

CAPTURED BY APES;

OR,

HOW PHILIP GARLAND BECAME KING OF
APELAND.

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ILLUSTRATED.



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CHAPTER III.

A TERRIBLE NIGHT.

WITH the setting of the sun the wind came in fitful gusts, betokening a storm, if not a hurricane.

During the first few hours of darkness the rhinoceros did not join in the concert begun by the other animals; but as the wind increased in violence, and the sea became more choppy, causing the bark to reel and stagger under the heavy blows, the deck-passengers became decidedly uneasy. When the lions were not roaring, or the panthers screaming, the thick-skinned captive would utter a loud "woof," and make such an attack on his cage that the watch on deck were ready to leap into the rigging at the first sign that he was succeeding in his efforts.

Each animal had been captured singly, and all were full-grown and dangerous. The near presence of the men, the sight of each other, and the violent motions of the bark, alarmed every one. Even the serpents were wide awake and vengeful; but the rhinoceros was furious with rage. He raked his great horn back and forth across the bars of the pen whenever any one went near him, and in a dozen ways gave evidence of his strength.

Most probably the unusual motion made every mem-

ber of the collection seasick, and as the malady increased so did their rage. Philip knew that during the first forty-eight hours the danger would be greatest, and he kept a watchful eye upon the noisy passengers. After they had gotten their "sea-legs" on, as sailors express it, there would be no more possibility of trouble than under the same circumstances ashore, and to get them safely through this period of probation was now his only care.

About a quarter of an hour before midnight, when all the watch on deck save the man at the wheel were forward, the rhinoceros leaned heavily against the side of his cage just as the bark buried her bow in a green wave, which, curling over the forecastle, swept every movable thing aft. Immediately following this came a great crash, startling the already frightened crew.

The mighty plunge of the vessel, together with the weight of the animal on the bars of the cage, had crushed them like pipe-stems, and the huge monster emerged from the ruins fully prepared for mischief.

A more dangerous and vindictive creature than a black rhinoceros cannot be found. He is in the sulks nearly all the time, and while under such influence or humor will charge an elephant or a lion without fear of the result. The first thing which comes in sight is attacked, and he never cools down so long as there is anything on which to wreak his vengeance.

It was as if the tossing of the vessel served to ex-

cite his anger still more, and he made desperate lunges here and there at the nearest inanimate objects, sometimes being thrown from his feet as the bark rose or fell; and, again, splintering into fragments such lighter articles as the hen-coops, the captain's gig, which was stowed on deck, and the crates containing fresh vegetables taken on board at Cape Town.

At the first intimation of this danger, which was more imminent than the threatening elements, the sailors leaped into the rigging, and for ten minutes the monster had the deck nearly to himself.

After having fallen several times the old fellow looked about, as if studying how he could soonest recover his sea-legs, and when that brief time of apparent thoughtfulness had passed he was as steady as a sailor. The rise and fall of the bark, abrupt and sharp as it was, caused him to slide to and fro, but he never lost his equilibrium.

After thus regaining control of his unwieldy body, the first thing which attracted his attention was the cage containing the serpents. With one mighty rush he tossed it in the air, and as it came down the three hissing occupants glided in different directions, one climbing over the cage containing the panthers, the second going on to the bowsprit, and the third darting into the fore-castle out of sight.

The lions and panthers immediately raised a terrible din, which, with the roaring of the gale, made the confusion most deafening. The big beast cleared

his horn of the fragments of the cage hanging to it, and then struck that containing the panther.

These animals were liberated in an instant. One ran aft into the long-boat, which hung on the davits, crouching under the thwarts ; and the other, cowed for the moment, but ready for mischief, retreated to the lee-scuppers.

Without so much as glancing at the panthers, the rhinoceros dashed at the pen of the lions, smashing it into kindlings.

The largest of the three captives sprang upon his adversary's back as he shook himself free from the fragments, and perhaps his sharp claws inflicted some injury, but not enough to check the fury of the beast, who chased the second one aft to the quarter-deck.

The third lion disappeared in the fore-castle ; and never was a watch below awakened more quickly or more thoroughly than were those who came tumbling up, half-dressed, terrified, and not knowing in which direction safety might be found.

