20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA

First and Greatest Story of a Submarine Boat

By JULES VERNE

IT BEATS THE DEUTSCHLAND!

There is no story of such timely and absorbing interest as this wonderfully prophetic, world-famous classic relating strange, thrilling adventures concerned with a craft of the deep conceived by the most inventive writer in the history of fiction years before the skill of man produced the terrible U-boat.

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

In the year 1866 "an enormous thing," resembling a whale in its movements, was sighted in various waters and it caused general alarm when it struck and damaged several vessels. Agitation over the matter resulted in the organization in the United States of an expedition to destroy the monster, the supposed narwhal. A frigate, the Abraham Lincoln, commanded by Capt. Farragut, was fitted out for this mission and started from its Brooklyn pier with 500,000 people cheering it on the way. One of the members of the expedition is Pierre Aronnax, professor in the Museum of Natural History in Paris. He takes with him a devoted Flemish servant named Conseil. Among others on board is a Canadian, Ned Land, noted for his skill as a harpooner of whales. For three months the Abraham Lincoln sought the waters of the Northern Pacific without any sign of the monster. Then one night, 200 miles off the coast of Japan, Ned Land sights a strange object that makes a luminous pathway through the sea. Suddenly the monster rushes toward the Abraham Lincoln, stops within twenty feet of the hull, sinks beneath the surface and then reappears on the other side of the frigate. Not knowing how to attack this unknown thing, Capt. Farragut decides to wait for daylight. In the morning the frigate pursues the mysterious object and fires a shot at it, but the bullet glances off the rounded surface. Then Ned Land hurls his harpoon at it. Two watermounts break over the Abraham Lincoln, then a heavy shock is felt, and Prof. Aronnax is thrown over the rail into the sea. Conseil leaps after him. Both are nearly exhausted when they are dragged to the top of something that is like a fish of steel by Ned Land, who is perched there. It begins to move slowly through the water. At daybreak an iron plate is unlifted and a man's head appears. The castaways are drawn down into the machine by masked men and later told by the commander of the submarine that they will remain on his vessel. He briefly says that he is to be known to them as Capt. Nemo. The professor is conducted through the boat and is surprised to find a library, drawing room and dining room elegantly furnished. Capt. Nemo explains that his vessel was put together on a desert island by workmen under his direction.

TWO TERRIBLE SHARKS PASSED WITHOUT SEEING US.

CHAPTER XIV.

(Continued.)

A Note of Invitation.

I HAD made up my mind that I should never see him again, when, on Nov. 16, on returning to my room with Ned and Conseil, I found upon my table a note addressed to me. I opened it impatiently. It was written in a bold, clear hand, the characters rather pointed, recalling the German type. The note was worded as follows:

"To Prof. Aronnax, on Board the Nautilus.

"16th of November, 1867.

"Capt. Nemo invites Prof. Aronnax to a hunting party, which will take place to-morrow morning in the forests of the Island of Crespo. He hopes that nothing will prevent the Professor from being present, and he will with pleasure see him joined by his companions. CAPT. NEMO,

"Commander of the Nautilus."

I consulted the planisphere, and in 32 degrees 40 minutes north latitude, and 157 degrees 50 minutes west longitude, I found a small island, recognized in 1801 by Capt. Crespo, and marked in the ancient Spanish maps as Rocca de la Plata, the meaning of which is "The Silver Rock."

"If Capt. Nemo does sometimes go on dry ground," said I, "he at least chooses desert islands."

The next morning, the 17th of November, on awakening I felt that the Nautilus was perfectly still. I dressed quickly and entered the saloon.

Cat. Nemo was there waiting for me. He rose, bowed and asked me if it was convenient for me to accompany him. As he made no allusion to his absence during the last eight days I did not mention it, and simply answered that my companions and myself were ready to follow him.

We entered the dining room, where breakfast was served.

"M. Aronnax," said the Captain, "pray share my breakfast without ceremony; we will chat as we eat. For though I promised you a walk in the forest I did not undertake to find hotels there. So breakfast as a man who will most likely not have his dinner till late."

Capt. Nemo ate at first without saying a word. Then he began:

"Sir, when I proposed to you to hunt in my submarine forest of Crespo you evidently thought me mad. Sir, you should never judge lightly of any man."

