

TRUE STORIES of Adventure

The Inhospitable Islands

BY WILLIAM COLLINS.

In the four-master Sally, out of Providence for the South Sea Islands, I shipped as second mate in 1860. To get right into the story, we were in longitude 163 degrees west and 8 degrees south latitude when we first met with trouble. No matter how thrilling an adventure he may encounter, that is the point which stands out above all else in the mind of a sailor—the latitude and longitude where he fabled trouble. I remember the night was a quiet one until about six bells—time for the sun to go down.

Instead of dropping below the horizon, it sank behind a bank of clouds which had almost the appearance of land in the distance and which hid the bright ball of the sun so completely as though it were night. In fact, it became dark so early that we could scarcely tell when the day did slip into night.

For long there was not over-much wind, although puffs tore viciously at the sails and rattled the yards. A low, dull roar as of breakers, although not so vibrant as in our ears. The ship veered around under them, and even before we experienced any violent breeze the helmsman felt a hint of the strength of the gale which was approaching. We had time a-plenty to reef and make all our preparations. As the captain feared a leeward shore we headed a few points into the teeth of the gale, which soon began to toss us about merrily.

In the next watch after the first signs of the storm we were plunging about wildly in a monster sea. All attempts to hold into the wind had been abandoned and we merely tried to keep from swamping in the heavy seas. In a sudden vicious gust of wind the jibs, the only canvas set, were blown away and we scudded helplessly before the storm. The pumps were manned and every effort possible was made to preserve the Sally, but she reeled like a log and took water very fast.

Hours were tossed and battered by the storm, flying like a great wounded bird before the wind, with not a stitch of canvas holding to our strained timbers. It seemed that each pursuing wave mounted higher and higher over our stern and as though the ship must be ripped asunder from the awful strain on planks and cables. Yet when a dull, unhealthy light began to spread about us—it must have been the dawn, although no sun could we see—we were still afloat.

With the excitement of it all I did not feel tired, but the captain, seeing how haggard I looked, ordered me to go below for a spell of rest, for he said the storm was blowing itself out and that we should all need strength for the work still in store for us. At the same time he sent four of the men below for a little sleep.

For a long time I could not bring myself to so much as close my eyes, for it seemed that should we for one single moment relax our vigilance the vessel must go down. At last, from sheer physical exhaustion my eyelids drooped and I was sinking into oblivion when, with a crash which hurled me from my hammock, the ship came to a dead stop and careened far to starboard. Timbers groaned and creaked. Above I heard scurrying feet and cries of men and the thud of sea mountains pounding straight down upon our decks.

I sprang to the companionway and climbed to the deck. Most of the lifeboats were in splinters, but the wretched plight of the crew made the two unharmed dinghies all that was necessary. Many of the men had been carried overboard, and two, Knowlton and Gunther, were washing back and forth in the scuppers, stone dead.

What we had struck was a matter of conjecture to us, for to add to the darkness, the wind drove a stinging rain in our faces with such force that we could hardly see to launch the dinghies. This work consumed I suppose a matter of seconds, although to me it seemed hours. There had been little time to provision the dinghies, and all we had with us were a few puncheons of water and enough biscuits for about two rounds. There was nothing for us to do but to run before the storm and confine our strength to the effort of bailing and preventing the dinghy from capsizing. We very shortly lost sight of the other boat and I never learned what became of its occupants, although I have no doubt they drowned.

I cannot tell how long we were tossed about, but I know that when the storm had finally blown itself out and the sea was running high, but more smoothly, we were all mighty thirsty and so hungry that the biscuits did not satisfy us. Patches of clouds scurried away, revealing the blue sky, and although the wind was puffy we did not fear it. The sun came out and warmed us, but best of all, way to the

eastward we saw a low line of hills. It was hard to tell how far distant they were, for one moment we saw them and the next, plunged in the trough of the sea, we saw nothing but walls of water.

As best we could we pulled away landward, six of us, but it was slow work. The men fatigued and the sea was still high enough to bother us, but every stroke counted, and at last, when the waves had very nearly subsided, we were able to see what kind of shore it was which offered us doubtful safety. The sun, shining unmercifully, drew torrents of perspiration from us and multiplied our thirst. We were hungry, but even if we had saved the biscuits we could not have forced them down our parched throats without liquid. Some of us were jealous that we had not been washed overboard with our mates, who were drowned and out of misery.

