



**HARD HARMAN:  
A SOUTH SEAS  
ROVER of the  
'40'S *of*  
Dan. L. Silverling**

**T**HE *Anna Lee* lay in Gibraltar Bay, swinging at her moorings off the ragged staff-landing. We—the skipper and his crew—sat on the quarter-deck under the awning, sheltered from the scorching heat of the sun. Everything was snug below and taut above and we but awaited our clearance-papers to drop down the bay and head out for Funchal.

There was not a man of us but had bunked in almost every port of the world, and our conversation had been mainly about the strange experiences we had encountered between voyages, but finally it veered around to a discussion of whether one could always judge a man's fighting-abilities correctly by his physical characteristics.

Bedell, the first luff, held that he could tell a fighter the moment he clapped eyes on him.

"Show me a man," he went on, warming to his opinion, "with a square-cut jaw, high cheek-bones, eyes deep-set under heavy brows, atop a body that's stocky with broad, high shoulders and feet that stay where they're put, and ninety-nine times out of a hundred he's a fighter. He just can't help fight. Even if he has only the face, he has the fighting-spirit, and will wade in against any kind of odds. But if he has a weak face, no matter if he's as strong as a bull, he won't fight any more than a worm."

We of the crew listened with approval while he expounded his theory, but when he

had finished the skipper voiced a dissent in his characteristic non-argumentative tones.

Captain Harter was an old man, close on to seventy. He had been educated at Annapolis and, despite the hard, rough life he had led on the sea and in out-of-the-way, half-civilized countries, his language and manner gave evidence that there had once been a polish so well put on, that, though worn off in spots, much of it still clung.

He liked to mingle with his crew and would go to a good deal of trouble to get men above the average in seamanship and general education. Once a man sailed with him he never left of his own accord and any change in the crew was an event on board.

He was known personally or by hearsay to every man who "went deep-sea" from Suez to Singapore and back again around the world. "Hongkong Harter" some called him, and spoke with awe of the wild doings with which he was credited, when in his younger days he sailed out of far eastern ports.

I had been his second mate for two years, and during the long dull watches of the night many were the marvelous tales of depredation and daring he had told me, mixed with interesting observations of the philosophy of life as he had found it. So now, when he spoke, I lent an attentive ear.

"RECOLLECT two years ago," he began, "when we lay in Suez, of a youngish-looking old man coming aboard and throwing his arms around me for sheer joy at finding me alive? He was rigged in white flannels, carried a cane, had a face like an old-time spinster and was as soft-spoken as he was soft-looking. Recollect him?"

We nodded our affirmations.

"Well, was he a fighter?"

"No," declared Bedell. "He just couldn't fight with that face and build. Why he'd run if a swarm of ants were headed his way. I could shoo him away like I would a

chicken that got too pert."

"There's where you're wrong," said the old man, reminiscently. Then, after a moment, "that was Dan Harman—'Hard Harman' they used to call him—and he was sure the hardest fighter among hard-fighting men when we sailed the South Seas some forty years ago. I've owed my life a score of times to his fearlessness and ability. If there was anything to be gained by it, he'd rush in where angels 'd fear to tread, and I never knew the time when he didn't bring home the bacon. No, not once. He was a wonder—a born fighter, you can bet your life, but not a scrapper. He was never looking for trouble, but when it came his way he could take care of it and everything, and everybody that went with it to the queen's taste. His body wasn't puny, even if his face was thin. He was the most deceiving man with his clothes on you ever saw."

"Let's hear a yarn about him, Captain," I ventured.

"Well, I guess there'll be no harm in that. He's dead now and left no folks; cashed in shortly after you saw him. But anyhow there's nothing to tell that isn't to his everlasting credit."

Musingly, he began the yarn:

"CRIME is largely geographical. Many a man's serving time in different parts, of the world to-day for things that in other times and other places would only have earned him the title of hero.

