

THE FOUNDERED GALLEON.

BY
WEATHERBY CHESNEY,
AND ALICE MUNRO.

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CHAPTER XIX. THE FOUR NEGROES.

There was a brief moment beneath the waters during which the gates of death seemed to swing wide open for the two members of the Eureka's crew. It was the sharp, agonized struggle in which a strong swimmer fights to release himself from the foolish clutching of another who cannot swim and who, with the blind, unreasoning instincts of self preservation, hampers his rescuer's efforts to save them both.

For a moment it seemed as though Guthrie would not be able to shake off the grip of Henrietta round his neck, but fortunately for them both his struggles to do so brought him suddenly into the shallows. In one of his convulsive throws he felt the bottom, and found that there was a flat topped bowlder beneath him, with less than four feet of water covering it. Getting his feet planted on this he first shook the woman off and then drew her up beside him and raised her head above the water. As soon as she felt firm ground under her Henrietta recovered her presence of mind, shook her shoulders like a retriever to get the water out of her hair and eyes and then began to look calmly and curiously about her to see what it was that had caused the undergraduate to back so suddenly down upon her and throw them both headlong into the brine.

Then for the first time Guthrie had leisure to remember the gun episode and looked up to see what sort of man it might be who was at the butt end of the barrel which had startled him.

The path they had tumbled from was at the other side of the water channel from the submerged rock on which they were now perched, and standing at the edge of this path were four negroes—one with a gun in his hand, which he still kept leveled at the two involuntary bathers, the others with their hands stuck deep into the pockets of their white cotton breeches. None of the quartet had offered the slightest help while Guthrie and the woman were struggling in the water, and indeed it seemed to the young man as he looked at their faces that they had watched the scene out quietly in the hope, perhaps, that one or both of the bathers would get conveniently drowned. Their attitude of contemptuous noninterference suggested this idea irresistibly and the look of disappointment on their faces confirmed the grewsome suggestion of the six ostentatiously pocketed hands.

Guthrie shuddered inwardly as this conclusion was borne in upon his understanding, but none the less, with a quick flash of prudence, he determined to disguise his suspicion and put a bold face on the situation.

"What the mischief do you mean by standing quietly up there to watch two fellow creatures drown before your eyes?" he demanded indignantly.

A chuckle ran through the group, and after a pause of a few seconds the man with the gun replied. He was a tall, lean negro, with a face so sallow and fleshless that it looked almost like a skull. However, a pair of burning black eyes, goggling amid perfect lakes of white, showed that he was very considerably alive, and, standing in the eerie green light of the cave in that attitude of menace, he looked, to his questioner, a sufficiently ugly customer to have to tackle.

"The question rather is, What are you doing in our cave?" said he in perfect English and with a purity of accent which Guthrie had not expected to hear from a man of his color.

"We've missed one of our ship's company," answered the young man. Again the three others, who seemed to act as a sort of chorus to the lean man, indulged in an amused laugh. But the spokesman kept his grim stare unaltered.

"Are there any more besides you two?" he asked.

"No," said Guthrie.

"Don't lie now," replied the man suspiciously.

The undergraduate retorted hotly that he was not in the habit of lying and asked again if they had seen his shipmate.

"What sort of man is he?" queried the spokesman. "Fat chap? Stolid sort of party, eh?"

Guthrie admitted with a smile that that sounded like him.

"Then Mr. Whatever's-your-name, you needn't hunt around any longer. Your man's here, and I'll tell you another thing, he showed more pluck than you when he got a gun barrel poked at him. He didn't even wince—stood like a tree."

"I believe you," returned the young man lightly. "He isn't the sort of man you could frighten easily. He's not excitable, you see—I am—that's just the difference. But I say, whoever you are, I wish you'd bear a hand and help us up on to dry land again. It's precious cold standing here between wind and water, and the lady can't swim, or I wouldn't ask you."

"The lady?" exclaimed the lean negro in surprise. "Why, so it is a woman! I'm sure I beg her pardon, but, in her man's clothes and in this dim religious light, I confess I hadn't tumbled to the fact that we'd got female company. You hear that, boys? Off with your toppers! We've got a lady paying us an afternoon call!"

Again the three negroes chuckled, and one of them made a remark in a low tone which called a smile from their leader.