The beach we were approaching seemed only about an eighth of a mile distant, but it kept ever that far from us. Hard as we drove ourselves it seemed as though we could not force the dinghy another inch, but at last we were in the breakers and capsized. Somewhat relieved by the cold water, the men scrambled ashore as best they could, but Capt. Morris called them back and made them drag the dinghy high on the beach, weary as they were. This proved our salvation. Death worse than drowning, perhaps even starvation, would have been ours had we not preserved that boat.

Water was what we needed first, and most, and we all went in search of it, at the same time trying to learn what manner of island we were on. Not far from the beach we found a clear spring and the captain and I forced the men to drink sparingly, fearing that if they gulped the liquid they might die.

The captain had managed to keep some cartridges dry, and by means of them and two hard stones, we got a fire going. Some of us stayed on a beach to dry the clothes of all the men, while others went inland a short distance to forage. They soon returned with fruits of all kinds and reported that they had seen many birds which looked like game fowl, but were unable to kill them, what pistols they carried being soaked. This brought home to us with somewhat of a shock the thought that we might need powder and ball for a sterner purpose than the shooting of wild fowl. We might live for days on fruit, but a half dozen men, tired and almost nervous wrecks, could not hold out against an attack by savages without the aid of firearms. The captain alone had dry cartridges and had managed to keep his rifle fit for use. So we laid flat stones near the fire and, removing the leaden slugs from our cartridges, spread the powder to dry. The metal shells and the bullets we retained so that we might remake the cartridges.

While we were busy two of the men went into the forest to look for signs of habitation. Missionaries were scattered pretty thickly throughout the South Pacific, and we hoped that some might have found a way to this island. The powder dried quickly and we busied ourselves reconstructing the cartridges. Our fortune seemed to have changed for the better, when suddenly we were startled to our feet by a horrid cry from the direction of the woods.

The captain sprang first into the thick jungle, which tore our hands and legs. The direction from which the cry had come led us straight into the sinking sun and we continued in this way for perhaps a quarter of a mile, when the leader stumbled over the body of one of our comrades. He was dead, with a dozen long jagged cuts in his breast and abdomen. An arrow had pierced his heart. A knife, gripped in his lifeless fingers and stained red, told the story of a struggle, and ten yards farther on we found the body of a naked black man, stabbed in the side.

There were signs that the other man, Thompson, had given the savages a desperate fight at this point, and the trail showed that several men had continued in the direction we were travelling. Spurred by the thought that Thompson was alive, we charged down the trail.

We had no notion of how strong a force of savages we were to encounter. All we knew was that one of our friends was in trouble and that we might save him from death, even from torture. If we could not wrest him from the savages, we would at least have him dead, and we were determined that should our attack fail we would end our own lives rather than be taken by the savages and suffer a lingering death.

Another eighth of a mile along the obscure trail we were following and we heard the enemy crashing through the brush ahead of us. They must have heard us about the same instant, for

they turned and rushed us. It seemed at the time that a whole army was charging down on us, but as nearly as we could learn later there were only nine of them. They carried queer spears with stone heads and waved long knives with crooked blades, probably supplied to them by traders who should have been murdered with their own weapons.

The first native to throw himself upon Capt. Morris fell with his throat cut so that his head almost rolled free of his body and the second was dropped by a backhand stroke of a knife by Sam Wells, which left seven of the savages to four of us and Thompson, who was a prisoner.

I had never wielded a knife against a human foe, but this was no time for qualms, and when a big black fellow made at me with a kreese, I tried to parry and slash at him. It would have gone bad with me but for the big seaman, Bill Terry, who grappled with the fellow. Over and over on the ground they rolled, while I watched my chance. For an instant Bill was undermost and I fell upon the back of the native, digging and slashing with my knife. Even then it gave me a feeling of nausea, but I sprang to my feet to use my knife on another savage who was charging me.

There was a ringing of blades striking together, the thud of falling bodies and of revolver butts on bare heads and the shrieks of the wounded. It sounded as though two armies were engaged in the work of slaughter. The scoring was not all done on our side, either, for Bill Terry was killed outright and every one of our men sustained some injury.

