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he knows. We can not catch that bird with salt on the nose, as the English say; but the young chick we can.' And then he said, 'Thou, Hahn, when we get to Kronprinzhaven, fight thou like a right Prussian, and avenge the honor of Germany.' And they laughed, and talked together, so that I could not hear. But by and by I heard Hahn, and he said: 'No matter about the choice of weapons; to me it is all the same. Thou, wilt thou take the challenge to-night?' And some one else said he would."

She stopped a moment; she seemed out of breath.

"Well!" I said to myself, ramming my hands deep down into my pockets, "this is plummy!"

To Miss Ravenna I spoke with more formality. I told her that she was very kind indeed, and that I could not be sufficiently grateful to her; that I would tell Mr. Gore what she had told me, and act on his advice; and that I hoped she would not trouble herself in any way about the matter, but rest assured that everything would be all right.

She answered nothing at all to this, but gathered her thin skirts round her, and slipped past the donkey-engine again, supported by my hand. I don't think the support was indispensable, but Isola Ravenna did not seem to find it disagreeable. For all that, I rather liked the manner in which she drew away that silken, firm small hand of hers as soon as we were on the open deck again, and the quick, silent fashion of her bow and instant disappearance.

**RED BOB** had turned in, but he answered instantly to my knock, and I entered, feeling none too comfortable in face of the interview that I foresaw. It was clear that I had been "made a hare of" in the completest manner. I had answered readily to provocation that was meant to get me into trouble, and I had allowed Richter—who was assuredly some one of importance in the secret service—to suspect a hidden motive underlying the apparent object of our journey. There was only one course to pursue, and it was bitter in my mouth. I would have to tell Gore everything, and act by his advice.

I did tell him, first turning on the noisy electric fan to make sure that no one could hear me.

Gore, sitting up in his berth, with his long legs in their gay covering, and his thin, arched bare feet dangling out into empty air, looked at me for a moment without any expression at all. Then, loosening the neck of his pajama coat,—for the night was hot,—he remarked: "We might as well have two beers."

I pressed the bell, and a steward popped up like a pantomime demon. While we waited for the beer neither of us spoke. As soon as the tall glass mugs, cloudy with coolness, had been handed in, Red Bob remarked, "Shut the door," and buried his face in his mug. I did the same, feeling that what was to be would be—hoping, anyhow, that my fun was not going to be curtailed.

Red Bob finished his beer in one slow draught, reached for a handkerchief, deliberately wiped his mustache, and said: "I suppose you understand just what kind of a fool you are?"

"Does that matter?" I said.

"Devil a bit," said Red Bob. "The thing is, what are we going to do? They have caught you in a trap that they knew was too plain for this old fox. It may stop our job. If the thing's put up, as it seems, they mightn't even play fair. They know I need a companion or I wouldn't have brought one. Yes, they can hang me up nicely—especially as you played a game with Richter that he knows better than you do. Well! These are my orders, young Paul, and you've got to mind them. You'll have to fight."

"I hope so," I cut in.

"But you're not on any account, or for any dashed piece of conceit, to kill, wound, or touch young Hahn. Do you understand? If he kills or wings you—well, that can't be helped; you've brought it on yourself. But if you even damage him, you can rely on it you will see the in-

side of the jail at Frederick Wilhelms-haven, and won't get out in a hurry. And I shall have to hang about and bother over you. And the fat will be in the fire generally. Now you have your orders. Off to bed with you."

He snapped off the light and lay down. I heard him breathing long and quietly before I was out of the cabin.

**KRONPRINZHAVEN** lies some way beyond the German-Dutch boundary of New Guinea. We came up to it in the very early morning, before the sun had gathered warmth, and while the shadows on the deck of the *Afzelia* were still powdered with dew as fine and sparkling as ground glass.

Wolff had made a formal call on the evening before on behalf of Hahn, and had arranged the details with Gore—who, of course, acted as my second. We were to use pistols at twenty paces. Hahn was rather anxious for rapiers, and I would not have been sorry to oblige him; but Gore had put me through ten minutes of fencing earlier in the evening, and delivered it as his opinion that I was safer with the pistol.

We went ashore in the ship's boat, Red Bob, Hahn, Wolff, and myself, and the mysterious Richter, who declared himself qualified as a doctor, in case we should need the services of one. The dueling pistols—Richter lent them—were hidden in the folds of a mackintosh. I can't remember much about that landing. The sun-beaten splendor, the cruel, feverish beauty of the spot, may have touched my senses at the moment—I do not know. I have only the recollection of setting foot on a beach that was white and heavy, and walking across it into a windy coolness of palms; of a dark forest after. Then the track opened out, and there was a space of empty meadow-land, and Wolff was chattering joyously about a duel he had seen in Pomerania, where "the Captain his brains all outrushing upon the green grass spilled."