It seems as if people have just got to have heroes. If they can't get the real thing, they're going to manufacture 'em out o' what materials they've got. With nearly every spot on earth civilized and all this talk o' universal peace, they're turning to the second-story workers and confidence-men. After a while I suppose they'll take in the grafters and pickpockets. Goodness! But that's a far cry from the spoils of war and adventure taken in

the open.

But Dan Harman was different from any of these. He led a wild life in wild tunes, but he hated bloodshed and even more he hated trickery. He never defied the law for his own ends, nor robbed any one, but the way things were those days, before England asserted her rule in the East, it was sometimes necessary to take the law into one's own hands to kind o' even things up.

If Dan were living in New York to-day and needed the money, you'd never find him in any high-finance hold-ups or confidence-games. No siree. It'd be hard to tell what he'd do, but it wouldn't be anything like that. Like as not he'd be burning midnight oil in a hall-bedroom, pushing a pen and leaving behind a trail of our adventures in the South Seas that'd hold the hero-worshippers for a while.

But seeing as he's not here to write 'em and it'll probably be quite a spell before the papers come aboard, I'll tell you about the first time he saved my life, and when I'm through I'll ask Bedell whether Dan could fight or not.

It was in Hongkong I first met him. The brig *Seton* brought me in, and he dropped off the old windjammer *Cuttledory*, that went on the rocks off Liverpool a few years ago. We met ashore, saw the town together, missed ship and from then on kept in pretty close touch until he left the sea ten years ago.

We were about the same age—along pretty well in the twenties—and were both from the United States, he from Down East and I from the Middle West. He'd been through college and afterward started to rough it on a trip around the world, and became so attached to the wild life that he couldn't be induced to give it up.

He looked much the same as when you saw him, except that his gray hair was a new-rope yellow and the muscles that bound his frame together were as vibrant and strong as piano-wires imbued with life, and you can bet

all you've got, he could play 'em high or low, soft or loud, as he pleased, just whichever way suited the subject best.

Those were wild days. Hongkong wasn't the sedate English-ruled port it is now. It was the toughest place in the Far East, well off the edge of civilization. The scum of the earth was gathered there. Soldiers of fortune, Russian renegades, Malay cutthroats, opium-smugglers, escaped convicts from Australia, Dutch traders—a jumble of all kinds of men from different parts of the world, most of whom were seeking cover for one reason or another, walked about its dirty streets.

They were sure a reckless, devil-may-care crowd of adventurers and fortune-seekers, none of whom cared much for human life and least for his own. It was a regular Sargasso Sea of human derelicts, drifted there from the four corners of the earth.

Everybody was stealing from somebody else. A highway-robbery sort of trade was going on all the time. Things changed hands without any pretense of a money-transaction. If you could get away with a thing, it was yours, just like a bluff in a poker-game, and if the man you stole it from wanted it back he had to work a slicker game than you had.

It was a case of who was the smartest crook, and the one who was cleverest at stacking the cards took the pot. Not so different from the way they do some things nowadays and in places nearer home than Hongkong, only, this was open and above board, and every one knew the game he was up against. Eternal vigilance was the price of keeping what belonged to you. It mattered not if it were a keg of whisky or a full-rigged ship. "Take a chance and everything that goes with it" was the watchword and the basis on which all business was done.

The Malay pearl-fishers were considered lawful prey, but if you went south among the islands with the intention of getting

a hatful of pearls, you might have to cleanup a few of the squint-eyed cannibals, and in return take a chance of having your head hacked off with a rusty cutlass or blown away by a blast from an old-fashioned musket, jammed to the nozzle with nails, pebbles and broken shells.

Every once in a while a pearl-hunting expedition went out. Some came back and some didn't, but when one did, and successful—well Hongkong made a Wild West rumpus, even of those days, sound like a Methodist prayer-meeting in comparison. It was hell—just plain hell with the lid off, with the devil serving the drinks, and you can bet the timid ones took to cover like a fishing-fleet before a nor'easter.