"Here, bear a hand!" cried Guthrie, impatiently. "Don't I tell you we're cold?"

"Not so fast, young gentleman," replied the man with the gun. "On the whole I don't know why you shouldn't stay where you are. By your own showing your companion can't swim, and if I put a bullet through one of your fins you won't be able to help her or yourself either. It really strikes me as a very neat trap, you know."

"Come, I say, don't be a brute," retorted Guthrie, but he shivered slightly, for the lean man looked quite capable of being as good as his word.

"Exactly, my dear sir. That's just what I wish to avoid," explained the negro with a grin. "If I help you across here, I shall have to be a brute to one of my men by making him stand sentry over you to see that you don't bolt."

"You want to keep us, then? What for, pray?" asked Guthrie in a tone of surprise, which was, it must be admitted, to a great extent simulated.

"That's a trifle we won't discuss," said the other coolly. "Let it suffice that as you have poked your meddling noses in here unasked you've got to swallow the consequences. You didn't choose to drown one another when you had a decent chance put in your way. So now you must understand that you are prisoners. The only question is, do you prefer to stay where you are, like a couple of seals with their flappers cut off, or would you rather come up here high and dry and give a promise to cause no further trouble?"

"You're pinning me rather unfairly," said Guthrie.

"Look here, young man," returned the negro savagely. "I'm not going to stay here palavering. Are you going to come or are you going to stay? Settle quickly or maybe my gun may go off before you've made up your mind."

"We'll join you up there, thanks!"

"Ah, I thought you would! Then it is understood that neither you nor your sweetheart in the trousers will attempt a bolt?"

The young man hesitated for a fraction of a second, but there was no alternative. "I'll promise," said he reluctantly, for he recognized that to resist further was hopeless. At present his adversary held all the trumps.

"Mind you don't break your word," said the man with the gun threateningly, "for I dare say some one will contrive to stick a bullet in your carcasses before you've got very far. George, get a brace of those paddles to make the lady a bridge."

George, one of the three, departed and in a minute returned with a couple of oars, whose ends he shoved out to the submerged rock. Henrietta swarmed up nimbly enough, and the undergraduate followed her.

"Now," said the lean man, "you can go up round this dark angle, and you'll find your shipmate there. You may chat with him if he's got a tongue. We can't find it."

The three negroes had taken their long sheath knives from their belts and stood now to attention. Guthrie and the woman marched past them in the direction which the leader had indicated and tried not to show by their manner that they found the situation an ugly one.

They did not find it so very dark round the angle, after all. There was a slab of smooth rock at the corner where the cave turned, and the green light was reflected on without much loss of intensity. They discovered the farmer sitting with his back to the rock wall. He recognized them with a microscopic nod, but as far as his face indicated seemed neither pleased to see them nor the reverse. He was a truly wonderful man. After that nod he did not appear to think it at all necessary to explain how he had tumbled into his scrape, and it was only by dint of patient cross questioning that Guthrie got the story out of him.

To give the tale piecemeal, as it was extracted, would be impossible, but this is the gist of it.

It seemed that when he felt the dry land beneath his feet once more, after the long weary months on shipboard, the love of the soil had taken a firm hold of him. This had indeed been no sudden feeling, for it will be remembered that when first the Eureka's people went ashore Cain Laversha alone sat him down and showed no inclination to scamper and frolic. But none the less the smell of the earth gradually found its way up his nostrils, and the sight of the greenery was slowly taken in by his little eyes, and by nightfall he fully understood that he was on his own mother earth again and loved her; also, as the restraining influence of Zusan Pierce was now some thousands of miles away, there came upon him the desire to poach. So he made his bargain with his friend Tom Jelly and slowly pushed his way inland. What manner of game he expected to find his questioner failed to gather, but the farmer admitted that he got disgusted with his sport before very long, perhaps because he found the scrub of bastard palm unexpectedly hard to push a passage through. So he bore away shoreward and came out on to the beach near the landing place and there plumped into

the arms of the quartet of dorkies.

Now, as these gentlemen, for some reason of their own, did not want their presence on the island to be reported aboard the ketch their only plan was to take the would-be poacher along with them, and thus was the problem explained which had baffled the ingenuity of the two searchers to solve. This was the reason why the heavy farmer had faced the exertion of scrambling over those cruel rocks. He could not help himself; it was a case of needs must when the devil drives!