"But, Captain, believe me"—

"Be kind enough to listen and you will then see whether you have any cause to accuse me of folly and contradiction."

"I listen."

"You know as well as I do, Professor, that man can live under water, providing he carries with him a sufficient supply of breathable air. In submarine works, the workman, clad in an impervious dress, with his head in a metal helmet, receives air from above by means of forcing-pumps and regulators."

"That is a diving apparatus," said I.

"Just so; but under these conditions the man is not at liberty; he is attached to the pump which sends him air through an india-rubber tube, and if we were obliged to be thus held to the Nautilus we could not go far."

"And the means of getting free?" I asked.

"It is to use the Rouquayrol apparatus, invented by two of your own countrymen, which I have brought to perfection for my own use and which will allow you to risk yourself under these new physiological conditions without any organ whatever suffering. It consists of a reservoir of thick iron plates in which I store the air under a pressure of fifty atmospheres. This reservoir is fixed on the back by means of braces like a sailor's knapsack. Its upper part forms a box in which the air is kept by means of a bellows, and therefore can not escape unless at its normal tension. In the Rouquayrol apparatus such as we use, two India rubber pipes leave this box and join a sort of tent which holds the nose and mouth; one is to introduce fresh air, the other to let out the foul, and the tongue closes one or the other according to the wants of the respirator. But I, in encountering great pressures at the bottom of the sea, was obliged to shut my head, like that of a diver, in a ball of copper; and it is to this ball of copper that the two pipes, the inspirator and the expirator, open."

"Perfectly, Capt. Nemo; but the air that you carry with you must soon be used; when it only contains fifteen per cent. of oxygen it is no longer fit to breathe."

"Right! but I told you, M. Aronnax, that the pumps of the Nautilus allow me to store the air under considerable pressure; and on those conditions the reservoir of the apparatus can furnish breathable air for nine or ten hours."

"I have no further objections to make," I answered; "I will only ask you one thing, Captain—how can you light your road at the bottom of the sea?"

"With the Ruhmkorff apparatus, M. Aronnax; one is carried on the back, the other is fastened to the waist. It is composed of a Bunsen pile, which I do not work with bichromate of potash, but with sodium. A wire is introduced which collects the electricity produced, and directs it toward a particularly made lantern. In this lantern is a spiral glass which contains a small quantity of carbonic gas. When the apparatus is at work, this gas becomes luminous, giving out a white and continuous light. Thus provided, I can breathe and I can see."

"Capt. Nemo, to all my objections you make such crushing answers that I dare no longer doubt. I must be allowed some reservations with regard to the gun I am to carry."

"But it is not a gun for powder," answered the Captain, "I use air under great pressure, which the pumps of the Nautilus furnish abundantly. With this gun every blow is mortal, and however lightly the animal is touched, it falls as if struck by a thunderbolt."

"Why? Because the balls sent by this gun are not ordinary balls but little cases of glass (invented by Leniebroek, an Austrian chemist), of which I have a large supply. Those glass cases are covered with a case of steel, and weighted with a pellet of lead; they are real Leyden bottles, into which the electricity is forced to a very high tension. With the slightest shock they are discharged, and the animal, however strong it may be, falls dead. I must tell you that these cases are size No. 4, and that the charge for an ordinary gun would be ten."

Capt. Nemo then led me aft, and in passing before Ned and Conseil's cabin I called my two companions, who followed immediately. We then came to a kind of cell near the machinery room, in which we were to put on our walking dress.

CHAPTER XV.

The Bottom of the Sea.

THIS cell was, to speak correctly, the arsenal and wardrobe of the Nautilus. A dozen diving apparatuses hung from the partition, waiting our use.

Ned Land, on seeing them, showed evident repugnance to dress himself in one.

"But, my worthy Ned, the forests of the Island of Crespo are nothing but submarine forests."

"Good!" said the disappointed harpooner, who saw his dreams of fresh meat fade away. "And you, M. Aronnax, are you going to dress yourself in those clothes?"

"There is no alternative, Master Ned."

"As you please, sir," replied the harpooner, shrugging his shoulders; "but as for me, unless I am forced, I will never get into one."