IT DIDN'T take Dan and me long to catch the spirit of the time, for we hadn't been ashore twenty-four hours until we had been relieved of everything of value about us, and it wasn't much longer before we were needing something badly to keep from dropping our mud-hooks in the port o' dead men, for want of the necessities of life.

We weren't the only ones traveling light amidships. We ran across a trio that were running without cargo or ballast, looking for something that somebody wasn't watching all the time. They were ordinary British seamen, but they'd been there for some time and could give us pointers that otherwise we could only have learned from experience. They were known respectively from the leader down as Red Rooney, Happy and Scuttle, but, as they were inseparable, Dan and I always referred to them as the "trio."

We joined forces with the idea of mutual protection and, under Dan's leadership, got odd jobs on the docks, so that we were able to fire up and get our boilers going steady again. All the while we were on the lookout for a decent opportunity to get away.

One day when we called at the

consulate for mail, Dan was handed a long legal-looking envelope and a smaller one with a black border. He opened the latter with trembling fingers and, while reading it, dropped the other unheeded to the floor, then without noticing it or me, crushed the one he had read in his hand and walked rapidly away. I picked up the long envelope and followed him, but at a distance, as his actions showed that he wanted to be alone.

He walked for miles, and I tagged on as far behind as would permit me to keep him in view. He finally reached an open space on the outskirts and disappeared behind some bushes. I followed, cautiously, and saw that he had thrown himself face-downward on the ground. His shoulders were heaving like a man shaken by some strong emotion, but there was no sound.

I walked a short distance away and waited. It was an hour before he came out, showing not a sign of the stormy weather he had run into. I gave him the long envelope and, after he had read the contents, he handed both letters to me and told me to read them. It took but a few minutes to understand the whole situation. His father and mother had died within a few days of each other, was the gist of the black-bordered sheet, and the legal communication set forth that, in compliance with his father's will, all cash on hand was to be divided immediately between his three daughters and Dan.

A man from the law-firm was at once sent on the trail of Dan with his share, amounting to thirty thousand dollars. As the lawyer would probably not be far behind the letter, when we returned to the consulate we were not surprised to find him awaiting the heir in the consul's private office. Before the day was over, Dan was in full possession of his inheritance.

He at once announced his intention of buying a trading-schooner and asked me to go into partnership with him, offering to let me

pay for my interest out of the profits. I accepted his proposition, until I could turn some property I had in America into cash. After we had discussed our plans and shaken hands on the agreement, we hunted up the trio and enlisted them as members of the crew. All that we needed further was two more men and the schooner.

The trio almost immediately called our attention to a three-masted schooner which had cast anchor that day. They had seen the Dutchman who owned her come on shore with his crew. It was a nice schooner, a clipper-built ninety-footer, and as trim a craft as ever came off the ways. The only sign of life aboard was a Chinaman puttering about the deck, and the clean, compact lines of the vessel stood out in bold relief against the western sky, out of which the sun had just gone down.

"Perhaps you can buy her," suggested Happy.

"There comes the Dutchman now," said Red Rooney, excitedly, pointing to a rolling figure of enormous girth coming toward us. "Maybe he'll sell."

"No harm in asking," said Dan and, going up to the Dutchman, he engaged him in conversation.

He returned in a few minutes saying, "That's funny; he does want to sell. Says the schooner is too small for his trade and he's been negotiating, to-day, for that big packet out there. I told him we'd take the schooner if everything was satisfactory and my partner agreed."

"How much does he want?" I inquired. "Five thousand pounds. Three thousand down and the balance in a year from date of sale."

"Dirt-cheap if everything's all right," I replied. "Don't see how he can afford to do it. Looks suspicious."

"He says he can make a better bargain for the packet with that much more ready cash, and he has a big contract pending which,

if he can handle it at once, will net him half the value of the Schooner. However, my lawyer will be here for several days, and he can look into it."

Well, to make a long story short, the Dutchman qualified as sole owner, and we bought the schooner the next day, with a stipulation for the Chinese cook and the privilege of signing up two of his men. The former owner and the balance of the old crew were to pack up and get off the following morning, as we were anxious to try our new possession on the high seas, and intended to weigh anchor at the earliest possible moment.