No ship's crew ever were in a stranger situation. It was high time sail should be shortened, the mate in charge having delayed this work until both watches should be on deck ; and with these enraged animals virtually in possession, the bravest sailor would hardly have dared to leave the rigging.

The helmsman remained at his post of duty despite the fact that the panther was in the long-boat behind him, and it was his shrieks that called Philip, the captain and second officer from the cabin.

Hardly did they emerge from the companion-way when the lion which had attacked the rhinoceros came bounding aft, and the three men fled below again, the helmsman following them and closing the hatch behind him.

To leave this place of refuge immediately meant death, while by remaining in it destruction seemed equally certain. Yet, strange to say, the gallant vessel sped before the wind as if a steady hand guided her movements; and five minutes later, Philip, accustomed from infancy to such animals, had burst his way out through the deck-window of the cabin.

As a matter of course there were plenty of heavy guns and ammunition on board; and with a Manton rifle and explosive shells, he sheltered himself behind the foremast, where he immediately opened fire on the nearest brute.

While he was making every effort to draw the rhinoceros toward him, in order to get a fairer mark, the lion on the quarter-deck leaped into the long-boat upon the panther. In the merest fraction of time the two were bounding over the thwarts and tumbling about in the wildest fashion, the boat rocking to and fro as if it would upset, the screams and roars of the struggling beasts drowning all the other horrible noises.

This fight attracted the attention of the rhinoceros, causing him, despite Philip's endeavors, to make his way aft, where he came across the lion who was skulking in the scuppers. To drive the

king of beasts back toward the wheel was not difficult for the huge monster, who was now so blinded by rage that he made a direct dash at the cabin-door.

No wood ever grew that could withstand such an assault, and as the rhinoceros forced his way into the saloon the captain and second mate took refuge in the steward's pantry, where they were even closer prisoners than before.

Straight on the charge was continued !

The dining-table was overturned, the chairs swept from their fastenings like so many things of straw, and as the after-end of the cabin was reached the bark rose to a huge wave. As a matter of course this gave an additional impetus to the enormous animal, and with a crash he plunged directly through the bulk-head, which formed what might be termed a deck-lazaret, where he was held fast by the heavy timbers despite his furious struggles. This gave the imprisoned ones in the pantry an opportunity to escape, and they reached the deck just as Philip, running to the wheel, opened fire on the animals in the boat.

One discharge of the weapon point-blank at the beasts, who had grappled and were rearing up from the thwarts, together with the rocking of the frail craft, caused the combatants to topple over the rail, and two of the disagreeable passengers were stricken from the list.

At this moment one of the crew shouted that a panther, a lion and two of the serpents were in the

forecastle; and for the captain and second officer to imprison them by closing the hatch was but the work of a moment.

That the rhinoceros could do little or no damage while in his present position Philip understood from what he had been told, and he turned his attention to the remaining lion, crouching near the water-butt, while the carpenter attacked the snake, who was making his way up the mainmast.

This last passenger was disposed of in short order, but not until he had been chopped into many pieces; and during such carving Philip succeeded in implanting a lucky shot directly in the heart of the lion, which effectually ended this portion of the struggle.

The crew paid no further attention to the other animals, but bent all their energies to saving the gallant craft which had, unattended, borne them on so bravely in the face of the gale. With nearly every member of both watches in the rigging the work of shortening sail was quickly performed; and, as the bark rode more easily over the mountainous seas, Philip and the captain went below to still the struggle of their unwieldy cabin passenger.

It required a dozen shots from the heavy rifle before the huge and helpless brute gave up his life. The work of removing the body could not be attended to during the hours of darkness, neither was it deemed advisable to make any effort at cleaning the forecastle. It would be "all hands on deck" till morning; but that was a minor consideration in

view of the fact that they had escaped so many dangers.

After barricading the fore-castle hatch with chain-cables and other heavy articles which would resist any pressure from within, the crew spent the remainder of the night listening to the sounds of conflict. They could hear the hiss of the serpents, the screams of the panther, and the growling of the lion until nearly morning, when all became silent. The animals were either dead or had concluded to suspend hostilities for awhile.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WRECK.