"No one will force you, Master Ned," said Capt. Nemo.

"Is Conseil going to risk it?" asked Ned.

"I follow my master wherever he goes," replied Conseil.

At the Captain's call two of the ship's crew came to help us to dress in these heavy and impervious clothes, made of india-rubber without seam, and constructed expressly to resist considerable pressure. The trousers were finished off with thick boots, weighted with heavy leaden shoes.

Capt. Nemo and one of his companions (a sort of Hercules, who must have possessed great strength), Conseil and myself, were soon enveloped in the dresses. There remained nothing more to be done but to enclose our heads in the metal box. But before proceeding to this operation, I asked the Captain's permission to examine the guns we were to carry.

One of the Nautilus men gave me a simple gun, the butt end of which, made of steel hollow in the centre, was rather large. It served as a reservoir for compressed air, which a valve, worked by a spring, allowed to escape into a metal tube. A box of projectiles, in a groove in the thickness of the butt-end, contained about twenty of these electric balls, which by means of a spring were forced into the barrel of the gun. As soon as one shot was fired another was ready.

Capt. Nemo thrust his head into the helmet; Conseil and I did the same. The upper part of our dress terminated in a copper collar, upon which was screwed the metal helmet. Three holes, protected by thick glass, allowed us to see in all directions by simply turning our heads in the interior of the head dress. As soon as it was in position the Rouquayrol apparatus on our backs began to act; and for my part, I could breathe with ease.

With the Ruhmkorff lamp hanging from my belt and the gun in my hand, I was ready to set out. But to speak the truth, imprisoned in these heavy garments, and glued to the deck by my leaden shoes, it was impossible for me to take a step.

But this state of things was provided for. I felt myself being pushed into a little room contiguous to the wardrobe-room. My companions followed, towed along in the same way. I heard a water-tight door, furnished with stopper-plates, close upon us, and we were wrapped in profound darkness.

After some minutes a loud hissing was heard. I felt the cold mount from my feet to my chest. Evidently from some part of the vessel they had by means of a tap given entrance to the water, which was invading us, and with which the room was soon filled. A second door cut in the side of the Nautilus then opened. We saw a faint light. In another instant our feet trod the bottom of the sea.

Capt. Nemo walked in front, his companion followed some steps behind. Conseil and I remained near each other. I no longer felt the weight of my clothing, or of my shoes, of my reservoir of air, or my thick helmet, in the midst of which my head rattled like an almond in its shell.

The light, which lit the soil thirty feet below the surface of the ocean, astonished me by its power. I clearly distinguished objects at a distance of a hundred and fifty yards. We were walking on fine, even sand.

Soon forms of objects outlined in the distance were discernible. I recognized magnificent rocks, hung with a tapestry of zoophytes of the most beautiful kind, and I was at first struck by the peculiar effect of this medium.

It was then ten in the morning; the rays of the sun struck the surface of the waves at rather an oblique angle, and at the touch of their light, decomposed by refraction as through a prism, flowers, rocks, plants, shells, and polypi were shaded at the edges by the seven solar colors.

All these wonders I saw in the space of a quarter of a mile, scarcely stopping, and following Capt. Nemo, who beckoned me on by signs. Soon the nature of the soil changed; to the sandy plain succeeded an extent of slimy mud. We then travelled over a plain of sea weed of wild and luxuriant vegetation. We had quitted the Nautilus about an hour and a half. It was near noon.

At this moment Capt. Nemo stopped; he waited till I joined him, and then pointed to an obscure mass, looming in the shadow, at a short distance.

"It is the forest of the Island of Crespo," thought I—and I was not mistaken.

CHAPTER XVI.

A Submarine Forest.

WE had at last arrived on the borders of this forest, doubtless one of the finest of Capt. Nemo's immense domains.

This forest was composed of large tree plants, and the moment we penetrated under its vast arcades I was struck by the singular position of their branches.

Not an herb which carpeted the ground, not a branch which clothed the trees, was either broken or bent, nor did they extend horizontally; all stretched up to the surface of the ocean.