THAT night, Dan and I lay in our bunks till long after mid-watch discussing our plans. After we finally went to sleep, it couldn't have been more than a few minutes when I suddenly awoke to find one of the crew standing over me with a pistol while another was tying my ankles with a rope. The same operation was being performed on Dan, and after we'd been bound and gagged we were carried on deck and laid in one of the boats, where we found the trio awaiting us, but in no condition to extend a welcome.

We could hear the Dutchman giving, orders, and presently the schooner was under way. Just at dawn we were lowered over the side and, as a nasty blow was stewing, we were anything but happy. Red Rooney hadn't been bound any too tight. He managed to work loose after a while, and soon had the rest of us free.

Needless to say, Dan had been relieved of the belt containing the balance of his money, so that now he was stripped of his inheritance as clean as a newly swabbed deck.

The Dutchman had considerably given us a chance for our lives by putting in the oars, food, water, our clothes and some blankets, so we managed pretty well, and it wasn't many hours until we were picked up and taken back to Hongkong. It didn't take us long to discover

that we couldn't do a thing to the Dutchman, either civilly or criminally, even if we caught him. Not a paper that had been filed could be found. We went up against a blank wall at every turn.

Evidently everybody concerned had stood in with the Dutchman, and no doubt they all had a bunch of Dan's money in their pockets. The consul couldn't account for the disappearance of the papers. He threw up his hands in despair and said he might as well resign after he had made this report to Washington. His reports every month had consisted mainly of outrages on American citizens and, as he was powerless to stop them, he hoped some one would be sent to take his place.

Dan and I and the trio talked things over and vowed to spend the rest of our lives, if necessary, in finding the Dutchman and recovering the schooner and the money. We promised the trio a third interest in the schooner if we were successful.

We discovered that we weren't the only suckers the Dutchman had sold that schooner to, though he had probably never before had one swim unbaited into his net. But easiest caught is sometimes hardest held, and we determined that before he got through with us he would conclude that he had caught a school of bull-whales instead of a bunch of suckers this time.

Our plan was to slip on some vessel trading between Hongkong and other ports and to keep a sharp lookout. We figured we were bound to come up with the Dutchman sooner or later. We had no trouble in securing berths, and for the next three months we had pretty hard lines and never a sign of the Dutchman or the schooner.

It was quite discouraging, but not one of us ever suggested giving up the chase. I reckon Dan's thoughts were taken up pretty much all the time with how his father and mother had slaved to get that thirty thousand

dollars for him, and I'd got to know him well enough by this time to feel sure that the stern lines that had settled about his mouth would never relax and the hard gleam that had come into his blue eyes never soften, until he had them back.

AT THE end of the third month we put into Macao, badly crippled after a rough voyage. It didn't look as if the old tub would ever go to sea again, and we were paid off for full time and released.

After all we'd been through it seemed as if we just had to do something to relieve the tension or bust. I was never a hard drinker and Dan didn't touch a drop, but the trio started to hit the high places. They struck the waterfront like a blazing meteor. There was no holding 'em, and Dan and I let 'em go their way.

Every one has a weakness, and both Dan's and mine was gambling, so we hunted up the speculation-parlors (Macao was then, as now, an Oriental Monte Carlo) with the idea of increasing the size of our rolls. But it was all the other way, and by Saturday—we had started Friday—we were high and dry without a dollar; stripped to the yards. We thought it was high time we looked up the trio. They had their wealth in belts around their waists, except what it was their intention to blow in, and it looked as if we would have to borrow enough from them to last until we made another strike.

The liquor they handed out in Macao was two-thirds shellac and the rest fight, and when we located the trio, which we very soon did, it was in the gutter in front of a Japanese shack, dead to the world and badly battered up. They were joyful looking propositions and not much to choose among them. Eyes swollen, lips puffed and split, and noses battered chunks pasted against black and blue and red landscapes. Worst of all, their belts were gone and pockets absolutely empty. It

took some time and much water to get any signs of life from them, but finally all three sat up and looked at us, stupidly at first, then broke into maudlin ejaculations of joyful recognition, mixed with demands for a drink. They were all hatless and bootless, and the ragged remnants of their clothes clung to them like fringe-grass to a cow-whale's back.

