

**THE WANDERINGS**  
**OF**  
**TOM STARBOARD;**

**OR THE**  
**LIFE OF A SAILOR,**

**HIS**  
**VOYAGES AND TRAVELS,**  
**PERILS AND ADVENTURES, BY SEA AND LAND.**

**BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE CHILDREN'S FIRE-SIDE," "THE YOUNG  
WANDERER'S CAVE," &c. &c.**

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**WITH SIX ENGRAVINGS.**

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**CORNER OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.**  
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turning to the Mate, ‘but the wind is foul for that tack; so keep together, my lads; and do you, Bilge, fire your musket, if any of the villainous Malays play you false.’

“Bilge, and Ned Luff, and Warely, and I therefore,” continued Tom, “armed ourselves, and put off towards shore. I was delighted to think that I was allowed to make one of the party; for my spirit of adventure was strong; and I longed to see fresh faces and fresh manners. We rowed away in high spirits, longing for the delicious fruits, which Bilge told us we should find in great plenty; for he had landed on this coast during a former voyage. We pushed into a pretty creek, jumped ashore, lashed the boat to the trunk of a cocoa-tree, slung our cutlasses, stuck our pistols in our belts, and away we sallied; Ned and I singing by snatches, as we pulled the fruits and ate them,

‘Ye gentlemen of England,  
Who live at home at ease,  
How little do ye think upon  
The dangers of the seas!’

“‘I wish you’d think of the dangers of the land, you noisy fools,’ said Jack Warely, who was peeping about, and fancying a Malay in every bush: but we were too thoughtless, and too full

of spirits, to be warned by our companion ; so we continued to sing, or rather roar—

‘ On a Friday morn, as we set sail,  
 It was not far from land ;  
 I spied a pretty Mermaid with  
 A comb and a glass in her hand ;  
 For the raging seas did roar,  
 And the stormy winds did blow ;  
 And we poor sailors are sent up aloft,  
 While the land lubbers lie down below, below, below,  
 While the land lubbers lie down below !’

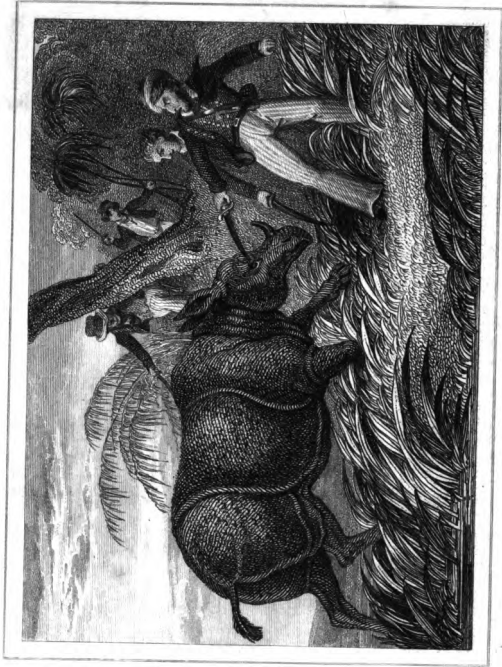
“ ‘ I’ll make you both sing to another tune, you bawling fellows, I tell ye ! Why can’t you stop your blaring mouths with *these* ?’ said Warely again, throwing two monstrous pine-apples at our heads. We only laughed the more at his anger ; gnawed away at the pine-apples, (in Malacca, they are the finest in the world,) and, between every mouthful, shouted—

‘ I sail’d from the Downs in the Nancy,  
 Her jib how she smack’d through the breeze !  
 She ’s a vessel as tight to my fancy,  
 As ever sail’d on the salt seas.  
 But sailors were born for all weathers,  
 Great guns, blow they high or blow low ;  
 Our duty keeps us to our tethers,  
 And where the gale drives, we must go !’

“ ‘ Bilge !’ exclaimed Warely, who was really angry, those bolt-headed fools of boys will cause some mischief ; here are we getting farther into this thick wood, and their noise will direct the rascally Malays where to find us ! Do stop their singing, will ye ? But look at Ned Luff ! why what ’s the fellow at ?”

“ Bilge and I sprang forward, for Ned had dashed on a few paces ; while I had stayed behind to laugh Warely out of his fears. Partly hidden by the trees, and among the brushwood, there was Ned, cutting and slashing away with his cutlass at something which we could not see ; but in another moment Bilge and I were in the thick of a fight between Ned and a floundering rhinoceros ! The monstrous creature had been wallowing in the mud of a neighbouring river ; and being awakened by our noise, had just raised up his cumbrous body as Ned got to the banks of the stream. The foolish boy began attacking the great hillock of flesh, instead of letting the animal remain quiet, which it would have done, for it is very inoffensive ; but, being attacked, it never flinches from an enemy. Bilge knew the habits of the creature better than we did, and cried out—

“ ‘ God bless my life, but Ned will have the worst of it !’



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Illustration of a man in a military uniform standing in a tropical landscape, holding a long staff or spear, with a large, dark, textured animal in the foreground.

“ ‘ Let ’s run down the bank and attack it behind, with our cutlasses,’ exclaimed Warely, who was close after us.

“ ‘ You may just as well cut at the rock,’ replied Bilge.

“ ‘ Let ’s all fire at it,’ shouted I.

