle Jock.

Antonio pursed his lips and looked doubtful. "She might manage it on a full stream, but it would take her all her time. You see it's the rocks more than the current that are the trouble."

"I don't want to smash her up," said Uncle Jock.

"Well, I don't think it's worth the risk," said Antonio. "The next lot would stop her anyhow; and then they come one after the other, as far as I've been."

"What about the launch?" said Uncle Jock.

"She's too light-built," said Antonio. "So are those canoes of yours. Do you know what an 'oba' is?"

"Yes, I think so," said Uncle Jock. "It's a solid tree-trunk scooped out, isn't it?"

"Yes, that's it," said Antonio. "Now here's an idea. I've got two first rate 'obas.' Can't we fit them up to take the launch engine? fit both, I mean, so that if one came to grief we might use the other. We'll take canoes, too, of course, and say a dozen of my people. Sooner or later, I fancy, we shall have to get out and walk; but if we can get over the rapids, it's as likely as not we shall hit on a long stretch of smooth water. Let's leave the *Manatee* here, and start just with the 'obas' and canoes and the launch engine."

"What about petrol?" said Uncle Jock.

"We'll send as much as we can in advance," said Antonio. "My people will take it up in canoes as far as they can get, and wait for us,

Then we'll take on as much as we can carry, and leave a dump of it in case we ever come back again. We'll use the launch engine as long as the petrol lasts, then we'll have to paddle, and then we'll have to walk. We can go as far as the first rapids, of course, in the *Manatee*, if one of your people can be trusted to bring her back again. She could tow the whole lot of us up there."

"Yes, I think that must be the scheme," said Uncle Jock. "Pedro and José I shall certainly want with me. So Ebenezer shall bring the *Manatee* back here—no doubt you can lend him one of your people to help. And he can stay here and look after her. He'll want to come with us, I'm afraid, but he's a bit too old. Now, let's see. How does it all pan out? There'll be five of us—you, Pedro, José, Luck and myself, and a dozen of your Indians, and this guide fellow. What's his name by the way?"

"He calls himself 'Gallo'," said Antonio.

"That's the 'Cock of the Rock,' isn't it?" asked Uncle Jock.

"That's it. That rare yellow bird, you know. Shouldn't wonder if we came across some. We're going to just the sort of places they like."

"I hope we shall," said Uncle Jock.

Gallo took his departure that evening with just a nod of farewell, which included his answer to the question whether they were to expect him back in a week's time.

"He's a queer chap," said Antonio, "and

pretty deep, too, if I know anything of Indians; though he certainly is not one of the ordinary up-river ones."

"Does he propose to get up the rapids single-handed?" asked Uncle Jock.

"You'll sometimes see these Indians disappear with their canoes straight into the forest, where you'd never guess there was any opening," said Antonio; "and then re-appear again miles higher up. They carry along on some small forest-stream or other, I suppose; but none of us could do it."

XXIII.—THE RAPIDS

During the next two days Pedro and José were hard at work adapting the 'obas' to take the launch engine. Fortunately there was a good stock of tools on the *Manatee*, both for wood- and for metal-work; and they had little difficulty in removing the bed-plate and propeller-housing out of the launch, and adapting the 'obas' to take them, and at the same time allow of being paddled in the ordinary way. The next thing to be decided was what sort of equipment they would take, and Uncle Jock came rather reluctantly to the conclusion, that, so far as this expedition was concerned, collecting must go by the board. Every inch of space would be required for stores and instruments. There was the chronometer, for instance, which had to have a special housing made for it, while the sextant and aneroid

needed almost as much packing as the chronometer, for Uncle Jock knew quite well what rapids were like. Then there was the armament to be considered.

Antonio had no hesitation in saying that the staff at least should be well armed, and that as he had a magazine rifle as well as his own repeater, Pedro and José could both now have rifles as well as their blow-pipes and axes. To his great delight, Luck was entrusted with one of the automatic pistols and the collecting gun, while Uncle Jock carried his repeater, which was the most up-to-date weapon of the lot. Then a good deal of fishing tackle had to be selected, since, for the first part of their journey at least, they would be relying on fish for food; and as everything, including ammunition and petrol had to be distributed so as to avoid the necessity of continually unloading to get over the rapids, a good deal of time and thought had to be spent over the preliminary preparations. Indeed, they had only just completed the fit-out by the end of the week, when, true to his promise, Gallo presented himself as silently as he had departed. In the meantime three canoes loaded with petrol tins had been despatched up-river with instructions to push on as far as possible and await the main body. They were in the charge of one of Antonio's most reliable men, who had picked his crews and who had no doubt that he could get them up beyond the highest rapid he knew, which was the tenth. After that he thought there was smooth water to the north for a considerable way,

Early on the following day the *Manatee* cast off with the two 'obas' and three canoes, this being the least number they could do with, in tow, and made so little of the extra load that she had brought them up under the first rapids soon after midday.

Here they bade farewell to old Ebenezer, whose grief at the parting was obviously sincere, but in some measure tempered by the fact that he was solemnly appointed master and supercargo of the *Manatee*, and invested with one of Uncle Jock's medals as a badge of office, as well as an old peak cap with a gold band round it, which was a relic of Antonio's past.

The wave of this cap was the last thing they saw as he rounded the first bend on his homeward voyage.

The rest of that day was spent by Uncle Jock and Antonio in making a survey of the rapids, as far as this could be done from the bank, and deciding on the best way of ascending them.

These first rapids were by no means the worst they had to encounter, but, as they all presented the same kind of difficulties, a short description of the first one may be given; and of the means they adopted to get over it.

On a river such as the Branco the remarkable feature of the rapids is the extraordinary number of eddies and cross-currents. While the main force of the current is whirled downstream, over and past slabs and pinnacles of rock, which it has not yet been able to wear away, there is, forward of every large rock-

obstacle, a patch of comparatively smooth water, and at times the formation of the rocks is such that a portion of the current is swung back and is actually travelling up-stream instead of down. To ascend rapids in a canoe one must obviously take advantage of these patches of smooth water and reversed current, losing ground very often by being compelled to cross a current which one cannot stem, but making up for it by getting into a more advantageous position, even if it is lower down. Obviously the nearer one can keep to the bank the better, but occasions will inevitably arise when one has to man-haul one's vessel either over partially submerged rocks away from the bank, or over a promontory on the bank itself. This means that every canoe must carry sufficient men to be able to drag its dead weight out of the water; and that in bad cases the canoe may have to be lightened by unloading the whole or part of its cargo, which must be got along somehow to where it can be put in again, or abandoned. When the river is full there is, of course, a stronger current to contend with, but, on the other hand, when the water is at a low level, it is much easier to decide on one's course, as the rocks show more plainly and there is consequently less danger of getting staved in.

It was found, to Antonio's and Uncle Jock's delight, that the weight of the launch engine in the leading 'oba' was much more than counter-balanced by the assistance it gave them. Working her engine for all she was worth, and

with a crew of paddlers in addition, she had no difficulty in crossing swirls of the main current which no canoe had ever before attempted. She would make a dash for it, paying out a tow-rope, from one sheltered piece of water to another. Then, with the help of this rope and their own paddling, the other 'oba' and the canoes followed her. They had the remarkable experience—none of the Indians had ever known the like—of ascending the first rapids without taking a single one of the canoes out of the water.

But they were not so lucky later. Of the ten rapids they climbed before they came up with the petrol canoes, the worst was the eighth. Here the river ran through a gorge with such fury that getting the canoes up it was quite out of the question. Everything had to be unloaded on the bank, and carried in instalments some five miles, so as to get past a cataract, where the water fell sheer into a seethe of spray over a ledge some ten feet high. The engine of course, had to be taken out of the 'oba', and, as far as possible, taken down altogether. Even so it was as much as the Indians could do to get the heaviest casting along, so broken and rocky were the banks of the gorge; and at various places they had to build up ramps and put rollers underneath it to get it over some particularly awkward obstacle. While this was going on Uncle Jock made two special overland journeys. On one of these he carried his precious chronometer, and on the other his sextant and aneroid.