We got them on their feet and made them wade knee-deep into the sea and bathe their battered faces. The sting of the salt water sobered them somewhat, and we all sat down on the beach and looked each other over in silent disgust, after we had broken to the trio that we also lacked the price of the drink for which they had kept up a constant, clamor.

After we had taken our fill of silent expressions of our opinions of each other, we turned and gazed sadly off to sea.

Three hundred feet off shore lay the schooner! Her stacks had been lengthened a bit and she'd been rigged with a spinnaker-boom. The nozzle of a six-inch brass swivel-gun protruded over her bows, and the deck was littered with boxes, casks and barrels which were being stowed by four men under direction of a fifth. It was a pretty safe bet that the boxes contained guns and cutlasses; the casks, powder and shot and the barrels, grub.

I don't know which of us noticed her first, probably all at the same instant, for suddenly the five of us turned as one man looked at each other, grinned—then, without speaking, again turned our eyes in the same direction.

"Nice schooner," said Dan finally, not withdrawing his gaze.

"Correct," said I, similarly fascinated.

"Looks as though she were going somewhere," he offered presently.

"She does that," I agreed. "What do you think about it?" to the trio.

"Right you are," they responded in unison.

There was another long silence as we

watched the activities aboard.

Presently I heard Dan mutter, more as though he were thinking aloud than speaking to any one:

"Cannon, cutlasses, guns and grub."

Then, after a pause, turning to me, "Looks as if she were being fitted out for a cruise among the islands."

"Pearls?" I suggested, inquiringly.

"Pearls," he acquiesced, softly.

"That's what," said Red Rooney and the other two sent back the echo.

Then we all regarded each other intently, as though each were trying to read the other's thoughts, the trio's eyes making mute appeal for some one to start something.

"Why not us?" Dan finally broke the silence.

"Just what I was thinking," chorused the rest of us eagerly.

"We'll need a couple o' more men to sail her," said Dan.

"We kin stop somewhere and git 'em," suggested Red Rooney.

That night, about four bells of the mid-watch, five dripping figures, stripped to the waists and gripping clasp-knives in their teeth, rose from the waters 'neath the schooner's bow and silently followed one another up the anchor-chain, a tow-headed fellow in the lead. Before the last man had reached the deck, the night-watch had been gagged and bound, and ten minutes later he, with four other would-be pirates, awakened from pearl-studded dreams, were lying helpless and silent in one of the boats, which we lowered over the side. We treated them better than they had us for, besides putting in the necessaries, we left them where they could easily reach the shore.

They told us that the Dutchman had gone ashore for the night, so we were compelled to let him go for the present. Anyhow, it was now up to him to find us.

The Chinese cook was right glad to see us and laid out a nice spread from the stores

which had just come aboard, but, before eating, we got the schooner under jib and spanker and headed out to sea, while we sheeted home the topsails main and fore.

AFTER clearing the bay we ran sou'east through the Ladrones, then headed her due south through the China Sea. For four days we held her nose straight into the south and on the morning of the fifth, just as the sun was breaking the mist, we raised land off the port bow. We figured it to be Sampanmangio Point on the north of Borneo and accordingly we threw her head into the sou'east and ran for Sambas, where we calculated we could pick up a man or two.

Ever been in Sambas? No? Well, it's no place for a white man: a jumble of straw-thatched mud huts huddled around the Dutch Government-House, in the midst of a malaria jungle between the sea and the great swamp that covers the sou'east of Borneo. Great gray skinks wallow in the stagnant pools or drag their slimy lengths through the ankle-deep mud of the streets, and repulsive tiger-snakes and black teguses bask in the scorching sun in armed truce harmony with gray death-adders.