"I was driv'n to't zur," explained Cain Laversha, pathetically. "driv'n by the black niggers."

"Did they tell you why you were kept captive?" asked Guthrie.

"No, zur, nor I never thought of askin them."

"You didn't! Then I will!" exclaimed the undergraduate, and he went round the angle to where the men were stationed.

He put his question, and received in reply a sour order to hold his tongue or



"This way," said the tall man. It would be the worse for him. He had given trouble enough already, he was told, by turning up at all.

This was mysterious and hardly satisfying, but there was only one deduction to make from it. Whatever their game was, it boded harm to the ketch and her people.

Guthrie whispered this to Henrietta and the woman nodded. "They're after the gold, I expect, sir," said she. "We must just stop 'em!"

"But I've given my word for the pair of me not to try to escape from the cave."

"So you have, sir," was the reply, "and you couldn't help doing that same either, but you haven't given no word not to interfere in any hanky panky games against the ketch. We'd best lie low for the present and keep our eyes and our ears open to find out what the devilment is that they're after."

During the rest of the afternoon, till nightfall, there was no further move on the part of the negroes. They gave their prisoners food and then went back to their niche and went to sleep; at least some of them slept, if snores were to be taken as a proof of sleep, but the prisoners made no doubt that there was at least one pair of eyes wakeful enough to have squinted along a gun barrel if they had attempted a bolt.

The green light dimmed as the sun neared the water on the opposite side of the island, and before long the cave was in complete darkness. Still no signs were given of an intended move, and the snorers slept on undisturbed.

About an hour after sunset, however, a voice was heard bidding the prisoners stir their stumps, and, looking up, they saw the meager form of the tall negro standing at the angle of the cave with a ship's lantern in his skinny hand.

"Where are we to go to?" asked Guthrie.

"Come along with me, and you'll see," said the man. "And tell your mates to come too. I can't din any sense into the fat one."

As the negro had the butt of a pistol sticking from a side pocket of his loose cotton coat, the Eureka's people recognized that for the present they must do as they were told. Their chance, they hoped, would come later.

"This way," said the tall man as he led them to where a whaleboat lay snugly hidden in a natural dock of the stone. His three subordinates followed behind the prisoners, hanging closely on their heels, with sheath knives drawn suggestively round to their hips in readiness for instant use.

The whole party boarded the whaleboat, which was then punted out of the cave.

When they reached the lagoon, as the wind was fair for the direction in which they wanted to go, the leader had the mast shipped and a lug hoisted, and away she went free. They coasted along the eastern shores of Piper's cay, and then, threading a few reef channels, hauled their wind somewhat and bore up to another island of slightly smaller size that lay about a mile away. It was another of the group of three to which Piper's cay belonged. Toward this the leader steered her in through some intricate navigation confidently enough, though one or two nice bits of handling were required, and more than once a couple of oars had to be got out to leeward to make her look up to it. But at last she ran in straight toward the land, rounded a point and opened out just such another harbor as that which held the Eureka at the island which they had left.

Guthrie gave a cry of astonishment, for there before them, with her spars and rigging traced in strong black lines against the sky, lay a large schooner. A beautiful fairy ship she looked in the soft moonlight, but if she were so she had surely changed hands recently, for the four negroes, at any rate, did not belong to the number of the good spirits.

Henrietta gave a sharp glance at the graceful lines of the vessel they were approaching and then turned to the negro captain.

"So you're pirates, are you?" she

granted. "And that's your private schooner! Well, I will say that she's far too good for the likes of you."

CHAPTER XX. THE SCHOONER'S HOLD.

Her steersman shot the whaleboat cleverly up alongside the schooner, which was moored fore and aft to trees on the shore. The lug sail was run down and the painter caught by a couple of men who appeared on the deck, negroes, too, like the others. The gangway was unshipped and passed out, and the people from the green cave boarded from the gunwale of their boat.

"Who've you got there, cap'n?" asked one of the men on the schooner, as the Eureka stepped up on to the deck.