In about an hour Capt. Nemo gave the signal to halt. I, for my part, was not sorry, and we stretched ourselves under an arbor of alariae, the long thin blades of which stood up like arrows.

After four hours of this walking I was surprised not to find myself dreadfully hungry. But, instead, I felt an insurmountable desire to sleep, which happens to all divers. And my eyes soon closed behind the thick glasses, and I fell into a heavy slumber, which the movement alone had prevented before. Capt. Nemo had his robust companion, stretched in the clear crystal, set us the example.

How long I remained buried in this drowsiness I can not judge; but when I woke the sun seemed sinking toward the horizon. Capt. Nemo had already risen, and I was beginning to stretch my limbs, when an unexpected apparition brought me briskly to my feet.

A few steps off a monster sea-spider, about thirty-eight inches high, was watching me with squinting eyes, ready to spring upon me. Though my diver's dress was thick enough to defend me from the bite of this animal I could not help shuddering with horror. Capt. Nemo pointed out the hideous crustacean, which a blow from the butt-end of the gun knocked over, and I saw the horrible claws of the monster writhe in terrible convulsions.

Capt. Nemo continued his bold excursion. The ground was still on the incline, its declivity seemed to be getting greater and to be leading us to greater depths. It must have been about 3 o'clock when we reached a narrow valley, between high perpendicular walls, situated about seventy-five fathoms deep. At ten paces not an object was visible. I was groping my way, when I suddenly saw a brilliant light. Capt. Nemo had just put his electric apparatus into use; his companion did the same, and Conseil and I followed their example. By turning a screw I established a communication between the wire and the spiral glass, and the sea, lit by our four lanterns, was illuminated for a circle of thirty-six yards.

At last, after four hours, this marvelous excursion came to an end. A wall of superb rocks, in an imposing mass, rose before us, a heap of gigantic blocks, an enormous steep granite shore, forming dark grottos, but which presented no practicable slope; it was the prop of the Island of Crespo. It was the earth! Capt. Nemo stopped suddenly. A gesture of his brought us all to a halt; and however desirous I might be to scale the wall, I was obliged to stop. Here ended Capt. Nemo's domains, and he would not go beyond them.

The return began. I thought we were not following the same road to return to the Nautilus. The new road was very steep, and consequently very painful. We approached the surface of the sea rapidly. Very soon light reappeared and grew, and the sun being low on the horizon the refraction edged the different objects with a spectral ring. At ten yards and a half deep we walked amidst a shoal of little fishes of all kinds, more numerous than the birds of the air, but no adequate game worthy of a shot had as yet met our gaze, when at that moment I saw the captain shoulder his gun quickly and follow a moving object into the shrubs. He fired; I heard a slight hissing, and a creature fell stunned at some distance from us. It was a magnificent sea otter, an enhydrus, the only exclusively marine quadruped. This otter was five feet long and must have been very valuable. Capt. Nemo's companion took the beast, threw it over his shoulder and we continued our journey. For one hour a plain of sand lay stretched before us.

On this occasion I was witness to one of the finest gunshots which ever made the nerves of a hunter thrill. A large bird, of great breadth of wing, clearly visible, approached, hovering over us. Capt. Nemo's companion shouldered his gun and fired, when it was only a few yards above the waves. The creature fell stunned, and the force of its fall brought it within the reach of the dexterous hunter's grasp. It was an albatross of the finest kind.

Our march had been interrupted by this incident. I saw a glimmer of light, which for a half mile broke the darkness of the waters. It was the lantern of the Nautilus.

I remained some steps behind, when I presently saw Capt. Nemo coming hurriedly toward me. With his strong hand he bent me to the ground, his companion doing the same to Conseil. At first I knew not what to think of this sudden attack, but I was soon reassured by seeing the captain lie down beside me, and remain immovable.

I was stretched on the ground, just under shelter of a bush of algae, when, raising my head, I saw some enormous mass, casting phosphorescent gleams, pass blusteringly by.

My blood froze in my veins as I recognized two formidable sharks which threatened us. They passed without seeing us, brushing us with their brownish fins. Half an hour after, guided by the electric light, we reached the Nautilus. The outside door had been left open, and Capt. Nemo closed it as soon as we had entered the first cell. He then pressed a knob. I heard the pumps working in the midst of the vessel, I felt the water sinking from around me, and in a few moments the cell was entirely empty. The inside door then opened, and we entered the vestry.