At last, however, they had got everything past the fall, and the engine rebuilt so that they could proceed as before. This part of the river was quite familiar to Gallo, and he assured them that the two next rapids were not nearly so difficult, though they would involve a good deal of wading and swimming and warping, which turned out to be the case. Above this, he said, the river widened into a lake about seven miles long and a mile broad, which was welcome news to Uncle Jock, as he was by this time quite uncertain of their position, and wanted a good horizon so that he could make an observation with his sextant. Before reaching the ninth rapid they turned west, and, apparently away from the main stream, though there was not much to choose in size between the stream they went on to, and that which they left on their right. The ninth and the tenth rapids were successfully surmounted, and they found to their relief that the petrol canoes had accomplished their journey with the loss of only half a dozen tins, owing to a canoe having capsized at a place where the water was too deep for them to be recovered.

Everyone was pretty tired at this point, so they rested for two days, after which the petrol canoes started on their homeward journey, while they pressed on to the lake which Gallo had mentioned. Here Uncle Jock was able to take bearings, and found, to his surprise, that they were much nearer to their destination than he had dared to hope. They were, in fact, about two and a half degrees north of the



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equator. His longitude he could not be so sure about, but he reckoned it roughly as $63^{\circ} 5' W.$

Since leaving the *Manatee* they had travelled about three hundred miles.

XXIV.—THE FIRST SIGHT OF THE CANYON

Apart from the service the lake rendered as an observation post, it provided a welcome addition to their larder, for it swarmed with turtles. The Indians at once organised a turtle hunt, partly with bow and arrow, and partly with nets; and it was amazing to see the skill with which they transfixed the turtles' shells with nothing more than a slight wave in the water, or a momentary glance at the creatures' snouts, to guide their aim. The arrows they used had points which became detached when they pierced the turtle's armour, and these points had thirty or forty feet of line wound round them, so that, when the turtle dived, the line unrolled, while the shaft remained floating on the surface. The archer then got hold of the shaft and played the turtle like a fish, shooting in another arrow if it happened to be a particularly large and heavy specimen. Both Luck's and Uncle Jock's efforts, however, were completely unsuccessful until they had discovered that the art of turtle-shooting consisted in lobbing the arrows so that they fell almost perpendicularly on to the turtle's back, since otherwise they were very liable to glance off the polished and slippery shell. Netting

was only resorted to when it was evident that no more could be obtained by shooting, and as each haul of the net brought in a quantity of fish as well as turtle, the final result was such an orgy of feasting that most of the Indians were too gorged to work, and had to sleep off the effects of their gluttony on the banks of the lake.

Uncle Jock and Luck took this opportunity to explore the eastern side of it, accompanied by Gallo, who showed them that it was fed by a stream that entered at the north-east corner, though time did not admit of their reaching this on foot. On the following day they crossed the lake and headed in procession up the river which fed it. This was flanked on either side by very lofty forest, and, as it narrowed, was practically roofed over by a network of branches and creepers which met across it, so that they were moving in a sort of tunnel which was singularly lifeless and gloomy. After about ten miles of slow progress, for the bed of the river was blocked in places by boulders and fallen tree trunks—fortunately they were always able to find a channel of sufficient width to get the “obas” through—the stream began to widen out again, and Uncle Jock at once noticed that they were getting into a different kind of country altogether. The height of the trees quickly decreased, while the banks became extremely rugged, and seemed to be formed of granite and hard rock in place of the sands and clays to which they had been so long accustomed. A halt was ordered shortly before sunset, and

Uncle Jock climbed to the top of a high bluff to see if there was any chance of getting an observation with the sextant. The view which met him was quite unexpected. To the south and west it was fairly open country, in the sense that it was a plain, though forested as far as the eye could see. To the north and east was a chain of high mountains, extraordinarily jagged in outline, and evidently of the same granite formation as that on which he was standing. He was so engrossed in observing these mountains through his glasses that he failed to notice that Gallo had followed him, and was standing behind him, evidently waiting to show him something. The Indian commenced by pointing his finger towards the mountains, and, following the direction of it, Uncle Jock saw, somewhat vaguely with his eyes, but quite clearly with the glasses, that he was pointing to a deep cleft, probably a pass between two towering peaks. Gallo's next move was more startling. From out of a quiver which was hung from his shoulders he drew a small branch with withered leaves on it, rather like the branch of an ash-tree, which he pointed in the same direction.

Uncle Jock saw at a glance that it was a branch from the mysterious rubber-tree, whose leaves were still fresh enough to show the curious metallic blue sheen he had been told to expect. He saw, too, that what Gallo intended to convey was that the tree was to be found somewhere near the cleft in the mountains; and, putting two and two together, he

guessed that this cleft must be the canyon referred to in his "sealed orders." Evidently they were on the right track so far, and, assuming that the mountains were, as they appeared to be, about ten miles off as the crows fly, they should be able to reach them in a day's journey. In this, as will be seen, he was mistaken.

Showing Gallo by signs that he understood him, and thanking him to the best of his ability, he managed to convey to him that he would like to have one of the leaves to examine, and this the Indian picked off and gave him. He returned with it to the others, told Antonio what had occurred, and asked him to find out from Gallo how far off the canyon actually was; and whether it would be practicable to get the canoes anywhere near it. The answer to this was somewhat disappointing. The Indian told Antonio that they would not be able to travel by water more than five miles farther at the outside, though at this point they would enter a waterway which actually issued from the canyon they were bound for. It was, however, altogether too narrow and too rocky for canoes to ascend, and their only way to reach the canyon was to proceed along its banks on foot. He also told him that on the last stage of the journey, that is to say from the point at which they started on foot, he could only guide two of the party at the most. The reason he gave for this was that his people disliked strangers, and that if a large party of strangers were observed approaching, they would certainly be

treated as hostile, and that he then could not be answerable for their safety.

"Well, Luck and I will go of course," said Uncle Jock when he was talking this over with Antonio.

"I don't at all like the idea of that," said Antonio. "The more I see of this Gallo bird, the less I trust him, though he's suave enough to your face. My Indians are of just the same opinion. I can see that by their manner. They're mortally afraid of him, and I wonder they have come as far as they have done. They'll be only too glad to be left behind with the canoes. You see if they're not. I tell you what I think would be the best scheme. You and Luck shall go on alone with Gallo, and Pedro and José and I will follow you up, starting, say, twenty-four hours after you. Pedro is a first-rate tracker, and I've no doubt could follow your line to an inch, but you needn't be afraid to stamp hard as you go along. You follow me?"

"Yes, I follow you," said Uncle Jock. "Luck shall have special instructions to *make* a trail—and Gallo will have to be pretty smart to see him doing it. I quite agree that what you suggest is only reasonable prudence. We two will just take our automatics, deep down in our trouser pockets. Oh, and there's another thing I think I ought to tell you at this stage, though I have not done so before," and he proceeded to show Antonio his envelope containing the sealed orders and to tell him the history of it.

"It all seems to fit in so far," said Antonio, who was deeply interested, "and I'd give a lot to read what's in the envelope."

"It can't be done here," said Uncle Jock, laughing. "I'm on my oath, and I must stick to it. But I'll tell you what I'll do. When I get to the canyon and open the envelope I'll make a copy of what's in it, and leave it where you can't miss it if you keep a good look-out. Then you'll know as much as I do, and at the same place."

"Yes, that will be all right," said Antonio.

XXV.—THE COCK OF THE ROCK

When the signal to start was given the next morning, Antonio's head Indian requested most earnestly that the launch engine should not be used. "Too much noise," he said. "This bad place. Bad Indian. Make noise, make trouble."

"I believe he's right," said Antonio to Uncle Jock. "What do you think?"

"Yes, I quite agree," said Uncle Jock. "We don't want to advertise our approach at the tops of our voices. They can get along with paddles all right, can't they?"

"Oh yes, easily," said Antonio.

And so, for the first time since they had left the plantation, or for that matter, since they had left England, they travelled without the noise of a propeller. Gallo was in the leading 'oba' with Uncle Jock, and shortly after

starting showed him, by holding out a feather from his head-dress, that they might expect to come across his namesake the, 'Cock of the Rock', in this part of the country. Through Antonio's help Uncle Jock had it conveyed to him that he particularly wanted to get a specimen alive; and Gallo, saying that he could do that easily enough, proceeded to fit up his blow-pipe so as to have it in readiness if they should sight one. The dart which he inserted in the bell-mouthed end was so wound round with silk that barely an eighth of an inch of point could be seen; and before putting it into the bore of the tube, which it fitted to a nicety, he dipped the point in a dark kind of ointment, and twisted it round so that it should be thoroughly smeared, as well as the tapering end of its silk wrapping.