From break of day till sundown, when they seek their holes, the town is given over to these reptiles of the near-by swamp. But when the sun sinks over far-off Sumatra, bathing the islands in one last burst of softened sunlight, the town turned into a bedlam of half-naked, jabbering natives, drunken beach-combers, parboiled Dutch traders and millions of huge sand-fleas and mosquitoes which I'll bet take away a barrel or two of mixed blood every night.

As I said, we headed in for this Godforsaken hole, and at noon next day made anchorage off the native village. We were flying the British ensign and as we swung to our moorings dipped to the Dutch frigate lying off the Government House. A deathlike silence hung forbiddingly over the town. The

only signs of life anywhere were aboard the frigate and a schooner anchored off to our left.

Dan and I rowed over to the frigate to find out what was the matter. They explained conditions as I've told 'em to you, and we returned to the ship agreeing with the natives that night made hideous with mosquitoes and sand-fleas, however big and thirsty, was to be preferred to a sun that burned into your very soul, with snakes usurping the right o' way, although we came pretty close to changing our minds before we got away.

After listening to our description, the trio readily agreed to forego their anticipated shore-leave and remain in charge of the schooner, keeping things in readiness for a quick getaway. As soon as the lights began to show and we could see figures dribbling here and there from the doorways, we went ashore in the dingy and picked our way gingerly through the muddy streets, fearful that some adventuresome reptile had decided to stay in town and see the sights.

We had found a bag of milreis on board, and our pockets were weighted down with the big silver disks, which we hoped would aid us to find our men quickly, so that we could get away before the authorities got suspicious and asked questions. But it took us several hours to make the rounds, and we hadn't found a single sailor nor any promising material for the making of one. There wasn't anything there to tempt a man to miss ship. No one who wasn't compelled to would stay there a minute after he could get away.

We were standing outside a rum-shack talking it over, and had about decided to return to the schooner and move on to some other place, when we heard a commotion down the street. The moon was up and in her third quarter, and we could see a crowd coming toward us, headed by four men in the uniforms of the island-constabulary and a great burly tub of a Dutchman. As they got up to us we could see in their midst three figures, bound

and hobbled, doing their best to keep up with the pace in response to proddings with their clubs from the constables and curses from the Dutchman. "The trio!" we exclaimed together.

DAN didn't hesitate a minute.

"Sail in," he gritted, "and as soon as they're down help loose the trio and run for the dingy. I'll be right after you."

As the last word left his lips he swung his right with a terrific crash on the jaw of the nearest constable, and almost at the same instant I performed a similar operation on the one nearest me. They both dropped like logs and we had only two more and the Dutchman to negotiate, for the crowd stood back and watched the battle, the same as citizens of any place look on at a clash with the authorities.

The Dutchman was no coward and, before I could recover my equilibrium after giving the blow to the constable, he was on me and bore me to the ground by the mere force of his great weight.

"You murdering pirates!" he howled, and called for some one to get a rope. In desperation, I gathered all my muscles for a mighty effort, and succeeded in rolling partly over with him and freeing my arms, while his right became imprisoned by his own body.

Another heave and a push with both hands against his chest and I sprang erect. He was too clumsy to rise quickly, and I quieted him with a terrific kick on the back of his head as he was struggling to get on his feet. I hated to do it, but things looked pretty serious for us.

Dan had grabbed a club from each of the fallen constables and, with blood streaming down his face, and lips drawn back in a set grin, he was working them like the blades of a two-way propeller, warding off the attacks of the two constables, and with eyes alert for an opening. Even as I rushed to his assistance, one of them sank to his knees, then suddenly sprawled on the ground. "The trio!" gasped Dan.

They were crouched in the doorway of the rum-shack, watching the battle with agonized faces, and struggling frantically to loose their bonds.

I sprang toward them, opening my clasp-knife as I ran, and as quick as you could let fly a halyard, I had them loose, at the same time telling them to run for the dingy and have it ready for Dan and me to jump in.

