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HOW I LOST MY FINGER.

Not many years ago I belonged to her Majesty's ship Iris, a smart little gun-vessel stationed on the West Coast of Africa.

We had been cruising off the mouth of the River Congo for several weeks, watching a suspicious-looking merchant barque, named the Dahomé, which had been anchored off Shark's Point (just inside the river) for the past two months.

Now King Peter, a native chief who lived in the vicinity of the point, had hinted to our captain that the master of the barque was only waiting for the Iris to leave the Congo, when a cargo of slaves would be taken on board for the slave-market in Cuba.

In consequence of this information we were all determined not to let the Dahomé slip through our hands if we could help it, so you may be sure that a constant and vigilant look-out was kept for her both day and night.

One morning during my watch the captain came on deck and said to me,

"Mr. Clifford, I intend to take the Iris up the river to-day as far as Banana Creek, and to remain there till the afternoon. While in the creek I will get on board about fifty tons of coal, and tell the people at the factories there that I am going to leave the Congo for a short time to cruise up the coast to meet the admiral. I anticipate that directly the news gets wind the master of the Dahomé will try to run his cargo; so I shall leave you this evening in the cutter to look after the barque. I propose," added Captain Hood, "to leave the creek just before sunset, steam close in to Shark's Point in order to let the Dahomé's crew see us, and then I shall stand out to sea, beat to windward for a day or two, and then return to the river to pick you up; and if you have good fortune, Mr. Clifford, I hope I shall find you in possession of the barque."

"Ay, ay, sir," I answered; "I shall be quite ready, and you may depend upon me doing my best to take her if she ships the mizzen."

Captain Hood then ordered me to alter the course of the Iris and steer for Banana Creek, which I did, and about 11 a.m. we reached Banana, and made the Iris fast.

When this was done the captain asked me to accompany him on shore.

I was very glad of a chance to stretch my legs on terra firma, and in a few minutes had changed my uniform coat for a white jacket, and was wending my way towards the factories.

At this time there were three factories at Banana Creek—large wooden buildings surrounded by palisades and armed with brass howitzers. Each was in charge of a European superintendent, whose duty it was to store the palm oil brought from the interior by the natives, and ship it in the trading vessels as they arrived from England.

On reaching the Dutch factory we found the superintendent engaged in conversation with no less a person than the master of the Dahomé. Walking straight up to them, Captain Hood, addressing himself to the superintendent, said,

"Mr. Van Bume, can you let me have sufficient coal to take the Iris up the coast to Ambrizette. I want it immediately, as I must endeavor to meet the admiral there before he sails for St. Thomé."

"Oh yes, captain; you shall have it at once," and, calling a negro, he ordered him to run down to the coal wharf and see to it.

While the captain was talking to the superintendent, I kept my eye on the master of the Dahomé, and I fancied that he pricked up his ears and looked particularly happy when Captain Hood said that he wanted to leave the Congo as soon as possible to meet the admiral.

We remained at the factory for about an hour, and having settled for the coal returned to the Iris to see how the coaling was progressing. Shortly after we noticed the master of the barque crossing the river, to Shark's Point in his gig, and I thought to myself, "It won't be long before you leave, my friend."

By 3 p. m. all the coal was in, and steam being up, we prepared to leave. As we cast off the hawsers from the tumble-down wharf to which we had been lashed, one of the crew, while employed hoisting up a boat, missed his footing and fell overboard. The cry, "Man overboard!" was at once raised, and all hands ran aft to render assistance.

A gallant young officer, the mate of my watch, sprang into the creek, and happily succeeded in holding the man's head above water until a boat picked them both up. The action of the officer was plucky in the extreme, as the creek was infested with crocodiles.

This accident delayed us for some time, and the sun was low on the horizon when we steamed down the river.

As we neared the mouth of the Congo the cutter was lowered, and her crew, consisting of a dozen men and a petty officer, all armed with cutlass and revolver, took their seats; and as soon as Captain Hood had given me my final instructions I jumped into the boat myself, and at once directed the coxswain to steer for the right bank of the stream, in order to get out of the strong current, and also to get under cover of the mangrove bushes.

The Iris, after casting us off, steered straight out to sea, and, as darkness set in almost immediately, we soon lost sight of her.

When we neared the bank I ordered my men to pull up the river until we reached a spot from whence unobserved I could see the masts of the Dahomé. Arrived here the cutter was made fast to the trunk of a palm, and after giving the boat's crew a dose of quinine to keep off the fever, I told them to put on their blanket suits and make themselves comfortable until they were wanted; then telling Brown, my coxswain, to keep a smart look-out, I jumped on shore and took a short stroll into the bush.