"That isn't urari—is it?" asked Uncle Jock of Antonio.

"No, it isn't that," said Antonio. "I don't know what it is. I imagine it can't be anything like so deadly as urari—if he proposes to get the thing alive."

"Well, we must wait and see," said Uncle Jock.

They were lucky enough not only to see a Cock of the Rock, but to see a male bird displaying. Coming quietly round a bend of the stream they noticed about a hundred yards farther on a great pinnacle of granite, which jutted from the bank. The top of this formed a platform, and a large bird of a brilliant orange colour was strutting up and down it, fluttering

his wings, and bobbing a wonderful crest, which curved like a helmet from the back of his head to the tip of his bill. A number of reddish-brown birds, the females, were settled on the rock gazing up at him, and all were so absorbed that the leading canoe was backed round the corner again, and those behind it stopped, without their noticing the intruders. Gallo got ashore with his blow-pipe, and very quietly disappeared in their direction.

About ten minutes afterwards a shout told them that he had been successful. Paddling round the bend again they saw that he was standing on the top of the pinnacle holding his blow-pipe in one hand and the cock-bird in the other.

"Poor old cock," said Uncle Jock. "It's rather hard on him. I hope he hasn't been done in altogether."

The leading canoe was brought up alongside the rock, and Gallo scrambled into it, and handed Uncle Jock the bird.

"But he's stone dead, isn't he?" said Uncle Jock, looking rather disappointed. He certainly looked dead, and not only dead but stiff, for his legs were shot out straight in front of him, and every muscle in his body was rigid, though he was still quite warm.

"No, he's not dead," said Antonio. "Look at his eye."

The bird's eye was certainly very peculiar-looking. It was glassy and staring, like the eye of a man in a fit, but there was something at the back of it, which showed that the bird was

not dead, though every muscle in its body seemed paralysed.

"Ask him when he'll get over it, Antonio," said Uncle Jock.

Antonio put the question to Gallo. "He says that he may be an hour, or six hours," he answered; "but that he will get over it all right, and very quickly when he once starts. You must put him where he'll get a good breeze of air if you can."

Uncle Jock promptly went up in the bows, and laid the bird down where he could get all the draught that was going. For an hour the bird lay as rigid as a steel rod, and, as Uncle Jock was getting a bit stiff, too, from his cramped quarters, he worked his way between the paddlers so as to sit down for a little while aft, beckoning to Luck to come and take his place. Before Luck could reach the bird, it gave a sudden flutter of its wings, which lifted it to its feet, and was off like a flash!

"Well, it's my own fault," said Uncle Jock. "I should like to know what particular poison that is."

But all Antonio's pressing could not get the secret of it out of Gallo. All he would say was that he would let him know later on.

XXVI.—GALLO DISAPPEARS

They reached the tributary mentioned by Gallo that same day. But for his pointing it

out to them they would certainly have passed it by, for there was a confused mass of rock at the entrance which no one would have suspected of being its outlet. There were plenty of fish to be caught and, as they still had some turtle left, they drew the canoes up on the opposite shore, which was fairly even, and settled down to a farewell banquet, as it was now understood that the party was to be broken up for a time at least on the following day. Uncle Jock and Antonio finally settled the details of their scheme for supporting one another, and decided that the canoes should be left in charge of Antonio's chief Indian, who was also to be lent José's rifle, José taking Uncle Jock's repeater. This meant that the supporting party, Antonio, Pedro and José, would be well armed.

On the following morning Uncle Jock and Luck started with Gallo as guide. They took no food with them, since Gallo had assured Antonio that he could easily feed the three of them with what he could shoot with his blow-pipe, and it seemed desirable, from what he said of the route, that they should travel as light as possible. Uncle Jock had practically nothing but his pipe and tobacco, matches, a compass, his glasses, and his automatic pistol. Luck, who had the other automatic, decided at the last moment on taking his hunting knife, too, a large-bladed thing which he had been given by one of the Indians in exchange for some fish-hooks, and which was subsequently to prove very useful.

To begin with, travelling was not nearly so difficult as they had expected. The stream was a winding one, and had a rapid current, but the right bank, on which they were walking, had evidently been used as a path pretty often, for, except in one or two places which had been over-grown, and where Luck employed his knife, not only to cut through the tangle but to leave clear evidence that he had done so, there was a well-defined track along it. This carried on for about five miles, and brought them to a water-fall, where the stream dropped some six or seven feet. It had evidently cut its way down from a considerably higher level, for there were steep banks on either side of it, which they had to exert themselves to get over. When they arrived on the summit they found that a gap in the forest allowed them a view of the mountains, with the canyon they were presumably bound for immediately facing them, though still five or six miles off.

This canyon was so conspicuous a feature of the mountain range that Uncle Jock's last doubt as to its being *the* canyon was dispelled by an object he caught sight of as it toppled over the fall. It was unmistakably a branch of the rubber-tree they were in search of. This naturally made him focus his glasses on the canyon itself and search its borders carefully to see if he could see any sign of the trees growing on them. In this he failed, but something else riveted his attention. The canyon, which was thickly wooded on either side, seemed to run almost straight north and south,

and, as it was now close on midday was almost shadowless, looking, from where they were, like a clean-cut green wedge, driven into the mountain range, and lying with its point higher than its base.

Half way up towards the point some polished surface was reflecting the sun in a steady blaze of light, just as one may sometimes in civilised countries catch the reflection of the sun on some glass-roofed building. His glasses resolved the blaze into a series of bright points set at regular intervals, which were certainly reflecting the sun, for a passing cloud caused them all to be extinguished, and at the same time allowed him a glimpse of what seemed to be a large, flat-roofed building, on which the polished surfaces, which were reflecting the light, were some kind of decoration. But could it be a building? and, if so, how did it get there? The canyon $3^{\circ}3'N$ $63^{\circ}3'W$ was certainly not marked on the latest map, indeed, it was obvious from the latest map that the district had not been surveyed at all.

He called Gallo to his side and pointed out to him what he was looking at, the blaze of light being easily visible to the naked eye. The Indian either could not, or would not, understand that he was asking what caused it; and showed evident signs of wanting to push on. The three of them accordingly resumed their journey and, keeping to the side of the stream, on what was more or less of a made path the whole way, arrived at the foot of the mountains at sunset. Here a lucky shot with

the blow-pipe at a large bird which Uncle Jock identified as a "curassow", provided them with an excellent supper, after which the three of them lay down, and were glad to get to sleep.

At day-break Uncle Jock was woken up by Luck shaking him gently, and then whispering in his ear. "Gallo's gone," he said. "He went about an hour ago. He didn't know I saw him!"

"Gone?" said Uncle Jock. "Where did he go?"

"Up stream," said Luck. "He bent over us both before he went. I shammed to be asleep, and you *were* asleep. He went off like a moth. He didn't mean us to know he was going."

"Well, I half expected something of that kind," said Uncle Jock. "I've no doubt he's gone to tell his people we're coming. He's brought us here anyhow."

"What are we going to do?" asked Luck.

"Carry on, of course," said Uncle Jock. "The first thing we're going to do is to get to the entrance of the canyon and open that envelope."

"He's left us something for breakfast anyhow," Uncle Jock went on, pointing to the remains of the curassow, and feeling in his pockets; "and he doesn't seem to have robbed us. My automatic is all right, so's my watch, and my compass, and my glasses, and my pipe and my matches and—Oh, Lord! What a swine!"

The last thing he had extracted was his tobacco pouch, and it was empty! I believe Uncle Jock would far sooner have lost his watch. He was so angry that, if hard names could have killed at a distance, Gallo would certainly have fallen in his tracks. But Luck came to the rescue. He produced from his pocket a whole pound of tobacco which he had snatched up when they left the canoes, having the idea that his master would be sure to want it sooner or later.

"Luck," said Uncle Jock quite solemnly, as he crammed his pipe full, "you've saved my life. Now for some breakfast and then we'll get off."

