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# An Adventure Among Cannibals

By Captain R. W. Nye.

Off Lunble Island, October 28, 1853, at 3 a. m., as the bluff-bowed old-fashioned whaler Governor Carver came in stays the little form of a boy slipped down the outer bobstay, took to the water and struck out for shore, distant about a mile and a half. The night was pitch dark, but the surf on the beach could be heard as the wind was light, and the boy judged his distance to be less than it really was. He had been flogged most unmercifully by the captain a few days before with the end of the main topgallant sheet whip and had been kicked and cuffed from one end of the ship to the other. He was only a little under 13 years of age and did not care whether he lived or died, for the ship was a living hell to him.

As he dropped into the water and the ship filled away on the off shore tack he breathed a prayer to heaven that God might give him the strength, wind and endurance to reach shore. He struck out with long, steady strokes; the water was nice and warm and he was a fine swimmer, for at the place where he was brought up the boys were in the water half the time in the summer.

**The Ship Had Vanished.**

Stroke after stroke he gave and looked over his shoulder into the darkness; the ship had vanished. He breathed a sigh of relief and murmured, "Thank God, they did not miss me and lower a boat. I guess I am now clear of that floating hell."

He had heard from the captain and officers when conversing at the table what was cabin boy about the cannibals on some of the islands in the Malay Archipelago, and had listened with wonder and fear. All this came home to him as he swam silently along. "Better take my chances with those people than live the life of a dog among my own," thought he.

Swimming steadily with a long, easy stroke, at times he saw the bright streak of phosphorus as a fish of some kind shot through the water. He was getting somewhat tired, so he stripped off his clothes, which were only dungarees, and being relieved of their weight, he gained fresh vigor. His hands shot out ahead and at every stroke his body stretched to its full length. As he slipped through the water he heard the surf plainly on the reef as it roiled gently in toward the shore.

"If I can only strike a passage between the coral so it will not scratch me up it will be fine. I wish it would break daylight so I could see how far off I am, but it must lack an hour or more yet."

Louder and louder roared the surf on the reef, and he could see the white line of breakers.

"Almost there," he said, and another prayer was breathed as he took the outside breaker. "God help me!" and he gritted his teeth as the breaker carried him along at a tremendous speed and broke over his head. "Now for the next," he muttered, as he regained some of his lost wind. Everything was now a white, seething foam, his strength was failing, his breath getting short. "Oh, God!"—and consciousness left him as a tremendous roller came along, picked him up and heaved him in clean over the reef.

**Found by Two Girls.**

Just after sunrise two young native girls were passing along the beach to take their morning plunge. They were the king's daughters.

"What is that," said the younger one, "lying out on the sand pit? It looks like a body, but it is white." They had never seen a white man, but had heard the old men of the tribe say there was such a race of people.

They soon reached the spot where lay the object of their curiosity. They put their hands on him and drew their fingers over his skin to see if it was painted.

"'Tis a white boy," said Tika, the younger.  
 "Yes, it is one of the race we have heard about," said Lua. "He is alive. Let's roll him over and look at his face."

As they rolled him over a groan came from the boy and, relieved of the salt water, he soon opened his eyes, stared in wonder into the two faces of the young girls, murmured in English, "Where am I?" and dropped off into a dead faint again. One of the girls ran to the village, told the king of their find and asked for a couple of men to bring him in.

Lua, the elder, remained with the boy, rolled the water out of him, held his head and now and then rubbed her nose against his, the manner of a friendly greeting among the savages in those days.

It was not long before a lot of na-

tives came and took him up and carried him to the village, the two girls walking one on each side. All the natives drew their fingers over his body and looked at their tips and chattered among themselves. Both girls looked on the boy as he lay on the rude stretcher and at times cast glances at each other as if to say, "he is mine."

**Asked for His Life.**

As the party approached the village the old king looked out from the bungalow that was stuck up on stilts and gave the command to bring him inside. The Princesses Tika and Lua begged that his life be spared and he be given to them. The old king loved his two daughters and it was little they asked for that they did not get.

The boy regained his senses after an hour or so and was rubbed down with coconut oil and a fancy grass tappa encircled his loins, all the clothing any one wore on the island.

The best of food to be had was given to the boy and no young prince of a royal blood of a civilized country was treated with more respect. He was the idol of the island, "the White God," as he was called, and the toy of the Princesses Lua and Tika, who loved him in their wild way. The natives bent the knee and put their hand to their forehead with bowed head as the white God passed, always in company with one or both of the princesses. It was like coming out of Hades for the boy and all his fears had vanished like a bad dream.

The tom-toms were beating and the wild, weird war chant was ringing over the water. The large war canoes were returning from a battle with a neighboring island tribe, and were returning home victorious. They had been away over two weeks and the old men and women feared that they had been taken and killed.

As was the custom in those days, all captives were to be put to death and a great festival held among the victorious combatants. Spears, bows and arrows, also that terrible Malay kreese, were the weapons used.

The whole of the remaining part of the tribe congregated on the beach, the white God and the two princesses at their head. Ding-dong, tom-tom and "Lua Noua Jaja" rasa si ang il, rose the wild chant plaine rand plainer as the canoes drew nearer. The boy had been a captive among them now for six months and could speak the language quite fluently. He was little less than a captive, for he was always under surveillance of one or both the princesses.