CHAPTER XVII.

Under the Pacific.

THE next morning, the 18th of November, I had quite recovered from my fatigues of the day before, and I went up on to the platform just as the Second Lieutenant was uttering his daily phrase.

I was admiring the magnificent aspect of the ocean when Capt. Nemo appeared. He did not seem to be aware of my presence, and began a series of astronomical observations. Then, when he had finished, he went and leant on the cage of the watch-light and gazed abstractedly on the ocean. In the mean time, a number of the sailors of the Nautilus, all strong and healthy men, had come up on to the platform. They came to draw up the nets that had been laid all night. These sailors were evidently of different nations, although the European type was visible in all of them. I recognized some unmistakable Irishmen, Frenchmen, some Sclaves and a Greek or a Candiote. They were civil, and only used that odd language among themselves, the origin of which I could not guess, neither could I question them.

I reckoned that the haul had brought in more than nine hundred weight of fish.

During the days and weeks that passed, Capt. Nemo was very sparing of his visits.

At 3 o'clock on the morning of Nov. 26, the Nautilus crossed the tropic of Cancer at 172 degrees longitude. On the 27th instant it sighted the Sandwich Islands. We had then gone 4,860 leagues from our starting point. In the morning, when I went on the platform, I saw two miles to windward, Hawaii, the largest of the seven islands that form the group. The direction of the Nautilus was still to the southeast. It crossed the equator Dec. 1, and on the 4th of the same month, after crossing rapidly and without anything particular occurring, we sighted the Marquesas group. I saw, three miles off, Martin's peak in Nouka-Hiva, the largest of the group that belongs to France.

During the daytime of the 11th of December, I was busy reading in the large drawing room. Ned Land and Conseil watched the luminous water through the half-open panels. The Nautilus was immovable.

Conseil interrupted me.

"Will master come here a moment?" he said, in a curious voice. "I want master to look."

I rose, went and leaned on my elbows before the panes, and watched.

In a full electric light, an enormous black mass, quite immovable, was suspended in the midst of the waters. I watched it attentively, seeking to find out the nature of this gigantic cetacean. But a sudden thought crossed my mind. "A vessel!" I said, half aloud.

"Yes," replied the Canadian, "a disabled ship that has sunk perpendicularly."

Ned Land was right; we were close to a vessel of which the tattered shrouds still hung from their chains. I counted four men, one of whom was standing at the helm.

What a scene! We were dumb; our hearts beat fast before this shipwreck, taken as it were from life, and photographed in its last moments. And I saw already, coming towards us with hungry eyes, enormous sharks.

The Nautilus, turning, went round the submerged vessel, and I read on the stern—"The Florida, Sunderland."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Vanikoro.

THIS terrible spectacle was the forerunner of the series of maritime catastrophes that the Nautilus was destined to meet with in its route. As long as it went through more frequented waters, we often saw the hulls of shipwrecked vessels that were rotting in the depths, and, deeper down, cannons, bullets, anchors, chains and a thousand other iron materials, eaten up by rust. However, on the 11th of December we sighted the Pomotou Islands, the old "dangerous group" of Bougainville, that extend over a space of 500 leagues at E.S.E. to W.N.W. from the island Ducie to the of Lazareff. These are coral islands.

Toward evening Clermont-Tonnerre was lost in the distance and the route of the Nautilus was sensibly changed. After having crossed the tropic of Capricorn in 135 degrees longitude, it sailed W. N. W., making again for the tropical zone.

On Dec. 15 we left to the east the bewitching group of the Societies and the graceful Tahiti, queen of the Pacific. On the 25th of December the Nautilus sailed into the midst of the New Hebrides.

I had not seen Capt. Nemo for a week when, on the morning of Dec. 27th, he came into the large drawing room, always seeming as if he had seen you five minutes before. I was busily tracing the route of the Nautilus on the planisphere. The captain came up to me, put his finger on one spot on the chart, and said this single word—

"Vanikoro."