XXVII.—THE ANACONDA ISLAND

The meal was soon over and they started off, still keeping to the right bank of the stream, as they knew that this must lead them to the entrance of the canyon. The track was not nearly so well defined as it had hitherto been, and at one place they lost it altogether. This was near a small gloomy-looking pool, whose outlet to the stream seemed to be bridged by stepping-stones. Instead of going round it, as they found afterwards they should have done, they crossed over these, and hacked their way for some distance forward until a bend in the stream showed them that they must be on a tongue of land between the longer side of the pool and the stream itself. Having got so far,

they judged that, if they were not on an island, they would hit the path again by carrying straight on, and as the vegetation was becoming less tangled, they decided to do so.

All of a sudden Uncle Jock, who was in front, jumped backwards, almost flooring Luck, who was close behind him.

"Look out, Luck," he said, and pointed to a large over-hanging bough about ten yards in front of them. Dangling from this bough, round which it was coiled, and swaying its hideous head to and fro, was a huge anaconda. It was eyeing them steadily, and every now and then its forked tongue quivered out and home again as if it was licking its lips. "Get back quietly," said Uncle Jock. "I've heard some nasty tales of these brutes."

The two of them retreated slowly backwards still facing the anaconda, and each of them held his automatic in readiness until they had put some thirty yards between them. At this point they turned and retreated with considerable speed.

"We must get round the other side of the pool," said Uncle Jock.

"What a huge brute," said Luck. "He must have been as big as that one we saw out at sea, and thought was a sea serpent. Do they attack people?"

"I'm not sure that they'd actually come after you," said Uncle Jock; "but there's no doubt that they *might* whip up a traveller who passed under them without noticing them. I've heard a good many tales of that. And they are



DANGLING FROM THIS BOUGH WAS A HUGE ANACONDA

extraordinarily quick-moving for their size. They'll have a couple of coils round you in an instant. And then you're done, especially if they've got their teeth into your skull for a start."

"Ugh!" said Luck. "But I thought they crushed you."

"So they do," said Uncle Jock; "but the crushing is more to make you into a sort of pulp, so that you will pass down the gullet easily. Even so an anaconda who has just swallowed a meal has a part of him swollen to four or five times its natural size, and can't take another meal for a considerable time."

"What do they eat as a rule?" asked Luck.

"Pretty well anything alive," said Uncle Jock. "I've heard of one eating a horse. I've heard, too, that they never touch anything unless it is on the move. That is to say, they must have their food alive. They won't eat carrion or anything of that sort."

"Well, I don't want to meet another," said Luck.

"I hope we shan't," said Uncle Jock. "But we must keep a good look out, for this is just the sort of place they affect—pools to lie *in* and branches to lie *on*."

"How long do you think that one was?" asked Luck.

"It's hard to say," said Uncle Jock. "Judging from what he showed of himself, I should think at least thirty feet."

By this time they were three parts of the way round the other side of the pool, and you can

imagine that, as they drew level with the place where they had seen the anaconda, they walked very warily, and were not a little relieved to find that they actually had been on an island, the pool having an outlet at either end of it.

This meant that the anaconda, of whom they could now see no sign, was separated from them by a fairly wide water-passage; and pressing on to get out of his neighbourhood altogether, they were not long in striking the track again at the side of the stream.

"Look here," said Uncle Jock, stopping suddenly. "There's one thing that we've forgotten to do, and that we *must* do. We must leave something to show Antonio the way to take when he gets to the pool; otherwise, as likely as not, he'll get up to the anaconda's front door just as we did. Cut back and mark the trail, Luck. No, wait: I've got a piece of paper here. I'll write it down."

He took a piece of paper out of his tobacco pouch and wrote on it. "All right so far; but Gallo has given us the slip. *Keep to the left trail here and look out for anaconda. Will leave contents of envelope under stone-heap.*"

Luck ran back with this, and fixed it up where it could not fail to be seen.

Another hour's walking brought them to the canyon; a vast cutting forested at the entrance and on either side, with the stream, whose course had so far guided them, running down its centre.

After examining the heights carefully with his glasses, but not observing anything of

particular moment, Uncle Jock flung himself down at the side of the stream, and took out his wallet. "Well, we've got here anyhow," he said. "Now for the contents of the envelope."

XXVIII.—THE CONTENTS OF THE ENVELOPE

The pair of them lay down, and Uncle Jock opened the envelope very deliberately, and neatly, with his pocket-knife. That was his usual way. The more exciting the situation, the more cool he became. It contained two half sheets of notepaper, and he read them both through several times before reading the largest of them out loud to Luck. It ran as follows:

"Ware these Indians. They're swine. Serpent worship and human sacrifice, especially whites. Rubber-tree avenue leads to temple, and is always guarded. Good view of temple from track high up on eastern slope, but hard to find. Main settlement well north of temple. Only medicine-men at temple. 'Ware branches all the time. Good luck."

"He knows whom he's addressing, anyhow," said Uncle Jock, laughing. "Now I must put my thinking cap on over this."

"What's on the other one?" asked Luck.

"I can guess what it is," said Uncle Jock; "but I certainly can't decipher it. It's the formula for treating the rubber, but it's in some language I don't know—*lingoa geral* possibly.

Anyhow that can wait a bit. Now the first thing to be done is to copy this sheet of directions out and put it where Antonio can find it. I'll keep the formula on me, for after all our old friend Captain Adams has a half share in that, and so I can't very well give it away to anyone else."

Uncle Jock accordingly copied out the larger sheet, and placed it under a little mound of stones like a pyramid. "He'll notice that all right," he said; "now that he knows what to look for."

"Now just keep quiet a minute, Luck," he went on, "I want to think these sealed orders out."

Uncle Jock lit his pipe, and knitted his brows over the sheet of paper which lay spread out in front of him. Once he lifted up his head and addressed Luck. "Keep a good look-out, Luck," he said, and then studied the paper again. At last he seemed to have formed his conclusions. "Look here, Luck," he said, "this is not going to be a picnic, but now I have got so far I am not going to turn back. I've seen the temple, of course, already, from a distance. It was that square business I told you about, that caught the light of the sun. That means that it had something very highly polished on the roof of it, and I think we may dismiss the possibility of anything like glass or metal. But why shouldn't it be slabs of this rubber used for windows or something of that kind. He held up the rubber sample, which he had got out of his wallet with the envelope,

and, sure enough, as he twisted it about, the sun's rays glinted off its surface almost as brightly as they would have off a piece of glass.

"I think that may be the solution of that," he said, smiling. "But how are we to account for there being a temple at all in this back of the beyond? And serpent-worship? And human sacrifice? The only solution I can think of is this. These people—Gallo is of course one of them—aren't South American Indians in the ordinary sense. They may, I am only guessing, mind you, have something to do with the Mayas, who were *Central* Americans. Serpent-worship and human sacrifice both point that way, for both entered largely into the Mayas' religion. How the rubber-tree is mixed up with it all I don't quite see at the moment; but it must be somehow, or they wouldn't have an avenue of trees leading up to the temple—a sort of sacred way—and keep it always guarded. The medicine-men are, of course, the priests."

"What do you think he means by 'Ware branches'?" said Luck. "Do you think it's anacondas?"

"Quite possible," said Uncle Jock. "Anyhow we *will* 'ware branches'."

"I should think we jolly well would," said Luck. "But I say, don't you think we'd better wait for the others? They ought to catch us up to-morrow."

"I'm certainly not going back to meet them," said Uncle Jock; "and I'm certainly not going

to stay where I am. This is the chance of my life-time as an explorer, and I'm going straight on and right now." Which was also quite like him.

"Last lap!" he went on, as they both rose to their feet. "Now we shall see what we shall see."

They were not long in seeing something. Where the stream issued from the canyon, it wound first right and then left in a succession of S-shaped curves (It's uncommonly like a snake itself," said Uncle Jock), and when they reached the upper end of these they found that it was spanned by a narrow stone bridge. It was evidently 'worked' stone, for it was almost square; but this was not so startling as the fact that its surfaces were carved in low relief. The top one was so worn down that nothing could be made of the pattern on it, but the two side ones each showed a rude human figure and a still ruder serpent, which filled up the spaces between several rectangular frames containing grotesque heads. "This rather confirms my theory," said Uncle Jock excitedly. "I remember seeing some designs in the British Museum something like these, and they were Maya work. I can recollect that quite clearly."