After forcing my way through a thick growth of palmetto and mangrove I reached a clearing whence I obtained a good view of the Dahomé and the grasshuts of King Peter's subjects. Here I lay down, and, notwithstanding the attacks of the mosquitos, managed to make myself pretty comfortable.

As I lay in the long grass, watching the hull of the supposed slaver, a gentle breeze came sighing through the palm trees, just disturbing their feathery branches, and imparting a delicious coolness to the heated atmosphere. Overhead the beautiful stars were shining brightly, and far away, across the dark, rushing stream of the Congo, I could see the moon, red as blood, rising above the haze which hung like a pall over the distant line of bush that fringed the opposite side of the river.

Nothing disturbed the silence of the night save the lap, lap of the tide, as it swept past the tangled roots of the mangrove-trees, and the occasional cheeping of the grasshoppers.

After contemplating the beauties of the tropic sky I turned my eyes towards the Dahomé, and presently saw that some of the crew were going aloft; then the topsails were unfurled and sheeted home. "Oh, oh, my friend; I suppose you have made up your mind to be off at last, and I presume you will take advantage of this wind to run farther up the river and ship your black cargo."

Muttering these words to myself, I jumped up and returned to the cutter, and telling the coxswain to rouse the men, I sat back in the sternsheets, watching for the barque to round the point. I had not long to wait; round she came, her sails glistening in the bright moonlight.

As soon as she cleared the point and was in mid-stream, proceeding up the river with a fair wind, I ordered the men to get their oars out and follow her, telling the coxswain to steer as close in as possible to the bush, to prevent the lookout on board the Dahomé seeing us.

By this time the breeze had freshened, and the wind was blowing in strong gusts up the river, driving the Dahomé so quickly ahead of us that we could no longer make her out. Seeing that we should be left a long way astern, I now told the men to lay in their oars and hoist the sail. This done, we bowled along merrily for a couple of hours, until, rounding a bend of the stream, we saw once more the Dahomé at anchor in the centre of the river.

I at once lowered the sail and steered right into the bush, making the cutter fast to the stump of a tree. Here, under the shadow of the mangroves, we were quite out of sight.

About an hour must have elapsed when the sound of paddles near us attracted my attention, and, looking in the direction whence the noise appeared to proceed, we saw about a score of canoes, apparently full of natives, paddling up the stream towards the Dahomé. A few of the canoes passed within a stone's throw of us, but evidently we were not observed. Turning to the coxswain I said,

"King Peter was right this time; we shall go home with our pockets full of prize money. I think, as soon as we have given the master of the barque sufficient time to get his passengers on board we will shove off and surprise him with a visit before he slips his anchor."

I then stretched myself down in the cutter to take forty winks, and giving Brown my watch told him to call me at three o'clock, or before if the canoes were heard returning from the Dahomé.

After sleeping for nearly two hours I was awakened by the coxswain, who reported that the canoes had returned from the barque, and were now passing down the river. I gave orders for the men to pull out into the stream, and, taking the

tiller from the coxswain, steered direct for the Dahomé.

Away we went, the men bending to the oars with a will. The ship was only a quarter of a mile ahead, and as we knew she could not now escape us it was no longer necessary to be cautious in our approach.

In about twenty minutes we were close under her stern. Not a glimmer of light was visible from any part of the ship, and, although we made noise enough as we closed her, we were not hailed by the lookout.

In another minute we were alongside, but thinking it suspicious that no notice had been taken of us, I told the coxswain and four men to follow me up the side, revolver in hand, in readiness for a strike out if necessary.

As I leaped on to the quarterdeck of the Dahomé, closely followed by the blue-jackets, expecting I scarcely know what, I felt surprised at the deathlike stillness pervading the decks, and, looking around to discover if there was any one in charge of the ship, I noticed in the indistinct light the form of a man lying down by the after hatchway, apparently asleep.

I went over to him, and gently kicking his legs, said,

"Wake up, my man, and tell your captain that I want to search the ship."

Receiving no reply, I stooped down, and imagine my horror at finding that I was speaking to a headless corpse.

Immediately I told Brown to fetch a lantern from the cutter, and this done, we proceeded to the forecabin, where fresh horrors awaited us. Here, lying about in all directions, and hacked almost to pieces, were the remains of the unhappy crew of the supposed slave-ship.