The effect was magical! It was the name of the islands on which La Perouse had been lost! I rose suddenly. "The Nautilus has brought us to Vanikoro?" I asked.

"Yes, Professor," said the captain.

"And I can visit the celebrated islands where the Boussole and the Astrolabe struck?"

"If you like, Professor. We are there now."

Followed by Capt. Nemo, I went up on to the platform and greedily scanned the horizon.

To the northeast two volcanic islands emerged, of unequal size, surrounded by a coral reef that measured forty miles in circumference.

Under the verdant shade of some mangroves I perceived some savages, who appeared greatly surprised at our approach.

Under the crustations of coral, covered with fungi, syphonulea, alcyons, madrepores, through myriads of charming fish—girellea, glyphisidri, pompherides, diacopes and holocentres—I recognized certain debris that the drags had not been able to tear up; iron stirrups, anchors, cannons, bullets, capstan-fittings, the stem of a ship—all objects clearly proving the wreck of some vessel, and now carpeted with living flowers. While I was looking on this desolate scene, Capt. Nemo said, in a sad voice:

"Commander La Perouse set out Dec. 7, 1785, with his vessels La Boussole and the Astrolabe. He first cast anchor at Botany Bay, visited the Friendly Isles, New Caledonia, then directed his course toward Santa Cruz, and put into Namouka, one of the Hapai group. Then his vessels struck on the unknown reefs of Vanikoro. The Boussole, which went first, ran aground on the southerly coast. The Astrolabe went to his help, and ran aground too. The first vessel was destroyed almost immediately. The second, stranded under the wind, resisted some days. The natives made the castaways welcome. They installed themselves in the island, and constructed a smaller boat with the debris of the two larger ones. Some sailors stayed willingly at Vanikoro, the others, weak and ill, set out with La Perouse. They directed their course towards the Solomon Isles, and there perished, with everything, on the westerly coast of the chief island of the group, between Capes Deception and Battafaction."

"How do you know that?"

"By this, that I found on the spot where was the last wreck." Capt. Nemo showed me a tin-plate box, stamped with the French arms, and corroded by the salt water. He opened it and I saw a bundle of papers, yellow, but still readable.

They were the instructions of the naval minister to Commander Le Perouse, annotated in the margin in Louis XVI.'s handwriting.

"Ah! it is a fine death for a sailor!" said Capt. Nemo, at last. "A coral tomb makes a quiet grave; and I trust that I and my comrades will find no other."

CHAPTER XIX.

Torres Straits.

DURING the night of the 27th or 28th of December, the Nautilus left the shores of Vanikoro with great speed.

Her course was southwesterly, and in three days she had gone over the 750 leagues that separated it from La Perouse's group heading a southeast point of Papua.

On Jan. 3, we had made 11,340 miles, or 5,260 French leagues, since our starting point in the Japan seas.

Two days after crossing the coral sea, Jan. 4, we sighted the Papuan coasts. On this occasion, Capt. Nemo informed me that his intention was to get into the Indian Ocean by the Straits of Torres.

The Nautilus approached an island. Suddenly a shock overthrew me. The Nautilus just touched a rock and stayed immovable, laying lightly to port side.

When I rose I perceived Capt. Nemo and his Lieutenant on the platform. They were examining the situation of the vessel and exchanging words in their incomprehensible dialect.

She was situated thus: Two miles on the starboard side, appeared Gilboa, stretching from north to west like an immense arm; toward the south and east some coral showed itself, left by the ebb. We had run aground, and in one of those seas where the tides are middling—a carry matter for the floating of the Nautilus. However, the vessel had not suffered, for her keel was solidly joined. But if she could neither glide off nor move, she ran the risk of being forever fastened to these rocks, and then Capt. Nemo's submarine vessel would be done for.

I was reflecting thus when the Captain, cool and calm, always master of himself, approached me.

"An accident?" I asked.

"No; an incident."

"But an incident that will oblige you perhaps to become an inhabitant of this land from which you flee?"

Capt. Nemo looked at me curiously and made a negative gesture. Then he said:

"Besides, M. Aronnax, the Nautilus is not lost; it will carry you yet into the midst of the marvels of the ocean. Our voyage is only begun, and I do not wish to be deprived so soon of the honor of your company. To-day is Jan. 4, and in five days the moon will be full. Now, I shall be very much astonished if that complaisant satellite does not raise these masses of water sufficiently, and render me a service that I should be indebted to her for."