Obviously the bridge was meant to indicate that the track which had hitherto been on the right side of the stream was now going to be on the left. They accordingly crossed it, and found that the trail beyond was a well worn path, flanked by a jungle of high shrubs and bushes, and winding this way and that, though

never out of the sound of the water. All of a sudden the path ended and an extraordinary vista presented itself. It was a long straight avenue of rubber-trees, whose foliage was of a beautiful metallic blue-green. Between the roots of these trees and the stream the ground on either side was clear of undergrowth, so that the general effect was that of a straight river running down the centre of an avenue with a grassy border on either side of it. The stream descended by a series of low water falls, as if a gigantic stairway had been carved out for it, while the ascent of the two rows of trees was on a gentle slope from where they were standing, and as far as they could see. About half a mile up, and behind one of the water falls, there was something that looked like a row of low buildings stretching right across the avenue. The centre one of these was evidently on some kind of bridge, for it spanned the water itself. It was somewhat wider than the others, and its upper half seemed to be fitted with windows. There was not a sign of life of any kind.

XXIX.—TREACHERY

“Well, we’re against a good dark back-ground, and the sun’s behind us, so we *may* not have been seen,” said Uncle Jock grimly. “I should not like to bet on it, though. That place up there must be the ‘temple’, and I don’t suppose the medicine men miss much in the way of strangers. We’ll get under cover

though, and have a good look round before we go on."

"What about the upper track?" asked Luck.

"We'll find that later," said Uncle Jock. "I want to have a good look at the avenue first."

The two stole quietly back again on to the path they had come by, and lay down under some bushes at the side of it, from which they could see up the avenue. Uncle Jock got out his glasses and searched it very carefully.

To begin with he focussed them on the temple.

"Those *are* windows," he said, after he had been gazing for some time; "and, as far as I can make out, transparent. There's a sort of roof, too, that seems to be transparent, but it has such a small slope that I cannot see much of it. There's a door right in the centre and a paved court in front. Who'd ever have thought of finding things like that here. I'd bet any money that that transparent stuff is rubber."

"Is there anyone about?" asked Luck.

"Not a soul that I can see," said Uncle Jock. "Now let's look at the trees."

The trees forming the avenue were quite regularly planted, and all some sixty to seventy feet high. Taken on the average they were stouter-boled than the ordinary Pará rubber-tree, but were much the same shape, having boughs that were inclined to grow upwards like those of a poplar, rather than outwards. Here and there, however, a bough stretched out at right angles to the trunk. In most of them

there were no boughs at all within twenty feet of the ground, so that a good length of trunk was visible.

"They've tapped the trees above pretty hard," said Uncle Jock; "but they don't seem to have touched these nearer ones. Look at those near the temple, Luck. They might have been tattooed."

Luck took the glasses and had a long look at the trees near the temple; then he turned with a queer look at Uncle Jock. "I believe there are snakes on them," he said.

"Snakes?" said Uncle Jock. "Let me have another look."

"No, they're not real snakes," he said after scanning them very carefully. "But you're quite right in a way. They've made the cuts to get the sap form in a regular spiral, like a snake's body curling round the trunk; and they've finished them off with heads and eyes; and, what's more, they've added touches top to bottom to make them like the markings on an anaconda—something to do with their serpent-worship, I suppose, and something that tells us pretty clearly the kind of serpent they worship."

"What about the upper track?" said Luck.

Like most naturalists Luck had his likes and dislikes, and there was no getting over the fact that he did not like snakes, or even pictures of them.

"Well, perhaps it would be best to get on to it, if we can," said Uncle Jock. "It must join on to the avenue somewhere on the right

hand side, though we've been told it's hard to find. We'd better work along the tangle to the right of the trees, and see if we can hit it. Got your pistol handy?"

"Yes," said Luck.

"Come on then," said Uncle Jock.

The two of them crouched down and worked their way stealthily forward along the right hand side of the avenue, Uncle Jock, who was leading, keeping a look-out to his front and left, while Luck searched the tangle on the right slope for any sign of a track leading up it.

"Ware branches," whispered Uncle Jock back to him. They were coming to the first tree whose branches grew outwards rather than upwards, and Uncle Jock half lifted himself from the ground to look up at them. As he did so Luck heard a little pop like the cork blowing out of a ginger-beer bottle; and then, to his horror, saw Uncle Jock stagger to his feet with his hand up to his throat, sway first one side and then the other, and fall flat on his face with his arms stretched straight out in front of him. In an instant Luck had leapt to his side and turned him over. He turned exactly as he had fallen with his arms stretched above his head, and his legs equally rigid. His spectacles had dropped off and his eyes were fixed in a horrible glassy stare. A single word came in a sort of hoarse whistle from his lips, and Luck caught that word. It was "Shoot!" Then the awful rigidity seemed to fasten on his face, too.

Instinctively Luck looked up at the branches above him. There was nothing but the branches. Yes, there was something though. A mass of foliage just where a large branch forked outwards from the trunk about forty feet up. *And this mass had given a little twitch.*

In five seconds Luck had emptied his automatic into it. For a moment it stayed motionless, then it lurched and fell with a tremendous thud on to the ground. A sort of leaf envelope burst in all directions, revealing a man's body. It was Gallo.

Luck made sure that he was dead, reloaded his pistol, and turned to Uncle Jock again. He did not care what happened now. He would stay where he was—by Uncle Jock. . . . He would keep one round for himself; but he would kill as many Indians as he could first. All of a sudden a picture floated into his memory. It was that of the Cock of the Rock, which Gallo had shot on their way up. That had been just as dead-looking as Uncle Jock was. Suppose . . . ? In a moment he was passing his hands over Uncle Jock's body, and in another moment he had pulled out a dart from just below his collar-bone, but a much bigger one than Gallo had used when he shot the Cock of the Rock. Perhaps Uncle Jock was not really dead after all. Perhaps . . . There was another curious popping sound, but I do not think Luck heard it, for it came from the other side of the stream.

All that he can now remember is that he felt a horrible shooting pain in his thigh, like

the sting of a gigantic hornet; and that the trees began to swim all round him; and that he had an awful feeling of being gripped in a vice at the waist, and pulled out at either end, as he fell forward unconscious across Uncle Jock's body.

XXX.—THE SUPPORTING PARTY

We must now return to the supporting party. Antonio, Pedro, and José started, as arranged, twenty-four hours after Uncle Jock and Luck; and, thanks to Luck's skill in 'blazing the trail' here and there, had no difficulty in following their track to the anaconda island, where they found the message left by Uncle Jock.

"I thought something of that kind would happen," said Antonio, when he had read the message; "and I don't like the look of it at all. We shall be lucky if we find them alive. No more beaten tracks for me. Get up aloft, José, and see where we are."

José was as good a climber, almost, as a coaita monkey; and in a very short time he had shinned up a seventy foot tree, and in an even shorter time had slid down it again.

"There's a big gap in the mountains," he said; "opposite the sun, and about a mile away from us; and a sort of building half way up, with two rows of trees leading towards it."

"That's the place they were bound for," said Antonio; "but we won't go straight for it, like they did. We'll sheer off east from

here and fetch round in a loop so as to pick up the second message; and when we've found out what that is we'll decide what to do next."

The three of them accordingly crossed the stream by the stepping-stones; but, instead of working round the anaconda island, carried off to the right into a tangle which only Indians could have got through at all. After they had struggled through the undergrowth for about a mile, José was once more sent up a tree to see how the land lay. As good fortune would have it, they were just about where Antonio had hoped they would be—almost at the foot of the mountain range, and about a mile to the east of the entrance of the canyon.

"I'll go by myself now," said Antonio, "and see if I can pick up the second message. You two must wait for me here."

He was back again in about an hour's time.

"I found it all right," he said. "And I don't think I showed myself either. I saw right up the canyon all the same. There's a stream down the middle of it with trees on either side which make an avenue leading up to a kind of temple. The message says there are two paths up to it, an upper and a lower. We won't take either, but we'll get there all the same, even if we have to crawl the whole way."