I knew we had come to the place when I saw this open, sunny bit of land, walled in by the immense forest standing round about. I threw a look at Hahn, and decided, not without disappointment, that he was perfectly cool. In fact, everybody was except Wolff, and he was simply bubbling over with delight.

**GORE** and Wolff tossed for position, and Hahn won. I had the sun in my eyes, but that didn't matter much, because it was still low. I fixed my eyes on Hahn's pink face, with the golden mustache and the outstanding heavy ears, like handles to his head. I knew what I was going to do, and knew I should do it.

The handkerchief fell, and a harsh German voice cried: "*Feuer!*"

At the same moment something hit me hard on the forehead, and I staggered.

"Did I do it?" I shouted out, straightening up and trying hard to see—one eye was oddly obscured. I was afraid I might be badly hit and going to die. And if I died I shouldn't know if I had done what I wanted to do.

"Confound you all!" I cried, losing my temper as the blood—I knew it was blood now—poured down, and I began to get sick and giddy. "Can't any of you tell me—did I clip his right ear?"

"Sit down," said Richter's voice; and I sat on the grass.

"I'm not hurt," I said. "Let me have another go. I tell you, I can clip his ear like a sheep, and I want to do it."

"Sit still, thou young fire-eater, while I sew up that iron head of thine," said Richter, with the suspicion of a laugh in his hard voice. "Yes, truly, thou hast clipped his ear. A moment, now—"

He lifted the piece of scalp that had been shot loose and was hanging over my eye, and I saw Hahn a few yards away, holding a handkerchief to his ear.

"Hooray!" I cried, though weakly.

"Just the tip, wasn't it?"

"Even so," answered Hahn, looking at me with an odd mixture of expressions. "What about another go?" I asked anxiously, as soon as Richter's stitchery was finished. "I want to clip the other."

"Yes," said Hahn, showing his teeth unpleasantly. "I should like to give him the chance."

"I object," said Red Bob, coming forward. "Herr Wolff, do you consider that honor is satisfied?"

Wolff did not look as if he did, but a glance from Richter tamed him.

"Yes, yes," he said discontentedly. "The insult to Germany and to her colonies without doubt now out is wiped."

I got up from my seat and went over to Hahn.

"Shake!" I said. He put his hand into mine; and I saw, as he let his handkerchief fall, that the tip of the right ear was indeed shot neatly off.

"I could have done the other," I said, with some regret. And, to my surprise, they all burst out laughing.

"Come," said Richter, quite good-humoredly. "It is time for the coffee for one. Mr. Corbet, you shoot straight—for an Englishman."

"Sorry I can't say the same for you," I said, looking him fairly in the eyes.

I think he understood, but it took more than the discovery of one small plot to unnerve Justus Richter.

"Ah," he said pleasantly, "you mean Hahn." (I didn't.) "But I think he has shot quite near enough for you. Do you like to see the native village before we will return to the ship? I know all this coast, and I can conduct you with safety."

I said I would like it, and we left the field of battle in a body, all very cheerful, as I suppose people generally are after a duel in which no one has been killed and there has been a little bloodshed, just to give the event a flavor. Gore was swinging along in front, just about to enter the forest, his hat tossed back on his head, his big frame slightly bent forward to hear what Richter was saying, when, all of a sudden, he straightened himself up, cast a glance at the path ahead, and bolted back with such suddenness that he cannoned violently against Wolff, knocking Hahn into a lemon tree full of thorns and throwing me into the arms—or, to speak more accurately, on to the well cushioned stomach—of Richter.

For a moment we were all too fully occupied with ourselves to notice the cause of the disaster. Hahn came out of the lemon tree with a scratched face, spitting thorns on the ground and cursing. Richter swore violently at me in German before he realized that I was not the moving force in the attack. Then he broke off gasping and asked what was the matter with the "*verfluchter Engländer*."

Wolff, who alone had escaped without actual damage, went back a little way, and stared at the vanishing form of Gore, which had crossed the open grass with wonderful speed, and was now all but lost in the forest at the other side.

**I ALONE** of the party guessed what had happened. I had heard a woman's voice in the distance, asking the way of a native, who evidently did not understand her, and my foreseeing soul cried out, "Miss Siddis!"

To save my employer's face, however, I made haste to explain that he had been taken suddenly ill; that I had seen these odd fits before, and that he would without doubt be all right in half an hour; also, that he liked to be left alone when thus affected. Wolff and Hahn accepted the explanation. Richter did not. He looked me through with those chill Baltic eyes, and asked himself, apparently, why I was taking the trouble to lie.

In another minute a woman's figure burst out of the forest, running as hard as it could—which was not very hard—on small flat feet. She was dressed in an untidy medley of muslins, with a hat over one eye, and her face was redder than I should have thought the face of any mortal being not stricken with apoplexy could be—and, as she went, bobbing her head with every call, like a cuckoo in a cuckoo-clock:

"Mr. Gore! Mr. Corbet! Stop!" Hahn, with the reddened handkerchief twisted about his ear, Wolff carrying the

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