"Sir," said Ned to me later, "you may believe me when I tell you that this piece of iron will navigate neither on nor under the sea again; it is only fit to be sold for its weight. I think, therefore, that the time has come to part company with Capt. Nemo."

"I can ask him, but he will refuse."

"Will master risk it?" asked Conseil, "and we shall know how to rely upon the captain's amiability."

To my great surprise Capt. Nemo gave me the permission I asked for, and he gave it very agreeably, without even exacting from me a promise to return to the vessel; but flight across New Guinea might be very perilous, and I should not have counselled Ned Land to attempt it. Better to be a prisoner on board the Nautilus than to fall into the hands of the natives.

At 8 o'clock, armed with guns and hatchets, we got off the Nautilus. The sea was pretty calm; a slight breeze blew on land. Conseil and I rowing, we sped along quickly, and Ned steered in the straight passage that the breakers left between them.

Ned Land could not restrain his joy. He was like a prisoner that had escaped from prison, and knew not that it was necessary to re-enter it.

"Meat! We are going to eat some meat; and what meat!" he replied. "Real game! no, bread, indeed."

At half past eight the Nautilus boat ran softly aground, on a heavy sand, after having happily passed the coral reef that surrounds the Island of Gilboa.

CHAPTER XX.

A Few Days on Land.

I WAS much impressed on touching land. In a few minutes we were within musket shot of the coast. The whole horizon was hidden behind a beautiful curtain of forests. Enormous trees, the trunks of which attained a height of 200 feet, were tied to each other by garlands of bindweed, real natural hammocks, which a light breeze rocked.

The Canadian discovered a cocoa tree, beat down some of the fruit, broke them, and we drank the milk and ate the nut with a satisfaction that protested against the ordinary food on the Nautilus.

"Excellent!" said Ned Land.

"Exquisite!" replied Conseil.

"And I do not think," said the Canadian, "that he would object to our introducing a cargo of cocoanuts on board."

"I do not think he would, but he would not taste them."

"So much the worse for him," said Conseil.

"And so much the better for us," replied Ned Land. "There will be more for us."

"One word only, Master Land," I said to the harpooner, who was beginning to ravage another cocoanut tree. "Cocoanuts are good things, but before filling the canoe with them it would be wise to reconnoitre and see if the island does not produce some substance not less useful. Fresh vegetables would be welcome on board the Nautilus."

Chance rewarded our search for eatables, and one of the most useful products of the tropical zones furnished us with precious food that we missed on board. I would speak of the bread-fruit tree, very abundant in the Island of Gilboa; and I remarked chiefly the variety destitute of seeds, which bears in Malaya the name of "rima."

We returned through the forest and completed our collection by a raid upon the cabbage palms that we gathered from the tops of the trees, little beans that I recognized as the "abrou" of the Malaya, and yams of a superior quality.

At last, at 5 o'clock in the evening, loaded with our riches we quitted the shore, and half an hour after we hailed the Nautilus. No one appeared on our arrival. The enormous iron-plated cylinder seemed deserted. The provisions embarked, I descended to my chamber, and after supper slept soundly.

The next day, Jan. 6, nothing new on board. Not a sound inside, not a sign of life. The boat rested along the edge in the same place in which we had left it. We resolved to return to the island.

After crossing a rather long prairie, we arrived at the skirts of a little wood that was enlivened by the songs and flight of a large number of birds.

After passing through a moderately thick copse, we found a plain obstructed with bushes. I saw then those magnificent birds, the disposition of whose long feathers obliges them to fly against the wind. Their undulating flight, graceful aerial curves, and the shading of their colors, attracted and charmed one's looks. I had no trouble in recognizing them.

"Birds of Paradise!" I exclaimed.

(To Be Continued.)

TAKE THE EVENING WORLD WITH YOU ON YOUR VACATION

So that you will not miss any of the weekly novels and may continue to enjoy the daily magazine, comic and other special features. Include them in your summer reading.

Order the Evening World Mailed to Your Summer Address