But the odds were becoming more equal and we had more to fight for than had the natives, and they began to weaken. One fled, then another, and with a rush the survivors disappeared into the forest. As he ran, one of the natives tried to stab Thompson, who was bound, but Capt. Morris saw the act and hurled a knife, which struck the savage in the side, and he fled howling.

Thompson and a man named Fielder were so badly wounded that they could not walk, so we made a sort of hammock out of boughs and carried them to the beach, where we buried Terry and the man we had found lying dead on the trail.

We knew that even with firearms we would be unable to repulse an attack by the savages in force, so as soon as we had given our dead mates a decent burial we gathered fruit and filled the water puncheons preparatory to taking to the dinghy. The sea was calm and the moon shone brightly, and we thought the water was the safest place for us. The captain had been unable to use his rifle in the hand-to-hand fight in the jungle, so we had his dry cartridges and the ones we made with the powder we had dried.

All night long we lay on or off the beach, and two of the men were on watch while the others slept. In the moonlight we saw the natives once or twice at the edge of the woods, but they did not attempt to molest us. Back of the first line of hills a fire lit the sky and we were in a quandary as to whether it was a signal to natives on other parts of the island. Our plight was not an enviable one. In the long watches I worried over it, for it seemed there would be no way to land and we could not remain in the boat indefinitely without more water and food. Life seemed to hold little hope, and I began to feel that the best way after all would be to attack the savages and die fighting.

I actually determined to propose this to the captain and the men when it should come morning, and the thought so pacified me that I fell into a sound sleep. I was awakened in broad daylight by a cry: "Ship to starboard. Bearin' toward us."

All eyes strained in the direction in which one of the men was pointing and there, sure enough, was a barque heading straight for the island. She was far off and we scarcely dared breathe for fear she would put about and sail away, leaving us in our fate.

Capt. Morris discharged his rifle as a signal to the barque, but I doubt whether we were near enough to her for the shot to be heard. But, at any rate, she continued toward us and began to row in her direction. It was weary work, but joy at the prospect of rescue helped us. We had not taken forty strokes when around a point darted a native war canoe filled with armed savages. Behind it glided another and another. We lay to the oars and pulled for all we were worth for the barque, but the hardships we had endured had sapped our strength and our breath was short. We had a fair lead on the enemy, but in the first quarter of a mile they had cut it down and we saw that we could not last against them.

From the action of the barque we judged she had sighted us, and the matter resolved itself into a race with life for the prize. The men were rolling from side to side at the oars, almost dropping from exhaustion. The captain in the stern threw water on us from time to time, but the stimulation did not last long. Foot by foot the savages overhauled us, yet they were not close enough for us to use our weapons.

One of the men who was rowing topped over backward and his oar swung useless in the rowlock. We bundled him into the stern and Capt. Morris took his place at the sweep. The barque was still at a great distance, and our pursuers were gaining rapidly, so that we were by no means safe.

When we thought they were close enough, the captain ordered us to stop rowing. The natives howled with delight, for they evidently believed we were spent. Bracing his feet wide apart to steady himself, the captain took careful aim at the leading boat. Bang went his rifle and a black body leaped high in the air, plunging into the water.

But the enemy were not discouraged. Onward they glided, and the delay while the captain fired gave them an opportunity further to cut down our lead. They were gaining steadily on us and at an alarming rate. We could see that the barque was holed, and guessed that she had struck shoal water. Boats were being lowered, and although they were being rowed to our rescue this meant more time for the pursuit.

We had so little ammunition we did not dare waste it, and we played a waiting game. Soon arrows began to fly at us, but they fell short.

"We'll stop that," said Capt. Morris, and he used his rifle again, killing another man.

After that it was scramble at the oars, then stop for an instant to empty our revolvers and the captain's rifle. After the third volley one of the canoes rolled heavily to one side and sank. The natives thrashed about in the water, but their comrades did not stop for them. The time was getting short and rescue was at hand. There was a little puff of white in one of the boats from the barque. A second later we heard the report, and simultaneously a savage flung his arms in the air and sank to the bottom of his canoe.

Then I think we all went crazy with relief. The dinghy drifted about in the sea and we lay panting in the bottom, for the savages had wavered, and after the effects of a heavy volley from the two rescue boats had fled for the beach. Some of our men were laughing and some were crying, but the sailors from the barque clambered into the dinghy and helped us into the larger boats.