"Oh, some blundering fools," replied the lean captain, "who must needs shove themselves in our way when they weren't wanted! Now, you three," he continued, addressing his prisoners, "I haven't staterooms to give you and the fo'c'stle's full, so just turn down into the hold for the present. No, young man, you needn't bother to argue the question. Just shut your head and go quietly. You'll only get your skulls cracked if you make fools of yourselves over it."

A couple of sheath knives were out on the instant, gleaming brightly in the moonlight. The negroes were six—all big men and armed—and how many more there might be below there was no means of guessing. The undergraduate saw that resistance was hopeless and did as he was told.

There was a fixed iron ladder at the after combing of the main hatch, running straight up and down from the deck to the hold beneath. By this he descended and the other two after him. The schooner's people slid on a heavy grating and fixed it in its place with wedges. Then four pairs of shod feet and two shuffling pairs of bare ones could be heard making their way aft over the deck to the companion, and presently the murmur of voices in the cabin came to the prisoners in a dull drone through the quietness of the night.

"There be something live in this yer box," announced Cain, as a faint, rustling noise made itself heard in the hold. "Why, un's tortois'es," he exclaimed after a brief, stertorous inspection, "zame as Zusan Pierce, her father get fur black beetles in the kitchen, only bigger."

"They're turtles, you oaf!" corrected Mrs. Jelly contemptuously.

The whole hold was paved with them, lying helplessly, belly upmost. Some of them were quite still, but others, feebly waving their flappers in the air, were giving rise to the faint whispering sound which had attracted the farmer's attention.

"So that's what the schooner is doing here!" exclaimed Guthrie. "That explains it, she's turtle catching. Well, that's a harmless enough trade surely."

"If they sticks to it," added Henrietta significantly. "But this kidnapping of us three ha'n't nothing to do with turtles that I can see."

The steady drone of the conversation in the cabin was making itself heard through the after bulkhead, and at this moment it swelled out to a louder volume. There was some sort of dispute going on among the turtle catchers.

Guthrie skinned along the floor of the hold among its impotent occupants till he came to the bulkhead. He found a lashed cask amidships and scrambled on to the head of it. Immediately in front of his nose was a faint glow of light. It came from a seam in the boarding from which the oakum had been started. Gently manipulating the calking with his fingers, he enlarged the slit to a hole two inches long by three-sixteenths wide and found that he could not only hear plainly, but see to a certain extent as well, although, as the bulkhead planking was thick, his view was necessarily a restricted one.

A white headed mulatto was reading from a scrap of paper. To the listener's amazement it was an accurate account of the foundered galleon enterprise, or, rather, all of it that could be known at the time when the Eureka left Bristol—the promoters' aims, the supposed

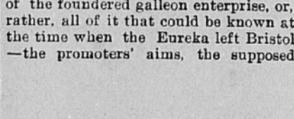
amount of the treasure and the means by which it was hoped that it might be recovered. The extract had been copied from the Bristol Times and Mirror into some local West Indian paper whose name the undergraduate could not gather.

"This is clear enough," said the mulatto, when he had read the cutting through, "but are you sure, cap'n, that the ketch at Piper's yonder is the same as this one?"

The lean negro with the burning eyes said, "Yes."

"You asked that fat lubber her name, did you?"

"Yes, and he said he didn't know, and I believe he spoke the truth; but he looks fool enough for anything. But it didn't matter. I went down, night before last, to the place where they are



lying and saw everything for myself. The fools had no anchor watch set, so I didn't have to hurry." And then he went on to give as minute a description of the little iron built ketch as the astonished eavesdropper himself could have furnished.

"And," concluded the negro captain, "I found her daily observations, too, scrawled up in pencil on the side of the companion. The reckoning showed that on the way out she had lain for 48 days in exactly the same spot. Hand me over the chart, George! There, that's the place where she put in the time. See? It's plain white paper; no land within 100 miles or more. You tumble to what that means?"

"Well, cap, what does it mean? Let's have your idea," said one of the negroes.

"It means," answered the black skipper slowly, "that they've got what they went for. Those 48 days were spent in raising the gold from the foundered Spanish galleon."

At this the rabble broke out into a noisy chatter, but the white headed old mulatto raised an authoritative hand for silence.

"It's no use all gabbling at once," he told them. "We have got to set about making a plan, sharp, or we shall have this haul slipping through our fingers. I don't suppose they'll be staying on at Piper's indefinitely. Well, I'm sorry for 'em, but— He finished his sentence by a movement of his pipe stem across his throat.