But it was too late. For at that moment the balance of the constabulary-force, ten or fifteen strong, came rushing up and we were quickly overpowered, securely bound and thrown in the mud in the middle of the street. They carried away the wounded and left us lying there in charge of one of the constables, to whom the chief gave some instructions which I could not hear. Two more constables were set to patrol in a circle around us, going in opposite directions, to see that no one came near us.

Now that the wounded were gone, I saw that there were only four of us, and I looked to see which one was missing. It was Dan! I could only conjecture what had become of him, but it seemed possible that he had got away and that the reenforcement of the constabulary, not knowing how many of us there were, had not missed him, or he might have been killed or badly wounded and been taken away. As I said, I could only conjecture and a whispered consultation with the trio showed that they knew no more than I did what had happened to him.

Things looked pretty black for us. In fact our situation was about as desperate as it could be. I could not understand then why they did not put us in the jail, but Dan told me afterward that it was because it was overcrowded, as it usually was, and this gave the brutal officials excuse to torture prisoners by letting them lie in the open, bound, at the mercy of the mosquitoes and sand-fleas by night and the poisonous reptiles from the swamp by day. Almost incredible but true, and

as you see me here alive to tell the tale, you know I escaped, but it was a pretty close shave and no thanks to them. As it was, we experienced all the horrors except the mere fact of dying, which would have been welcomed as a relief if help hadn't come when it did.

Now that the excitement had died down, the mosquitoes and sand-fleas began to get busy, and in our helpless state they found an opportunity they seldom had to indulge in fiendish orgies of blood. Our clothes were little protection and they settled all over our bodies by the thousands, crowding each other for room on the exposed places. The agony was terrible, and the only fight we could make was to roll around in the mud, I dug my head into it and, repulsive as it was, sunk my face in and turned my head this way and that in an effort to cover every part of it. The trio, needless to say, were doing likewise.

The guard seemed to be of the opinion that this was a circus arranged for his amusement and laughed heartily, calling to the men on patrol to come nearer so that they could get a view of our antics. They certainly must have appeared droll to any one hardened and cruel enough.

WELL, as I said, our situation was bad and getting worse every minute. We had to keep rolling and digging all the time, for as soon as we'd smother those on one side of us, a new swarm was on the rest of us, and they'd manage to get in some pretty devilish work before we could roll over again, bound as we were. To keep this up for a couple of hours was about the most exhausting thing I've ever done, and it seemed sometimes as if I'd just have to give up and let them finish me.

It was pretty bad poison they injected while they were taking out the blood, and I could feel myself swelling up all over my body. The trio, at first kept up a constant and loud cursing, but I whispered to them to keep

their strength, as they might-need it in case Dan was at large and should find some way to help, us.

That he was free was my only hope, and a pretty slim one, guarded as we were, but still a hope, and I clung to it as those mosquitoes did to our blood-vessels. It was all that kept me from giving up for, aside from that, I knew that death was only a matter of a few hours, and I urged the trio to depend on it and be ready for it.

The thought hadn't occurred to me as yet that if we survived till morning we would be left in the street at the mercy of the reptiles. It was too horrible to think of even those inhuman Dutchmen doing such a thing. But about mid-watch two constables came up to relieve the others, leaving only one on patrol. They stood talking for a few minutes and I gathered that their instructions were to retire at sunup.

They said the injured constables were in a bad way, and that being left in the street to be finished by the reptiles was only a small part of what we deserved. Then they all came over and each of 'em gave us a kick apiece to emphasize the expression of his opinion. None of the trio understood their mutterings, and I didn't tell them of the fate in store for us.

I didn't have much time to indulge in the pleasures of imagining those horrible creatures of the swamp disputing ownership of my body with the vampires then in possession, and I tried to put away the thought when it did come, but every once in a while it gripped me with a sickening sensation so paralyzing that I lost what little strength I had left, only to be whipped up to it again by the agony I was enduring. If it had not been for the repulsive horror snakes always give me, and especially that kind, a couple of good hard jabs from their poisonous fangs would have been far easier to endure than the torture of being drained of my blood drop by drop. But there was still the hope of Dan, and life looks

promising at twenty-eight, so I fought on and gasped encouragement to the trio whenever I could spare a breath.