It was the barge Triton which had rescued us and she left us at Bombay, from which we shipped to Boston.



A CHIC NEW STYLE.

The two-piece mode—the classic of the season. If your wish is for a sports suit that reflects unmistakably the mode, you will find it in the model pictured here. The jumper blouse is in the new finger-tip length, with collar fastening to one side under the chin, or turned back to form revers. A slight fullness is introduced over the bust by gathers, and set-on bands are button trimmed. The belt, coming from the sides of the trimming bands, ties at the centre of the plain back. The skirt is joined to a bodice top and is distinguished by two inverted plaits either side of the front. The diagram pictures the partly finished costume, and No. 1243 is in sizes 16, 18 and 20 years (34, 36 and 38 inches bust only). Size 18 years (36 bust) requires 1 1/2 yards of 36-inch, or 2 1/2 yards of 54-inch material. The bodice top alone requires 1 1/2 yards of 36-inch material, or with ribbon straps over the shoulders 3/4 yard. Price 20 cents.

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YOU CAN GIVE ANY FLOOR A HARD-WOOD FINISH

BY CLEMENTINE PADDLEFORD.

In the days of carpets floors didn't matter—you couldn't see them. Soft wood was just as good as any other kind. Being cheaper, we rather favored it. But we have lived to regret our choice with rooms showing less of rug and more square feet of floor.

Softwood floors are one of the backaches of housekeeping. You can't keep them clean—splintery things. All one can do is to sweep or scrub them. Dry mops get tangled on the rough surface and leave their lint on every splinter.

Footish to put up with a soft-wood floor when it is so easy to turn it into a hardwood substitute—a substitute that the mop slips over as smoothly as on polished walnut. You can do the work yourself for around five dollars a floor.

Paint is the best covering for old floors that have no natural beauty—but paint alone isn't enough. A small plane and an emery cloth come before the paint brush. Go over the surface until it is smooth and even, not a splinter left. It's a tedious job but the outcome of the finished task is dependent upon how thoroughly the scraping is done.

FINISH AS YOU GO.

The easy way is to start at one corner of the room and go over the boards one by one, finishing each as you go. Nails and tacks may be removed or else driven below the surface of the wood. Splintery spots and knots smoothen up best with a sharp knife. Each splinter and wave must be cut back to the solid wood if you expect to use the dry mop. This will give an uneven surface but when it is rubbed down with the emery cloth, and the paint and varnish are added, it scarcely shows.

Before you begin painting give the floor a good scrubbing with warm water and ammonia. One part of ammonia to eight parts water is usually

about the right proportion. Grease spots and stains may require special scrubbing with a stronger solution. Where this fails, washing with alcohol or benzine will do the work. If paint spots refuse to come off with turpentine try elbow grease with sandpaper. Don't make the mistake of scrubbing first. The floor must be "bone dry" if you want to get the splinters out.

When the floor has dried overnight it is ready for the first coat of paint. Soft, porous wood needs an excess of linseed oil in this first or priming coat to satisfy the absorbing properties of the wood. You will be surprised how much oil a soft-wood floor can lap up—it takes nearly a full quart for a room 10x10 feet. Give this coat plenty of time to dry—forty-eight hours isn't too much. Before adding a second coat fill the nail holes with putty, using a good filler for the cracks and crevices. Mix some of the paint in with the putty and filler to give the desired color.

THREE COATS OF PAINT.

Now comes the paint proper, which is applied according to the directions on the can. You will have better luck if you put it on rapidly, taking only one or two boards at a time.

For painting use a fairly large round bristle brush. Brush out the paint first with the grain, then cross it, then smooth it out with the grain. This advice applies especially to the first coat, which must be well worked into the surface.

For a good finish use three coats of paint. It is poor economy to use but two when three would make a lasting job. In the choice of floor paints there is but one rule to follow—buy the best in the market. After the painting a coat of varnish will give the finish greater beauty and better wearing qualities. The floor should stand forty-eight hours before your rugs are laid down.

When the floor is hardened you can treat it as you do a hardwood one.

Growing Annuals From Seed.

By Miss Anna Moy's for the Ontario Horticultural Association.