Leaving the forecabin, I proceeded to the master's state-room. Here everything was turned upside down. A scene of utter confusion: the chairs were overturned, the lockers forced open and empty, and the panelling of the cabin was bespattered with blood. I was about to look into the sleeping-cabin, when a faint groan attracted my attention, and looking beneath the table of the state-room I saw the poor master of the Dahomé. He was bleeding from a fearful gash across his throat, and I saw at once that life was nearly extinct. I managed to raise his head, and as I did so he gasped out, "I'm done for! the Congo pirates, Medora's people, surprised us; they have carried off my poor little Willie; save him; I'm dying."

He was gone. The strong man whom I had seen but yesterday morning in the full enjoyment of health would never again look upon the faces of his loved ones. I now searched the ship carefully, and it became quite clear to me that she was no slaver. The hold had been cleared out of everything portable by the villainous Congo pirates, and King Peter, at the instigation of the King of Medora, had either knowingly or unintentionally misled Captain Hood, with a view of getting the Iris away from the scene of their horrible crime.

I then had the bodies of the master and his unfortunate crew placed aboard the mizzen mast and covered with a sail, and was thinking what further steps I ought to take, when one of my men touched me on the arm, and said, "I believe I see the lights of a steamer coming up."

Taking my night-glasses, I mounted the mizzen-shroud and perceived that the man was right. I took a long look at her, and as she gradually shortened the distance I fancied I recognized the well-known outline of the Iris.

A few minutes later I felt quite sure that I was right; and now the light of the early morning showed us the Iris steaming up on our port quarter.

I got into the cutter, and hastened on board the Iris to report myself. At the gangway I was met by Captain Hood, who, in a cherry tone, said, "Well, Clifford, you have captured the slaver?"

I at once apprised him of the real state of affairs, and he immediately accompanied me back to the Dahomé, greatly shocked at the account I gave him.

Captain Hood, however, was a man of action; he gave orders to the first lieutenant to arrange for the funerals of the murdered men; and as soon as that was over to man and arm the boats, and proceed to Medora Creek, attack the natives, and burn down their town.

The boats were speedily manned, and, led by the first lieutenant, we pulled down the river towards Medora Creek.

We had some difficulty in finding the creek, but at last our search was successful and a narrow creek it was, I can tell you. For about a quarter of a mile we were obliged to pull up in single file, as the branches of the trees on either side met overhead and interlaced.

By-and-by the passage became still worse; we could no longer use the oars to pull with, and so the men got out and dragged the boats along.

Just as we were thinking whether we would leave the boats, a sudden turn of the creek brought us in view of the town. It consisted of about 400 huts surrounded by cocoa-palms.

We commenced operations at once. A rocket fired from the first cutter went slap into the nearest hut; then another from my boat passed through a row of them, setting them on fire. All this time none of the natives were to be seen; they had, we presumed, observed the Iris, and decamped into the bush.

The first lieutenant then directed the blue-jackets to land and fire the huts, and at it they went like a parcel of schoolboys ripe for any mischief.

In the meantime I commenced a careful search for poor Willie, the son of the master of the Dahomé.

While looking about I came across a hut the walls of which were composed of dried clay. I had just set fire to the roof, when my attention was arrested by a faint moan from within. After looking round to see if I could find a log of wood with which to batter it in, I saw a small hole about a foot from the top of the door. Thinking there might be a catch inside, I inserted my fore-finger. In an instant I felt an intense pain shoot through every nerve of my body, which caused me to draw my hand back. Too late! My poor finger was gone—it had been shorn off by somebody as clean as a whistle.

Maddened with the pain, I threw myself violently against the door, which suddenly burst in. There, in a corner of the hut, I saw a fair-haired little fellow, his face as pale as marble, holding up his small arm to ward off a blow which a gigantic negro was aiming at his breast with a long knife, the same weapon which had deprived me of my unfortunate digit. In a moment I struck up the brute's knife with my sword, and, falling on him, we both rolled to the earth.

While we were rolling together my faithful coxswain rushed into the hut, and, with a well-aimed blow from his heavy cutlass, sent my sable foe to his last account. Then, catching hold of the frightened child, we got outside the place just as the burning roof fell in.

As soon as the huts were fairly ablaze we returned to the boats, and had just pushed off, when the bush on each side of us became filled, as if by magic, with the black paties of the natives, and the rascals opened fire on us with such hearty good will from their rusty muskets, that in less than five minutes they had wounded the first lieutenant with a slug, which entered his chest, and they also killed three of the men in my cutter. Unfortunately, owing to the awkward position the boats were in, we could not return the fire with any effect, and so, under a storm of shot, retreated slowly out of the creek, and at last reached the Iris with the loss of twelve of our number.