They did, in fact, have to crawl nearly all the way. To begin with, the mountain slope that faced them was almost a cliff, on which they had to zig-zag from one foot-hold to another, until they were some three hundred feet up. Then matters became a little easier,



THE THREE OF THEM CROSSED THE STREAM BY THE STEPPING-STONES

but they still worked upwards until, on reaching a great crag and peering over the edge of it, they had a clear view of the temple about a thousand feet below them, and half a mile behind.

By this time it was close on sun-down; but a full moon was already high in the sky, and presently the short tropical twilight gave way to patches of shimmering indigo and dense black shadows.

"This is just what we want," said Antonio. "We'll wait till the shadows are a bit longer; and then José must slip down and see what he can see."

In an hour's time the conditions were as good as they could be for 'spying'; for there is nothing like a sharp contrast of light and shade for hiding oneself in, *provided one keeps in the shade.*

"Now off you go, José," said Antonio. "Find out as much as you can; and come back as quickly as you can."

The first thing José did was to slip off most of his clothes. Then he lay flat on his stomach with his hunting knife in his mouth, and started off as smoothly as an eel, though no eel could have disappeared more quickly or more silently. They could just trace his body in the first deep shadow; and they might have thought they saw it as he passed on into the second; but in the third not a trace of him was visible.

It was a full hour before he returned; and his coming was as uncanny as his going had been. He simply appeared.

He had news, though.

"I've seen them," he said.

"Where are they?" asked Antonio.

"In a room on this near side," said José. "The building is all made of trees with the tops off, and the spaces in between filled up with stakes bound together. You can see through them in places, and the roof lets the moon through, so that it's quite bright inside. They're both bound and gagged."

"Anyone with them?" asked Antonio.

"Yes," said José. "Two people with them—one alive and one dead. The live one's a medicine man, and the dead one's Gallo."

"Anyone else about?" asked Antonio.

"Yes, there are four or five other medicine men," said José. "They're all asleep in the room on the far side. I couldn't see into the middle part. The walls are much thicker, and you can't see through them anywhere. There's an awful snake smell about the place."

"Oho!" said Antonio. "A snake smell, is there? Now I wonder what that means. The medicine man with them is on guard, I suppose? Is he armed?"

"He's got a knife or two, and, I think, a bow," said José.

"No rifle?" said Antonio.

"No," said José, "I didn't see any rifles."

"Well, you've done well, José," said Antonio. "What do you make of it, Pedro?" he went on, addressing José's father.

"Uncle Jock and Luck kill Gallo. Now they kill Uncle Jock and Luck," said Pedro, quite simply.

"Why haven't they done it before?" asked Antonio.

"P'raps they make big feast. Then kill slow," said Pedro.

"Why do you think Uncle Jock and Luck killed Gallo?" asked Antonio. Pedro shrugged his shoulders.

"Well we must get them out of it quick," said Antonio. "There's a door to the room, I suppose, isn't there, José?"

"Yes, there's a door," said José, "But I didn't try it."

"Quite right," said Antonio.

XXXI.—THE RESCUE

"Now what's to be done?" said Antonio. "The moon will be going down presently; and I don't fancy a night attack without knowing more of the situation; but we might get down closer so as to be ready for any chance we can see. What do you think, Pedro?"

Pedro agreed; and so the three of them worked their way very slowly and cautiously towards the temple, finally arriving, without mishap, within a hundred yards of the end where Uncle Jock and Luck were.

"We'll wait here for sunrise," said Antonio. "Then we shall have to get the guard to open the door and show himself. The door's sure to be fastened on the inside; and it may be too strong to burst open in a hurry."

They had not long to wait.

Barely a quarter of an hour had passed before the day broke behind them, and the opposite slope and the temple itself were brilliantly lit, while the undergrowth, in which they were concealed, was still in comparatively deep shadow.

"We must spread out a bit," said Antonio. "Pedro to the right, José to the left. I'll go straight forward, and throw something heavy at the door when I get within range of it. Then I'll fling myself down, and you two must do the same. We can't afford to take any chances. Keep the door covered, but don't fire unless you have to."

Pedro went away to the right, and José to the left. Then, on Antonio raising his rifle the three of them crept quietly forward, Antonio carrying a large stone.

From about twenty yards range he threw it with all his strength against the side-door facing him; and then fell flat on his face, with his rifle covering the door.

The others did the same. There was a pause of a few seconds, and the door flung open, showing a strange figure wearing a robe which seemed to be made of snake-skin hung with all kinds of curious beads and decorations; and having on its head a sort of helmet shaped like the head of an anaconda. From beneath the rim of this two eyes cast quick glances, left and right. Then a long-bladed knife sped through the air, straight to where Antonio was lying, and missing his head by a hair's breadth. Almost before it pitched,

three shots rang out from Pedro's rifle, and the medicine-man fell on his face, while a second knife sped in Pedro's direction, but fell short as though there had not been sufficient fling behind it. The eyes under the serpent head-dress must have been pretty keen.

But this was no time for reflection. Antonio, Pedro and José were already rushing forward, and, in a moment the ropes which bound Uncle Jock and Luck had been cut through, and the gags taken out of their mouths. Both of them were so stiff and numbed that they could hardly stand, but Uncle Jock was as cool as a cucumber.

"Give me your rifle, José," he said; "and stay here with Luck. There are four or five more of them. Come on you other two!"

If fighting had to be done, evidently Uncle Jock preferred that it should be done in the open. Antonio and Pedro rushed round the front of the building after him, but, before they got half-way across it, were confronted by five other medicine men, all in the same fantastic garments, who had been roused by the firing, and, to do them justice, were obviously ready to defend themselves against the intruders. Uncle Jock might perhaps have tried to parley with them, but Antonio and Pedro were taking no chances and immediately fired.

Three fell, and the other two turned and ran round the far end of the building with Antonio and Pedro in hot pursuit, but only in time to see them disappear into the undergrowth of the western slope. The head of one of them showed itself for a moment about

a hundred and fifty yards away, and Pedro sent a parting shot after it. Evidently the survivors were hurrying northwards up the canyon as fast as their legs could carry them.

When Pedro and Antonio returned, they found Uncle Jock and José and Luck all endeavouring to open a massive sliding door in the front of the temple, which was evidently too heavy for them.

"Lend a hand both of you," said Uncle Jock. "I'll explain things later."

It needed the combined strength of all five of them to move the door, but at last they managed to shift it so as to make an opening about a yard wide. Out of this came a horrible musty smell. "Ah, I thought so," said Uncle Jock. "Give me a rifle." José handed him his rifle, which still had its magazine full; and, a moment later, five shots rang out in succession.

No one could see what was happening except Uncle Jock himself, since his body entirely blocked the entrance.

"That's all right," he said, turning round. "I could have managed it with a couple of shots if I'd had my glasses; but the brutes had taken them. Now we'll open this gate a bit farther, and you can have a look in. We must get him out and measure him before we go."

XXXII.—THE SECRET OF THE TEMPLE

The sliding gates moved much more easily now they were ajar, and they all crowded round

the opening to look into the main body of the temple, which was well lit by transparent windows in the roof, but otherwise hermetically sealed all round.

It was a huge water-tank, choked with tree-trunks and branches, and evidently fed by the river itself. Indeed the whole temple building formed a bridge across the stream. Lying on a platform of branches above the water was a gigantic anaconda of a horrible pinky-white colour, in fact an albino.

"The biggest one I ever saw or heard of," said Uncle Jock. "We must get him outside somehow to measure him. He's dead all right."

It was as much as the five of them could do to get the great brute outside—indeed they had to get him out a short length at a time; as one has to do when one shifts a heavy chain. The middle part of him was as thick as a man's body, and he must have weighed over a ton. When Uncle Jock had paced out the length of him he declared that he was as nearly as possible fifty-five feet long.

"I shouldn't have killed him, you know," he added, rather whimsically; "if I hadn't been thinking out things a bit since I got here—and they gave me lots of time to do that quietly. But I'll tell you all about that later. I wonder how old the brute is. Let's see if his teeth are worn." He knelt down and forced open the hideous jaws until they stood away from one another at a right angle, making a gape eighteen inches across; the teeth were evidently worn down.