“ ‘ His tough hide will flatten your bullets for you ; but we shan’t hurt him,’ returned Bilge.

“ In the mean time, the creature had left the water, and was coming up the bank ; preparing, with its head down, to strike his short, thick horn into poor Ned ! I rushed up, whisked out my cutlass, and, while Ned stood on his defence, I aimed at the animal’s eye, and struck my weapon into it ! The pain made him pause for an instant ; but, the next moment, he dashed up between us, while we slipped behind a tree. All escape seemed now over ; for he instantly wheeled round, and ran with fury against the very tree which sheltered us : his weight and mighty strength jarred the stem ; the leaves and blossoms quivered ; and down it fell, snapping like a lath.\* Our danger was now frightful ! The stamping of his ponderous feet was tremendous ! his monstrous body—

\* See, in Bingley’s *Animal Biography*, an account of the great strength of this animal.

(for he was twelve feet high,) seemed waiting to crush us, as we crouched down among the fallen boughs; and his rage was quite awful, as he staggered with the pain of his wound. Terrified as I was, however, I would have rushed out upon him in the hope of injuring his other eye also with my cutlass; but the creature had come up the bank and was now on level ground, so that I could not reach him. At this moment, I saw Bilge and Warely peep out from behind a mass of rock; the rhinoceros now fell from pain, with a weight that shook the ground: Bilge then fired at the only soft part of the animal—his belly: Warely darted forward at the same moment, with his cutlass raised on high, which glittered as he struck it deep into the same place: Ned and I flew out from behind: I aimed at the eye which was yet perfect, and blinded him; while Ned buried his weapon near the heart of our enormous foe.

“ His very agony now brought him on his feet again; but we were safe; for, as he could no longer see to pursue us, we stood on the rock (whither we had run for protection,) watching the blind, headlong fury with which he kneaded the moist sod of the dingle with his feet; tearing down the surrounding trees, and trampling their branches into splinters: the next moment, he

staggered, and rolled down the bank into the river; his huge bulk forming a stoppage to the water, which soon rose over his body, and dashed off in a sparkling cascade! All this, my dears, that has taken so long in telling, passed in less than three minutes. I don't wonder you both look so interested; it was a frightful situation to be placed in; and I shall not easily forget our terror.

“When we had recovered ourselves,—for, I assure you, our white cheeks told truth, whatever our lips might have said—‘we called a council of war,’ and agreed to go back to our boat, and bring her round the rocky headland, in order to fill our water vessels in the small river which we had discovered; so we tacked about again; and I give you my word,” added Tom, laughing, “that we returned more quietly than we went! Like other heroes, ‘we fought our battle o’er again;’ and, unlike some heroes, we gave each one his fair share of the glory! Well, we had steered round into the mouth of the river, and were still talking of our morning’s work, when Bilge called out, ‘There goes an esculent Martin!’ pointing, as he spoke, to a little bird that was flying over us, and which looked no bigger than a wren. ‘Is that,’ exclaimed I, ‘one of the birds that build the edible nests? Oh, do, Warely, put the



head of the boat round, and land me on this rock, will you? The Captain was telling me about the little esculent martins, last week; and he said too, that he was very fond of their nests in soups.—Put her head round, there's a good fellow; I won't be long clambering up the rock; and I dare say I shall soon find some nests, if there are any caverns.'

“‘I'll come too!’ exclaimed Ned Luff, jumping up.

“‘Yes, you idle fellow,’ said Warely; ‘you'll be off from the labour of filling the casks! Bilge and I may do that, while you go a birds' nesting, like land-lubber lads! No, no! I don't stand that fun; come, bear a hand; let's get the boat freighted, and then you may land and welcome; but you won't catch me among you, though; I'll not put myself in the way, for those wild wretches to run a muck\* at me!’

“We laughed at Warely's caution,” continued

\* The Malays are deemed the most ferocious and treacherous people on the face of the globe; and when their natural ferocity of disposition is increased by drinking spirits, they frequently seize a sword, or other naked weapon, and, running through their villages like maniacs, cut at every one they meet. This is called “running a muck;” which is also a term of chivalry, and then means an action something similar, but without cruelty or bloodshed.

Tom, "but we 'lent a hand' to fill the casks; for we felt he was right.

"'Ay!' muttered he half aloud, 'I do hate those Malays! I wouldn't meet one—no, not if I might be made captain to-morrow!'

"'Why, Jack,' said Bilge, as he stood to rest himself, wiping the heat drops from his sun-burnt face—'why, Jack! if I had not seen you stand to a gun, with as good a heart as e'er a one of us, I should think you, and even call you, a coward!'

"'No, Jem Bilge!—no! I am no coward; I never was one, but for two days, and that was when I would have lifted my hand against a fellow-creature—a countryman—my captain! and I do think, sometimes, that Swipes must have had a Malay in him, to tempt me to—'

"'Ay, ay! well, well! that's all over long ago, Jack. Come, let's get this job done, for it's very hot, and we'll moor the boat under shadow of the rock, and cool ourselves, while those boys climb up it!'

"In a short time, we had finished our task, and Ned and I began our birds' nesting. The face of the rock was nearly perpendicular, but bold crags jutted out here and there, over the water: bushes, dwarf trees, and beautiful flowering creepers fringed the rugged stone, and waved in the light breeze. We toiled up, catching and clinging to