Willie, who was in the cutter with me, was untouched; and I was very pleased to think that I had been instrumental in saving his life.

The following day I was down with fever; and as the doctors thought my chances of recovery small if I remained longer on the African coast, they invalidated me, and I was sent to England, taking Willie with me.

Before reaching home I recovered from the fever; and when able to sit up I had a long talk with him about the Dahomé, and his narrow escape from death.

Willie told me that the reason the Dahomé remained so long at Shark's Point was owing to the King of Medora having told his father that if he would remain he could manage to let him have a much larger cargo of palm oil than he could get at any other place.

I asked Willie to tell me how he felt when the big negro so nearly knifed him. "Well, Mr. Clifford," he replied, "I can scarcely tell you how I felt. I had been left in the charge of that man by the native king, and I suppose when the pirates saw the boat coming, every one ran away except ourselves, and they must have forgotten us in their excitement."

"I had been praying to God to deliver me, and watching the negro, who was lying down asleep, when I heard the whizz of the rockets. The noise made by them woke up my gaoler. At first he did not seem to understand what had happened; but as soon as he heard the cheers of the sailors he appeared to comprehend, and was on the point of dragging me towards the door when you appeared—or, at least, your finger. Mad with rage at seeing his escape cut off, the infuriated black slashed at it, and then—but you know the rest."

No More Bothers.

GENTLEMEN,—I have used Hagyard's Yellow Oil for my chilblains and it cured them. I have never been bothered with them since.

REGIE KROWN, Victoria, B. C.

A Dangerous Birthmark.

A well-known family of Minneapolis are distinguished by a similar birthmark, said to have been borne by every member of the family for the past two hundred years. However this may be it is certain that the mark is carried by all of them now known. It is a small gash like a knife wound at the base of the neck, narrowly escaping the spinal cord.

That cut, which resembles a fresh scab with raw lips, refused to be healed and at times bleeds profusely and even alarmingly. It is about three inches in length and varies in depth from a quarter of an inch to an inch and a half, increasing as the bearer grows older, and becoming more angry and occasioning greater loss of blood.

This peculiar birth-mark has been the cause of death to nearly all of the family possessing it, as after the age of thirty-five or forty it assumes an exceedingly malignant nature, discharging pus and blood until mortification ensues. In the children it seldom amounts to more than a deep scratch, causing slight pains, but readily inflamed by fever or other illness.

There is attached to this peculiarity a romantic story of an ancestor's cowardly blow at a brother and supposed to perpetuate its memory in this way, but physicians pronounce it to be of a cancerous nature, hereditary and remarkable in the history of medicine.

Administering an Obnoxious Dose.

The physician in charge of an insane asylum in Ohio prescribed a large dose of castor oil for one of the inmates, a man of great strength, and wild, unmanageable temper. The attendant who had been commissioned to administer the nauseous dose foresaw that he was likely to find the task more or less difficult, and therefore took with him several assistants.

On reaching the lunatic's cell the attendant put on a matter of fact air and, cup in hand, stepped inside the door. The madman divined his purpose instantly, and rushed furiously upon him. The assistants were too quick for him, however, and after a severe struggle threw him down and attempted to pinion his arms.

The man fought like a tiger, but found himself overmatched. Suddenly he became perfectly quiet, and putting his hand to his mouth said in a whisper to the chief attendant, "Call it oysters."

The attendant was a man of great natural shrewdness—as dealers with the insane need to be—and at once understood the lunatic's meaning. Directing the wondering assistants to release the patient, he took the cup from the shelf on which it had been set, approached the crazy man, made him a low bow, and said in a tone of ceremonious politeness: "Good morning, Mr. Smith; will you try this dish of very fine oysters?"

The lunatic smiled pleasantly, returned the bow with one still lower, and answered:

"Thank you very much; you are very kind."

So saying, he took the cup and drained it with every appearance of the deepest satisfaction.

"Ah," said he, as he finished the dose and smacked his lips, "those are indeed fine—the finest oysters I have ever tasted."

Thus he saved his self respect, and had taught his keepers an excellent lesson in their own line.

Origin of the Titles of Peers.

Duke is derived from the Latin word *dux*, a leader. Marquis: this title was conferred upon those who held the command of the *marches*, as the boundaries between England and Wales and England and Scotland were called, when those countries were hostile to this nation. Earl is a title derived from the Saxon word, *eorl*, noble. The earl formerly had the government of a *shire*. After the Conquest the earls were called counts, and from them shires have taken the name of counties. Viscount or *Vice-comes*, was the deputy of the earl. Baron: the title of baron is the oldest in point of antiquity, although the lowest in point of rank, of any order of nobility.