All of a sudden a low booming sound came travelling down the canyon.

"What's that?" said Luck.

"War Drum," said Pedro without a moment's hesitation. "Two medicine men get away."

"Phew!" said Uncle Jock. "That'll mean the whole tribe on the war-path, won't it."

Pedro nodded.

"Well, I'm not going to leave this place empty-handed, now I've got so far," said Uncle Jock. "I'm going to find my glasses and my pipe. Wait for me here!"

And he dashed round the corner of the building out of their sight. He was not away more than five minutes really, though it seemed hours to those who were waiting for him, and the fact that the war-horn and drum were still booming up in the north did not tend to reassure them.

"It's madness staying here!" said Antonio. "We've only about twenty rounds of ammunition all told. Go and tell him, Luck!"

But before Luck could start, Uncle Jock had reappeared, wearing his glasses, smoking his pipe, and beaming from ear to ear. "Thumbs up," he said. "I found a sort of laboratory place at the back, and I've got a sample of pretty well everything in it. Look!"

And he dived his hand into one of his many pockets, which were all bulging to bursting point, and produced a handful of small phials, and pieces of rubber in various stages of transparency, also some largish seeds, spotted like beans.

"Listen, Mr. Harding," said Antonio. "We must get out of this rightaway. The whole

tribe will be down on us presently, and we've got barely twenty rounds of ammunition. You've got what you wanted, and now you must think of our lives."

"I'm not going to leave this temple standing," said Uncle Jock. "I'll tell you why later."

"Do you think you can pull it down with your hands?" asked Antonio grimly.

"No," said Uncle Jock, "but we can fire it, and that's what I'm going to do."

"Fortunately there was a pile of bone-dry brushwood, evidently meant for kindling, in a small out-house close by; and this was distributed at various points of the building and set well alight.

"Now, I'm at your service," said Uncle Jock,

And the five of them hurried down the avenue. and were out of the canyon, and following the stream under cover of the forest, within a quarter of an hour of leaving the temple, of which their last sight was a column of black smoke.

XXXIII.—EXPLANATIONS

They reached the canoes without mishap, and, thinking it wise to put rather more distance between them and the canyon, though they were now well provided with ammunition, Uncle Jock gave orders to push on immediately. Paddling all night, they made their first halt at the granite pinnacle where Gallo had shot the Cock of the Rock; and looking backwards from here they saw a heavy cloud of

smoke hanging over the canyon, which told them that there could be little left by this time of the temple. After posting sentries they settled down for a good night's rest, which five of them certainly needed. Everything was quiet when they woke on the following day, and they took the opportunity to reckon up the losses and gains of the expedition, and to compare notes of their experiences.

"I felt somehow," said Uncle Jock, "at the moment that the dart hit me that it was not one of the fatal kind, though you could hardly conceive anything more disabling. Every muscle of your body seemed to be tied up in a knot, like a sort of cramp all over you, if you can follow me. I remember getting out that one word 'Shoot' to Luck, and the tremendous effort I had to make to do it. After that I must have immediately become unconscious, for the next thing I remember is waking up with a tremendous start in the temple itself, and finding that I had been gagged and bound, and that Luck was lying alongside me in precisely the same situation, though he was still unconscious. Presently I made out Gallo's dead body, and a medicine man fully armed, sitting in a corner, as if he was keeping watch over it and us.

"There was a sky-light at the top of the place we were in, which, I suppose, was a sort of condemned cell. Anyhow there seemed precious little chance of getting out of it. It was broad day-light, but I hadn't the least idea of the time, and so I don't know how long

I was unconscious, though I shouldn't think it could have been more than an hour or two. Anyhow Luck came to, about ten minutes after I had, and we were jolly glad to see each other alive, though that was about all we could do. I was close up alongside a partition wall made up of thick stakes and boughs laced together so that it was practically solid, but there were peep-holes here and there in it close to the ground, and I did not take long in wriggling myself up to one of them, and looking through.

"The first thing I saw, though I didn't realise what it was for the moment, was the anaconda's tongue. The great brute had somehow scented us, and was glued to that hole like a cat waiting for a mouse, quivering his beastly tongue right through it.

The medicine man grinned in a horrible way at me as I rolled myself away from the hole, and from that grin I began to put two and two together. Both Luck and I were obviously meant to be kept alive for a time. That was why these particular darts had been used, and not urari ones, which would have killed us out-right. Now why? Well, I felt glad that Luck didn't know, and that I couldn't tell him. What would have been the use?

"Then night came on, and early on the next morning an Indian came in, who might have been Gallo's twin-brother. He had just the same features, and just the same faraway expression, as if he belonged to a different world altogether. He gave us food and drink—I haven't an idea what either of them were,

but they were quite good. That was the only meal we had, and we were gagged again the moment it was swallowed.

"I was given mine first, and I managed to tell Luck to cheer up, though as he was still gagged he couldn't answer me. Do you remember, Luck?"

"Rather," said Luck; "and then I said the same to you, when I was ungagged; and that the others ought to be here soon, too."

"You did," said Uncle Jock. "And I was jolly glad to hear that, because—you'll hardly believe me—I'd forgotten about the supporting party altogether! I suppose I'd had too much to think about one way and another. Well, you know all the rest of the story."

"And are you satisfied?" said Antonio.

"Yes, I think I am," said Uncle Jock; "taking one thing with another. I've lost my watch, my compass, and both my automatics. On the other hand I've still got my spectacles. I've got enough material to start a rubber plantation with any luck; and deal with its produce in the right way, if our chemists are any use."

* * * * *

And now I must use the story-teller's privilege to carry you over a very long stretch of country in a very short space of time.

I must transport you to a merry party on board the *Manatee* in Manaos harbour. You will expect, of course, to find old Ebenezer among them, and Antonio, and Pedro, and

José, and Uncle Jock and Luck. But I think you will probably be surprised to find Captain Adams, who had tumbled over the *Manatee's* side within five minutes of her arrival, and had been an honoured guest ever since.

He had suddenly taken the idea into his head of extending his business up the Amazon, and had arrived from the east in the *Venus* two days before the *Manatee* had arrived from the north, to find on inquiry that she was expected daily. A few minutes' conversation had decided that Uncle Jock and Luck and Old Ebenezer should return with him down river, pick up the collections at Pará, drop Ebenezer, and sail to Barbadoes where they would get into a homeward-bound liner. What of the *Manatee*? you will ask. Well, Uncle Jock gave the *Manatee* to Antonio.

"You saved both my life and Luck's," he said; "and nothing I could give you could balance that."

And what of the rubber? Well, Captain Adams and Uncle Jock went into that matter thoroughly, and decided that the best thing they could do would be to get the seeds and chemicals to Kew to see what the wise men there could make of them. I have little doubt myself that sooner or later transparent rubber will be on the market, but how long it will be in coming I cannot tell. Rubber trees take about ten years to grow tappable.

SELF-STUDY EXERCISES

CHAPTERS I-VI

1. Write negative or affirmative notes for a debate on this topic: *Luck was just the sort of boy to be the servant of an explorer.*
2. A good pioneer needs: (*a*) to have all his wits about him, (*b*) to be brave, (*c*) to be strong, (*d*) to be unselfish. Why are these qualities necessary?
3. Describe the appearance of Uncle Jock.
4. Give reasons why Luck felt out of place when he was on the liner.
5. Write out from memory any questions Luck asked Uncle Jock.
6. Describe briefly any misadventure that happened to Luck while he was on the liner.
7. Why did Uncle Jock leave the liner and complete the sea-journey on the *Venus*?
8. Luck was more happy on the *Venus* than he was on the liner. Why?
9. Luck picked up much information on the *Venus*. Mention some of the things he found out.
10. What was Luck's great misadventure on the *Venus*?
11. Describe (*a*) a flying fish, (*b*) a goby, (*c*) frigate birds and their habits.
12. How does a flying fish make its journey through the air? Does it use its fins?

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13. The captain of the *Venus* told a funny story about a roly-poly pudding. Re-tell the story in your own way.
14. Write a composition entitled *The life story of an eel*.
15. Which did you find the more interesting—the adventure with the jelly-fish or the adventure with the whale? Give reasons.