I could tell that it was near morning when the moon sank behind the cloud-bank on the horizon, leaving the islands in inky blackness until the sun should break. It was in this interval that help must come, if it came at all, and I told the trio to be prepared to obey orders strictly if anything happened. And happen it did. We hadn't much longer to wait, either, for Dan had been holding off for this very interval of darkness—not that he had been idle the rest of the time either, as you will soon see.

So confident had my hope of him been that I was hardly surprised when a voice whispered in my ear, "Keep quiet and drink this."

At the same time I felt the mouth of a bottle pressed to my lips and, while I drank, I was conscious that his other hand was cutting my bonds.

"The guard is over talking to the patrol," he whispered. "Don't get up but keep moving same as you were. I've got to silence the guards, so that we can get away. No, leave it all to me. You're too weak, and there must be no mistake and no noise. Only be ready to go when I say the word, and without any questions. I'm going to stay here until the guard comes back, and then I'm going to give him a punch that'll keep him quiet for a while. Then I'm going to creep over and fix the patrol the same way. Don't worry; I won't fail. I'm, all keyed up to it, and they're not expecting it."

At this moment the guard returned and kicked among us to see if we were there all right. It was so dark he couldn't distinguish details, not even that there were five figures instead of four, which fact Dan had counted on. He waited only until the guard's back was turned, when he was on him, swift and sure as the pounce of a panther, and in another

moment there were again five figures in the mud, but the fifth wasn't Dan.

The whisky had sent fight coursing through my veins and it was all I could do to restrain myself, so I was glad when Dan gave me the bottle and a knife and told me to loose the trio and give them a drink and instructions while he crept over and attended to the patrol. We were to wait there until he returned, as he wanted to take no chances of our getting separated in the dark. By the time I had finished my work he was back, and a moment later five figures crept, four of them painfully, but all with the greatest caution, between the huts and down to the beach.

SILENTLY as shadows they waded into the sea and swam for a familiar schooner, lying five fathoms off the shore. An unseen hand slipped her cable and she floated gently toward the open sea with the outgoing tide, five dark figures clinging to her channels. As she reached the southern point her jib and spanker were sheeted home and a boat was carefully lowered over the side. Across the thwarts lay three figures, securely bound. Two wore the gray blouses of the constabulary. The other was a Dutchman with his head done up in bandages and minus a chamois belt he had worn next his skin! For the third time the schooner was ours.

Dan had run behind the huts just as the reenforcement came up, crept down to the beach and, not finding the dingy, swum out to the schooner, which had been left in charge of a single constable when the trip were taken off. Dan was quickly in possession, in his own inimitable way, and then lay in wait for whoever might come aboard, which same proved to be the Dutchman and another constable.

While the slow-moving Hollander was coming up the ladder, Dan engaged in a little set-to with the constable, who came first, and was through in time to assist the Dutchman,

whose bandaged head deafened him to the noise, to the deck. The latter, thinking it was the constable, was still in the midst of his thanks when Dan laid him beside his silent companion, trussed them as comfortably as security would allow, then hunted up the Chinese cook, who expressed his delight, but showed no surprise at seeing him, nor made any complaint at being awakened and requested to prepare a meal.

I wonder what would have been the Dutchman's feelings if he could have seen us after we had recovered a little, gathered round Dan in the wheel-house, while he opened the chamois belt. It contained two thousand

pounds in Bank of England notes and forty perfect pearls. And to think that that Dutchman had called us pirates!

AT THIS point in the skipper's narrative a hail came from a small boat putting out from the landing.

"Our clearance," said the skipper, rising. Then, looking at Bedell, he asked, "Was Harman a fighter?"

"I reckon he was," admitted Bedell.

The papers were tossed aboard and the skipper bawled, "On deck all hands! Stand by to up anchor!"