There is a peculiar fascination in growing our own annuals from seed. Success with some varieties, failure with others, makes one anxious to find the reason for the latter, so it is a case of "live and learn," with the enthusiastic gardener.

Before my border was ready for the perennials I used it for annuals. Asters, snapdragon, and ten-week stocks were the ones selected and sown in a hotbed in April.

Florists tell us the annuals should be transplanted as soon as the first true leaves appear, that is the first two after the seed leaves. I found them too small and delicate for an amateur to handle without considerable loss, so waited for the next two leaves, then set to work. I made the hole with a narrow trowel, pinched off the two seed leaves, and set the plant in the hole so the remaining leaves were almost touching the ground, half filled the hole with earth, gently pressed it down around the roots and stem, then filled the hole with water, planted six or eight more, then filled up the first one. When all were in a little nitrate of soda was sprinkled around each plant and worked in. They were protected from hot sun, wind, and heavy rain, and were soon quite at home and grew rapidly. Cultivated regularly, and as soon as buds appeared another application of nitrate of soda worked in, gave me dozens of strong, healthy plants that were full of bloom when the snow came.

Another year I decided to specialize in stocks, sending to England for the four separate colors, white, pink, rose, and lavender, and the same methods followed when transplanting time came.

Bees in the Spring.

Spring is the most important and critical period of the bee year. The principal object of all manipulation during this period is to get a large and, later on, to prevent the tendency to swarm. For a maximum production of honey, says the Dominion Apiarist (Mr. C. B. Gooderham, B.S.A.) in his bulletin "Bees and How to Keep Them," there should be, during the honey flow, an abundance of bees between the ages of two and six weeks. If the bees were well prepared for winter they are best left undisturbed for awhile, but if stores have run short or if by death colonies have become weakened and there is danger of them being robbed out, a short superficial examination should be made on a warm day. Combs containing stores may be taken from colonies that have more than they need, and given, providing healthiness is apparent, to those that are deficient. If there are not enough bees to cover two combs the colony should be united with a stronger one. The work is best done towards evening. A warm day when the bees are flying freely should be chosen for making a thorough examination of the brood nest. Any colony that is found to be queenless or to contain a drone-breeding queen should be united to one containing a fertile queen.

Colonies wintered out of doors should be kept in their wintering cases binding tendency.

Care of Fruit in Transit.

By illustrations and descriptions Mr. R. L. Wheeler, Dominion Fruit Transportation Specialist, in a Fruit Branch pamphlet entitled "Loading and Climax Basket," published by the Dept. of Agriculture and available free on application to the Publications Branch, Ottawa, points out how improper loading of cars is done and how it might be correctly performed and much waste saved. He says that the basket itself is a good seller of tender fruit but a poor loader and carrier and proceeds to point out grave faults in loading. Proper ventilation and inspection conveniences must be considered. Trouble and waste are often caused by trying to squeeze in just one more basket in each row. Again, loading with mixed size baskets (six quart and eleven quart) always presents difficulties, which are minimized when only one-size basket is used. Crosswise loading is not desired but the practice of filling the doorway causes end to end lack of centre space is very necessary to develop the required air circulation, which at best is insufficient. The important fact is, says Mr. Wheeler, that there must be air circulation to carry the heat to the ice and the ice must melt to benefit the load, chilled air flowing from the ice ends under the false floor and filtering through whatever space is provided when loading. The purpose of the false floor is disregarded if covered by a load without breathing space.

Under the side heading of "Two Evils" our authority states that "The situation facing shippers is that the Climax basket is subject to damage by shifting if loaded loose enough to provide anything approaching sufficient ventilation through the load and is equally subject to deterioration by insufficient refrigeration if loaded compact enough to stand ordinary handling in train and yard movement."

Details are given in the pamphlet—study of which is commanded to every shipper and handler in transportation of fruit—of comparisons made last September between two cars carrying grapes from St. Catharines to Winnipeg, one loaded solid and the other with the doorway spaced and braced, which argue strongly for the latter. Mr. Wheeler recommends loading from the end towards the door and but not over tight, with diagonal loading instead of either squeezing or racking baskets. He adds that a load of lighter material than is required for a car of crates or boxes since with a solidly built load the handles have a binding tendency.

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