CHAPTERS VII-X

16. Why was Uncle Jock surprised when he examined the rubber sample?
17. Mention some of the uses to which transparent rubber could be put.
18. Write in *words*: " $3^{\circ} 3' N$ by $63^{\circ} 3' W$ "
19. Uncle Jock took over a trust from the captain of the *Venus*. Say what he agreed to do, and say why he agreed to swear on the Testament.
20. Uncle Jock gave Luck some good advice. He said to him: "*You'll find that you've got to look out for the little things in the forest more than the big ones.*" What did Uncle Jock mean by this statement?
21. Why was an Indian pilot taken aboard the *Venus* when the Pará river was reached?
22. On leaving the *Venus*, Luck made a promise to the captain. What was it?
23. Mr. Angelo arranged several matters for Uncle Jock. Give details.
24. Mention some of the things that interested Luck while he was in Mr. Angelo's garden. Describe *one* of the things as fully as you can.
25. Write a short paragraph about the *Manatee*.

26. What is a galley? · Make a list of the things that were in the galley of the *Manatee*. Why had Ebenezer to depend upon a Primus stove or an oil-cooker?
27. How many “rooms” were there in the *Manatee*?

CHAPTERS XI-XIII

28. What are the following things: (a) spares, (b) an automatic pistol, (c) a collector’s gun, (d) an armoury, (e) a magazine rifle, (f) butterfly nets, (g) a medicine chest? Say why each of these things was necessary.
29. Why did Uncle Jock want a camera and a microscope?
30. Find out why the chronometer, the sextant and the aneroid were likely to be useful to Uncle Jock.
31. Why did Uncle Jock prefer to travel inland by water?
32. Write out the names of the people who formed the crew of the *Manatee*.
33. Which do you like the better—José or Pompey? Describe your favourite, and say why you like him.
34. Why was Rastus taken with the party?
35. The *Manatee* had two *large* storage tanks for petrol. Why were *large* tanks needed?
36. “*Most good sea boats are lively.*” Explain this statement.
37. Mention some of the things which Luck must have noticed as the *Manatee* worked her way through the “forest channel.”
38. Find out what a “snag” is. Then say why it was necessary for those on board the *Manatee* to keep a sharp look-out for snags.

39. Tell the story of Rastus and the butterflies in your own words.
40. Read what Uncle Jock says about "mimicry." Does any English insect or animal depend upon "mimicry?"

CHAPTERS XIV-XVIII

41. Say why Luck disliked mosquitoes, gadflies, ticks and ants. How did mosquito-netting help to protect the people on the *Manatee*?
42. How does the blow-gun get its name? Give a reason why Uncle Jock did not care to use the blow-gun.
43. What reptile is a caiman like? What helped Luck to distinguish between a caiman and a log of wood?
44. Give *one* reason why Uncle Jock took wireless apparatus with him.
45. Why did Uncle Jock disapprove of the killing of the toucans?
46. What was curious about the frog's nest discovered by Luck?
47. How can you tell from what you have read that it is a difficult matter to force a way through a forest?
48. What preparations did Pedro make in order to catch the monkey? Of what use was the fish?
49. Was the first wireless experiment a success?
50. Why did Pedro kill the jaguar? Say why the jaguar is described as a "great spotted cat."
51. When Uncle Jock saw the coaita and the marmoset he said to Pedro: "How on earth did you catch them both?" Give Pedro's explanation in your own words.

52. Describe an incident which shows that even monkeys have a "fellow-feeling."

CHAPTERS XIX-XXIII

53. Why should the melody "When we come to the end of a perfect day" remind Uncle Jock of the War and of his service in the "Line"?
54. Why did Uncle Jock switch off suddenly?
55. Think over what you have read about the tamandua, and write a sentence about each of the following: (a) his fore-feet, (b) his tail, (c) his nose, (d) his tongue.
56. Imagine that you are Mr. Angelo. Write a letter to Uncle Jock giving him information about Antonio Diaz.
57. Why was Pompey sent back to Pará? Do you think that he was glad to go back?
58. Was Antonio able to give Uncle Jock much information about the trees from which transparent rubber was supposed to be obtained?
59. When did the medicine chest come in useful? Did Uncle Jock know how to use the contents?
60. What did certain Indians tell Uncle Jock about (a) cannibals, (b) the Wood Demon? Did their tales frighten him?
61. Describe Gallo, the Indian.
62. What is an oba? At what stage of the journey did the obas prove useful?
63. When the obas were made ready certain things were taken on board—other things were left behind. Make a list of the things which were taken on the obas.
64. Why was Ebenezer left behind?

- 65. What difficulties have to be faced in ascending a rapid?
- 66. Why did the eighth rapid present more difficulties than the others? How did the travellers meet the difficulties?

CHAPTERS XXIV-XXVIII

- 67. Give a short account of the art of "turtle-shooting."
- 68. How did Gallo prove that he knew much about the rubber trees for which Uncle Jock was searching?
- 69. Why was Gallo unwilling to guide more than *two* of the party to the canyon? Do you think his excuse was a good one?
- 70. How can you tell that Antonio did not trust Gallo? Give examples of any things that Antonio said, or did, to illustrate your answer.
- 71. "*They travelled without the noise of a propeller.*" Why?
- 72. (a) Describe the "killing" of the bird called "Cock of the Rock," (b) was the bird suitably named?
- 73. Uncle Jock split his forces. Who were the members of the first party? Who belonged to the supporting party? How was Antonio's party armed?
- 74. When Uncle Jock examined the canyon a *second* time he discovered something which puzzled him. What was it? Did Gallo know what the object was?
- 75. (a) Why did Gallo leave Uncle Jock and Luck? (b) Who saw him sneak away? (c) How did this person know that Gallo was *deserting* his party? (d) What did Gallo steal from Uncle Jock?
- 76. Say in a few words how Uncle Jock and Luck managed to get out of danger when they met an anaconda at close quarters.

77. "*Keep to the left trail here and look out for anaconda. Will leave contents of envelope under stone heap.*"
(a) For whom was this message meant? (b) Did the message help the person who found it?
78. Uncle Jock found a message in the sealed envelope. Write out the message in your own words. Why did Uncle Jock make a copy of the message?
79. Uncle Jock noticed a very curious thing about the stone bridge. Say what he noticed.

CHAPTERS XXIX-XXXIII

80. Describe the rubber trees which formed the avenue, and say something about the markings which had been made on the trunks.
81. "*Ware Branches.*" Show from what happened to Uncle Jock that this warning was not an idle one.
82. How was Gallo repaid for his treachery?
83. How was it that the *second* party managed to reach the temple without mishap? Mention some of the precautions that were taken, and give an account of the special work done by any individual member of the party.
84. Describe in detail how the members of the second party gained admittance to the temple.
85. What was behind the sliding door? Why did the priests keep this thing?
86. What do you think would have happened to Uncle Jock and Luck if they had not been rescued?
87. Why was the anaconda of the temple different from most of his kind?
88. "*War Drum.*" Why did these words hurry events? Who refused to be hurried?

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89. Did Uncle Jock do the right thing when he fired the temple?
90. When the party were out of danger Uncle Jock told a story. Tell this story in your own words.
91. What did Uncle Jock gain by this expedition?
92. What became of the *Manatee*?
93. What did Uncle Jock do with the rubber seeds and chemicals?

GENERAL QUESTIONS

94. Uncle Jock, Luck, Pedro, Ebenezer, José, Antonio, Gallo, Captain Adams. Arrange these characters in order of merit, placing your favourite at the head of the list.
95. Take any two of the following and say how they proved useful: (a) the "automatics," (b) compasses, (c) glasses, (d) a magazine rifle, (e) the sextant, (f) the microscope.
96. Which of the adventures described in the book interested you most of all?
97. Describe:—
 - (a) Any brave deed done by Luck.
 - (b) An incident in which Uncle Jock showed his coolness.
 - (c) A conversation in which Pedro showed common sense.
 - (d) A mistake made by Uncle Jock.
 - (e) A mistake made by Gallo.
98. Would you like Luck for a class-mate? Give reasons.
99. Write out six questions that you could put to Uncle Jock if you met him.
100. Describe: (a) an insect, (b) a fish, (c) a reptile, or (d) an animal mentioned in the story.