WITH the rising sun the wind abated, and when it was sufficiently light all hands set about the task of cleaning ship.

To remove the huge animal from the cabin it was necessary to literally chop him in such pieces as could be readily handled, and two hours elapsed before the last fragment had been thrown overboard to the following sharks.

Then all hands, save the man at the wheel, armed with cutlasses, rifles and capstan-bars, gathered around the fore-castle hatch as it was pushed back.

A terrible stench arose, but no sound was heard. After five minutes Philip descended the ladder with a revolver in each hand ; but no enemy confronted him. There had been a general battle, during which the beasts were mangled and torn in the most horrible manner, while the serpents were literally cut in pieces.

Not until twenty-four hours had passed was the bark free from odor, blood, and other evidences of the conflict ; and during the week which followed the carpenter and his assistants had quite as much as they could do to repair the injury done the cabin.

Philip's venture had not proven a paying one ; but

in view of what might have happened he was only too well pleased to be rid of his dangerous merchandise. As he thought of this, the first speculation since Magog destroyed the establishment, and reflected upon the result of it, there came into his mind a fear that it might be the beginning of a series of misfortunes.

Of course such superstitious fears were more than childish, and he struggled manfully but unsuccessfully to put them far from him.

That which had just occurred, however, was but a foretaste of what might be expected when there was a full cargo of animals on board; and in the forecabin the sailors discussed the possible fate of all hands during the homeward voyage.

"I've been in ships what was becalmed week in an' week out for two months, with never a cat to throw overboard," old Tom Bixbee said, as the watch below were reviewing the events of the past few hours, "but I never struck on anything like this craft. Talk of havin' a drowned man as shipmate! Why, that's nothin' compared to what's goin' to happen on this' ere barkey when she turns her nose toward home. If there's ever a chance of showin' my heels to the Swallow in this 'ere benighted place we're bound for after more jest like sich as we had last night, you'll see precious little of me!"

And Tom's opinion was very much the same as that entertained by every member of the crew.

As the bark continued on with favoring winds through the Indian Ocean, never a day passed but

that some one of the sailors had a particularly harrowing tale to tell of ghost-infested ships, and the conclusion to each would invariably be :

“ But they couldn't hold a candle to a craft like this what's goin' to take on board sich a crowd as we left Cape Town with.”

Sailors on a long voyage have plenty of opportunity for strengthening their strong belief in the supernatural, and in this case the reasons for misgivings were so real that it is little wonder all hands, from the boatswain to the cook, were in a state very nearly bordering on insubordination when the *Swallow* entered the Straits of Sunda, bearing to the westward on a course to the Celebes.

Perhaps it was because of this mutinous condition of the men that the bark was not kept true to the needle, or, again, it may have been that the captain was at fault in his navigation. At all events, on the morning of the fourth day after leaving the straits, while sailing over a mirror-like sea and under cloudless skies, the *Swallow* brought up with a terrific crash against a sunken reef.

In an instant all was confusion. Orders were not obeyed as promptly as should have been the case, because the sailors had settled in their minds that this was an incident to be expected during such a cruise, and for several moments the bark pounded and thumped upon the rock until, without the aid of her crew, she slipped off into deep water again.

As a matter of course, the first thing after this hidden danger had apparently been passed in safety

was to sound the well, and to the dismay of Philip, if not of the insubordinate crew, it was learned that the bark was leaking.

The damage done was something even more serious than the starting of a timber, as could be told from the fact that in half an hour the depth of water in the hold had increased from four to nine inches.

At that rate it was only a question of a few hours before the vessel would founder; but it was possible the injury might be so far repaired as to admit of her reaching some island on which she could be beached, and the men were stationed at the pumps while the carpenter and first mate went into the hold.

Tom Bixbee boldly announced that in his opinion the best thing they could do would be to "save their own precious selves, an' leave the old barkey to sink if she wanted to;" and this advice might possibly have been followed, owing to the frame of mind in which the crew were, if the officers and Philip had not assumed such a determined front.