The tall, gaunt captain leaped to his feet and brought his black fist down on to the table with a bang.

"No!" he shouted. "Not that! There may be two skippers aboard here practically when it comes to a job of this sort, but I'm rated master of this schooner's books, and whatever else I may give in to I'll hold out against that. I've told you before that I'm not overkeen on the stealing part of it, but the air of the islands seems to have made pirates of the whole lot of you, and so I can't help myself there. But—take it as you like—I draw the line at murder."

At this the babel broke out again. It seemed, indeed, to the anxious watcher that the black captain had some support, but it was obvious that the majority was with his white headed antagonist.

"As for stealing," said the mulatto fiercely, "who says it's stealing at all? Who gave the Eureka's people the old Spanish hulk to plunder? Tell me that! They've no more right to her treasure room than I have. In fact, if we come to that, not so much, for I've got good Spanish blood in me. Of course they won't hand over peacefully if they can help it, and it seems to me that the best plan would be to get the stuff under our own hatches, quiet them for good and then scuttle their clumsy ketch in deep water. She'll never be inquired for. If she isn't reported again, their friends in England will just say: 'Mad scheme. Come to grief. Served 'em right. Amen!'"

"I will have no murder done, I tell you," repeated the other firmly. "So, if that's your game you go without me. But scuttle their craft and maroon them on Piper's if you like. I won't say no to that."

The lean captain's eyes were gleaming like black diamonds. The mulatto evidently knew his man. He dropped the throat cutting scheme and started on another tack.

"I dare say you're right," he admitted dulkily. "Maybe it's best after all, boys, to leave the white folk alone, as the cap here wants us to. Little games of that kind, so I've heard, stick in the memory afterward and sometimes spoil a man's night's sleep. So we'll just manage without. We'll get what we want, maroon the white folk on Piper's cay, where nobody's likely to disturb them in a hurry, scuttle their ketch and then just up stick and be off ourselves. We can run across to Para. No! You're shaking your head, George? The Amazon, then? We can run right up into the heart of the Brazils. No questions asked there, boys, and with all the dollars we shall have the spending of there'll be as fine a time ahead as a man could wish for."

And then with ready negro eloquence the old man drew a picture. It was a luscious tale of sensual delights and the speaker used the most lurid pigments in painting it. The old scoundrel knew his audience, and he depicted a black man's earthly paradise.

"No more turtle turning," he told them; "no more work, unlimited grub and unlimited rum. The days to be spent in basking in a grass hammock under a tropical sun, the nights— And so he went on until all the waverers of his audience were won over and even the hot eyed captain himself allowed a faint smile of longing anticipation to flicker over his skull-like face. And as he listened to the old villain's eloquence Guthrie realized that the men would have been bigger saints than they looked if they had been able to resist it.

After the pith of the cabin council was over the young man slid down from his perch and reported to Henrietta in a low tone all that he had heard.

"Did they say when they mean to make the attempt?" asked Mrs. Jelly.

"Tomorrow night."

"Oh, they do, do they? I somehow don't seem to think that they will, sir."

"What do you mean?" asked Guthrie eagerly. "Have you a plan?"

"No; can't say that I have. But we'll find one I dessey."

"If we don't," cried the young man, "I don't see what's to stop them from working their will on the Eureka! They know we don't set an anchor watch."

Mrs. Jelly chuckled. "They know that, do they?" said she. "Well, it strikes me that that may turn out a fortunate bit of knowledge for them as is aboard the ketch just now. You don't see how? Now, look here, sir, Dr. Tring ain't no sort of fool, he is! Well, and didn't you hear what he said when we showed him that bloodmarked oar on the beach a dozen or so of hours ago? No fear; there'll be an anchor watch set aboard the Eureka tonight right enough and every other night, too, till she sails clean away from these murdering islands. Now, the schooner's folk expect to catch the doctor and the cap'n napping, but I'm thinking they'll get a bit of a surprise when they try."

"Maybe, but I don't see that that mends the matter," objected Guthrie; "in fact, it makes the case worse if anything. If there is resistance, there will be bloodshed. There are no firearms on board the Eureka, and every one of these cutthroat niggers is armed to the teeth. Besides, now that that hoary headed old mulatto has worked them up to the proper pitch, they won't be in the mood to stick at trifles. The gaunt captain tries to restrain them now, but if his blood was up in a fight I wouldn't trust even him very far."