Don't be Discouraged Boys.

It is the bubbling spring which flows gently, the little rivulet which runs along day and night by the farmhouse, that is useful, rather than the swollen cataract. Niagara excites our wonder, and we stand amazed at the power and greatness of God there, as He "pours it from the hollow of His hand." But one Niagara is enough for the continent or for the world; while the same world requires tens of thousands of silver fountains and gently flowing rivulets, that water every farm and meadow, and every garden, and that shall flow on every day and every night, with their gentle, quiet beauty. So with the acts of our lives. It is not so much by great deeds like those of the martyrs, as by the daily and quiet virtues of a Christian life, that good is to be done.

Saw His Ideal's Photograph.

Appropos of boarded doors and windows, there is a romance attached to one in Philadelphia. It seems that after reaching Bar Harbor, Madame remembered something which had been left behind in that darkened house. She wanted it, but her husband was traveling, so she could not ask him to go to the house for it. She had a nephew from the south visiting her. He offered to go to her house and get it for her.

His aunt lived in one of the rows in which every house is like its neighbor. He had always recognized her's by its double row of black tiling across the house, and took but little notice of the number.

Alas! when he reached Philadelphia he had forgotten the number, and there were two houses with painted bricks and next but one to each other. Which was the one for which he had the keys? He finally decided on one—his keys fitted, so he felt safe. He entered and went immediately to the second floor. He now discovered that he was not in the right house—it being furnished in a style entirely different from that which stamped his aunt's apartments.

As he looked around his eyes rested on the portrait of a girl. He gazed fascinated; it was the face of his ideal realized; he took it up, studied it held it off at arm's length, drew it near and at last took his unknown from the dainty frame and swore he would find the original.

Luckily he got out of the house and no one saw him. He returned to Bar Harbor; he could get no information there; his aunt's neighbors were traveling in Europe but they had no daughter. He sought for her at all the summer resorts; at last he found her, and—well, the engagement is announced.—Philadelphia Music and Drama.

Canada for October.

Canada is rapidly winning its way into Canadian hearts and homes. The number for October contains, in addition to the continued articles, a beautiful poem called "Una in the Wilderness," by Thos. C. Robson; an imaginative and suggestive essay by Pastor Felix, "The heart on the Sleeve;" a story by L. L., "On the Gatincau;" some five verses by Erie on "Indian Summer at Montreal;" a rendering in verse of a Danish Legend by the Editor; and some choice selections, including a fascinating story from the Independent, "Shon McGann's Toboggan Ride." All who subscribe for 1892 will receive the last three numbers of this year free. One dollar will pay for fifteen months. Published by Mathew R. Knight, Benton, New Brunswick.

The Beauty Standard.

The standard of female loveliness varies greatly in different countries and with individual tastes. Some prefer the plump and buxom type; some admire the slender and sylph-like, and some the tall and queenly maiden. But among all people of the Caucasian race, one point of beauty is always admired—a pure, clear and spotless complexion—whether the female be of the blonde, brunette, or hazel-eyed type. This first great requisite of loveliness can be assured only by a pure state of the blood, active liver, good appetite and digestion, all of which are secured by the use of Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery. It is guaranteed to accomplish all that is claimed for it, or money refunded. If you would have a clear lovely complexion, free from eruptions, mothy patches, spots and blemishes, use the "Golden Medical Discovery."

A Tight Little Craft.

A blue-jacket who has recently married gives the following description of his bride and her apparel, which we think will put some of the "society papers" to the blush: "My wife is just as handsome as craft as ever left millinery dry dock, is clipper-built, and with a figure-head not often seen on a small craft. Her length of keel is 5 ft. 8 in., and displaces 27 cubic feet of air; of light draught, which adds to her speed in the ballroom; full in the waist, spars trim.

"At the time we were spliced she was newly rigged fore and aft with standing rigging of lace and flowers; mainsail part silk, with fore staysail of Valenciennes. Her frame was the best steel covered with silk, with whalebone stanchions. This rigging is intended for fair weather cruising. She has also a set of storm sails for rough weather, and is rigging out a small set of canvas for light squalls, which are liable to occur in this latitude sooner or later. I am told in running down the street she answers the helm beautifully, and can turn round in her own length if a handsomer craft passes her."

A seat in the New York Stock Exchange was sold the other day for \$22,000.