Almost at the point of revolvers were the men forced to labor at the pumps; and as if this disaster was not enough to dishearten Philip, the elements began to play their part in wrecking the craft which had come so far for such a strange cargo.

In two hours the breeze from the south had increased to a gale. The sea suddenly rose very high, and with all the light canvas stowed, the sinking vessel was headed toward the coast of Borneo under

storm-sails only. There was little hope in the minds of the most sanguine that she could float much longer; but yet the only chance of safety was in making land.

Some time previous the carpenter had made his report privately to the captain; but the crew understood very well from the expression of his face how imminent was the danger which threatened.

The damage was so near the keel that it could not be gotten at without removing the ballast, a task which was impossible of execution owing to the rapidity with which the bark was settling.

"She would be at the bottom before we could so much as come at the leak," the first mate said; and it was owing to his report that the *Swallow* had been headed for the coast.

The wind increased hourly, and in addition to the water which came through the shattered hull, large quantities were taken over the rail.

About three o'clock in the afternoon a heavy sea washed away the port bulwarks fore and aft, completely flooding the decks, fore-castle and cabin. The port quarter-boat was crushed like an egg-shell, leaving a few splintered fragments hanging in the davits, swinging to and fro in what the crew fancied was an ominously suggestive manner.

Then the sailors mutinied in downright earnest. With Tom Bixbee as the spokesman they declared it was useless labor to attempt to sail what was hardly more than a wreck, and that their lives were imperiled by remaining longer on board.

“The only chance we’ve got of saving a single soul is by sticking to the bark !” the captain shouted. “We are hardly fifty miles from the coast, and she can be kept afloat long enough to make that distance with this wind.”

Again by a liberal display of weapons the men were forced to return to the pumps ; but at sunset the water had gained upon them so steadily that the doomed craft began to settle and roll heavily in the cross-seas.

At this moment, when even the captain was disheartened, the starboard pump choked, and with only the port one serviceable it was no longer reasonable to think of keeping her afloat.

As the captain and Philip, both of whom had been on deck continuously since the hidden reef was struck, turned to go into the cabin for the purpose of saving such valuables as could readily be taken away, the men became like demons.

There were only two serviceable boats remaining since the gig had been destroyed by the rhinoceros and the port quarter-boat carried away in the wreck of the bulwarks, therefore the possibilities of taking off the entire crew seemed limited.

Fully aware of this fact, the men took advantage of the captain’s temporary absence to abandon the ship, without regard to supplies of food and water, and despite the threats of the other officers.

The long-boat was stove in the launching, owing to the absence of discipline, and the starboard quarter-boat nearly swamped as she was dropped heavily by the unreasoning men.

When the captain came on deck the crew had taken to the boat, already half-filled with water, and were some distance from the sinking bark.

It would have been useless to force them to return, even if such a thing was possible, for the little craft could not approach the foundering bark in the teeth of the gale without being stove to pieces, and the four officers and Philip stood gazing at the rapidly retreating boat with despair written on every feature of their countenances.

This was the culmination of disasters, and from it there appeared to be no way of escape.

They could do but little toward providing for their own safety. It was simply a question of whether the wreck would float until some friendly craft could be sighted; and this was answered within two hours from the time the crew abandoned her.

While the five despairing men were busily engaged constructing a raft of such materials as could be hastily gathered from the wave-swept deck, the *Swallow* gave a mighty lurch to port; then rising on her stern-post, as if endeavoring to escape from the doom which was now so close at hand, she settled to starboard with such rapidity that those on board had not even time to throw over the timbers they had partially lashed together.

Fortunately, so far as Philip Garland was concerned, he had been hurled beyond the whirlpool caused by the foundering vessel, and as he struck out, instinctively rather than because of hope, his

hands came in contact with the fragments of the quarter-boat.

Dazed by the shock and blinded with the driving spray, he grasped with the clutch of a dying man the frail timbers, and heeded not the black clouds which opened to belch forth fire and peals of thunder.

The shrieking wind tossed the wreckage upon the angry, white-crested waves which gleamed like the fangs of some devouring monster, and the rain descended in torrents.