"Well, sir, we must do something ourselves to keep 'em busy," said Mrs. Jelly decidedly. "The trouble is I can't think of anything. Can you?"

"If we had powder, we might blow a hole in the schooner."

"But we haven't got the powder nor nothing else either, barring live turtles, and I don't see that we could make much of an explosion with them. Think of something else, sir."

Guthrie kept silence for a moment pondering, but no plan would come to him. The quiet of the hold was broken by the loud breathing of Cain Laversha, who was lying on his back among the turtles snoring like a steam force pump, and under the circumstances the undergraduate found those healthy snores wildly irritating. They were aggressive, insistent. He could fix his mind on nothing else but them.

"Give that clod a kick and wake him!" he cried irritably.

The farmer was roused and stretched himself noisily.

"Perhaps Cain might give us an idea," suggested Mrs. Jelly, though without much hope in her tone.

"Try him," said Guthrie.

Henrietta began, in a low voice to give the farmer an account of the situation, but his ears seemed at the moment to be preternaturally dull and he constantly interrupted her with a hoarse, whispered "What?" that boomed through the hold like a rain squall. The woman cut her tale as short as she could.

"Now, Cain, what are we to do?" asked Guthrie when she had finished.

The farmer shook his head slowly from side to side, yawned heavily, but did not answer.

"Think, man!" exclaimed the undergraduate testily.

"I can't, zur," said the man in such a whisper that the turtles began to rustle afresh at the sound of it.

Then Mrs. Jelly took him in hand and tried him with Zusan Pierce. She reminded him that Zusan would take it badly if he never returned to her and none of the Santa Catarina's treasure fell to her share, and then, with the cunning of one who knew, she drew a vivid picture of the lady's sharp tongued wrath. There was an inconsistency in this somewhere, but that he would not be there to feel his sweetheart's wrath did not seem to occur to the farmer. He roused himself from his habitual lethargy and shook his big head pitifully to the tune of, "That 'ud be tarrible. 'Enrietta, tarrible!"

"It would; you're right," said the undergraduate, stifling his inclination to laugh. "Just think of it! Your throat cut, and Zusan's purse unreplenished and her marriage finger still unhooped! Now come, Cain; pull yourself together and tell us a way out of the difficulty!"

"I reckon, zur," said the farmer with awful deliberation, "us ought to cloizn up atop of the zellin first."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

England makes a Protest. London, Nov. 13.—"Great Britain has made a courteous protest to Russia," says the St. Petersburg correspondent of the Daily Mail, "against a few regrettable incidents in China where Russians have brusquely opposed the hoisting of the British flag."

Cost of South African War. London, Nov. 13.—Parliament will assemble Dec. 3 to vote the expenses of the war in South Africa, which are now expected to amount to fully £100,000,000. Before Christmas an adjournment will be taken until the end of January.

Jolly Sentenced to Hang. Covington, Ky., Nov. 13.—John J. Jolly was last night convicted of murder and sentenced to be hanged. He had separated from his wife at Hamilton, O., she returning to her parents here. Last August Jolly followed his wife here and attempted to kill her. Her sister, Emma Klekamp, came to the assistance of Mrs. Jolly and was killed, while other members of the family narrowly escaped, and Mrs. Jolly was so badly wounded that she will never recover. Jolly was addicted to liquor.

Price of Salt Takes a Jump. Chicago, Nov. 13.—The Chronicle says: "The National Salt company put up the price of common table salt of a fair quality to \$2.50 per 100 pounds. The price before was \$1.10 per 100 pounds for the same grade. The National Salt company controls directly 95 per cent of the salt output of the country and is able to dominate the remaining 5 per cent of the production. The principal mines of the company, which is commonly known as the salt trust, are in Michigan."

Somerset Bank Officials Rearrested. Somerset, Ky., Nov. 13.—Renewed interest was aroused in the defunct Somerset National bank when the late president, G. W. Waite, and G. R. Hall, his cashier, were rearrested, together with L. E. Hunt and Cyrus Waite on a grand jury warrant, charging conspiracy to defraud.