"What it is, Lua?" asked the boy.  
 "What?" asked Tika.  
 "Why, the meaning of this music and chanting?"

"Why, don't you know? It is the song of victory. They have a lot of prisoners and there will be a great feast."

**A Cannibal Feast.**

The boy shuddered as he thought of what he had heard at the cabin table from the cruel captain and his officers. He almost wished himself back there again.

The large canoes landed on the beach, out leaped the warriors, the old king at their head. He approached his daughters and the native nose rub was given; the white God received one, which was unpleasant to him, but he had to stand for it.

Sixteen captives were brought on shore, bound hand and foot. Four were young girls not over 16 years of age, and not bad looking, their hair hanging burning brightly. Sixteen hardwood stakes sharpened at the upper end were stuck in the ground. The wild, weird death chant with the muffled tom-toms sounded on the tropical night air. A boy of a color different from any of the rest, on his knees pleading, begging at the old king's feet to spare those young girls' lives; a princess kneels at each side of the boy interceding and begging that his boon be granted.

The savage king's face relented, and a smile passed over it. "Well, well, children, since you grieve and beg so much for their lives, they shall be spared, but on one consideration—they shall be your slaves."

Four stakes were taken up and the remaining twelve were divided at an equal distance to form the circle. The girls were released and turned over to the princesses, who took charge of them.

The rest of the captives were on their knees, bound, and heads bowed in front of each stake. The king entered the circle, the boy and his two guards stood on the outside. The old king gave some command—the headman swings that terrible, long, heavy kreese—but let us close our eyes on the scene and forget it, as the boy is still trying to do after a lapse of fifty years.

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# ESCAPE FROM GULF SHARKS

Ever since Aristotle's time, when two men descended into "deep water" in a "kettle," diving has been a dangerous affair. The divers' dangers are threefold: he is in danger descending, for then he may be literally "swallowed" by the pressure of the lateral air; and he is in danger ascending, for then he is subject to the "bends," which, if the exact opposite, is exactly as bad; and, if neither "swallowed" nor "bent" by the atmospheric pressure, he is frequently in danger of both from some passing whale or man-eating shark. The modern diver is rigged up with a telephonic apparatus, which serves him in good stead, but up to a few years ago the diver had been forced to depend wholly upon tugs at the lif line to communicate with those above. This was true in the case of George Means, whose story is told in The Scientific American. He recounts:

It was in the Gulf of Mexico, and I had to go down to look up the condition of the Bella Marta, sunk two years before, and supposed to contain a good deal of coin. The water was only nine fathoms, and I did not expect much trouble, but I got it. I had a good man on the line, and thought my pump was all right, yet from the first I experienced difficulty in getting air. It was found out afterward that there was a leaky valve. I pulled for more, and for a while it came better; then I got to work 'n earnest. The water was as clear as a bell, and I didn't have any difficulty at all in finding the hull, although she was half covered with sand. But I had all thoughts of her scared out of me in short order. I had crawled through some of her rigging and wreckage to go down in the hold—dangerous thing to do, but I couldn't help it. I was getting along nicely, and had the hatch almost broken through, when I saw a shadow about fifteen feet long above me. I knew it was a shark, and I was a badly scared man. Of course, I commenced working my way back as soon as possible, but I wasn't quick enough. The brute saw me and came at me slowly, jaws open wide and wicked eyes gleaming like sin. And I couldn't get out, because the way I had come was the way to his jaws—he, was on the wrong side for me. I was in mortal terror lest he go at my tube, but he had eyes for bigger game. There was but one thing to do, so I drew my knife—luckily it was a good ten-inch blade—and waited. It was my first experience with sharks, and I was nervous, but the thought that my life depended on no one but me kept my head clear. He came at me suddenly, with a rush, and turned almost on his back, so as to give his scissor jaw a chance. That was my chance, and I gave it to him twice in the throat, slashing as much as I could.

The water was red in a minute, and as I threw myself on my face I just prayed he would swim off to clear water. He did, I guess, because things were quiet for a while, and as soon as my heart stopped pounding long enough for me to get my breath, I commenced to feel my way back again through the maze of woodwork, spars, wreckage, and old cordage through which I had crept to get at the interior of the hull. It was slow work, and hazy red as the water was, I was afraid of cutting my own line. About this time the air got scarce again, and I was in a desperate hurry, I tell you. I did finally manage to get clear, and, all unnerved, I gave the signal to haul up, when—see this here stump of a leg? Either that shark or another one came along just then and got the rest of it. I hauled with all my might; and the man at the line, "feeling" something wrong, hauled, too. I came

up with a rush, my helmet full of water and nearly choked to death. The blood was coming out of ears and mouth as well as my stump, and they gave me up for dead, but I pulled around. No, never dived any more; didn't want to, either. The company gave me a pension, and now I just enjoy it."

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# I.O. O.F.

All Odd Fellows, Rebekahs and friends are hereby fraternally invited to be present at our Memorial Services to be held at the Odd Fellows Hall Sunday afternoon, June 18, at two-thirty.

# COMMITTEE.

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