



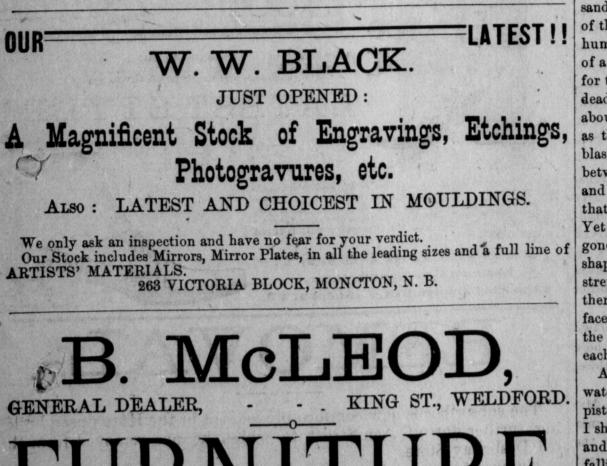
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whipped under the arm as though it were the model of a boat, and carried to the water. I think if Alexander were here, Miss Grant, he would agree with me that our one chance lies in our making our presence known to a passing vessel; which reminds me," said I, rising and looking at my watch, "that it is about time I took a peep seaward, for it will be some hours now since I visited the hummock." was walking to the steps.

"You do not ask me to join you," she said. I turned and noted a look in her,

half wistful, half amused." "Do pray join me," I cried ; "I was

fraid that the heat-" "No," she interrupted ; "I expect there will be nothing to see." I smiled at the coquettish feigning of gentle resentment in her manner of drawing aside the shawl that sereened her room. She disappeared closing the drapery afresh, and I climbed through the opening into the sunshine. My hat was wide-brimmed like that of a southern planter. It sheltered me as effectually as an umbrella, and under the shadow of it I paced leisurely toward the hummock, but pfliung perhaps with unnecessary vigor at my cigar, to certain thoughts of Miss Grant that rose in me as I advanced. "Pooh !" thought I, "what a madman must I be, situated as we are, to think of anything under this wide blue sky but our deliverance, and how to effect

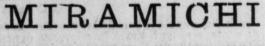
it !" It chanced just then that, my eyes happening to turn toward the scattering of trees that came thinning out of the mass of the forest round to that part of the sand where I had met with the iron ring of the hatch, I spied, or seemed to spy, a human face peering at me from the midst of a huddle of leaves big enough to serve for the foliage of a cotton-tree. Istopped dead like a man transfixed, the cigar I was about to rise to my lips arrested midway, as though my arm had suddenly been blasted. The light rained in a blue dazzle betwixt me and the heavy-leafed bough, and the glare of it obliged me to blink, that on looking again I might make sure. Yet when I started afresh the face was gone. I hollowed my hands into the shape of a binocular glass to shelter and strengthen my sight, and gazed again, but there was nothing to be seen save the surface of green leaves which seemed to arch the solid bough they draped, as though each was of the weight of a giant banana. All was stirless in the tree, though I watched it attentively. I had left my pistols in the kitchen, as I must call it, or I should certainly let fly at the branch, and taken my chances of a murdered man falling out of the foliage of it. Still

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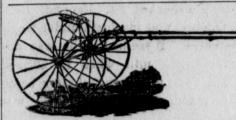
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JOHN HUCHES.

motionless. Yet it was certain that she had hove in sight since the morning, that is to say, since I had last viewed the sea, and either a faint breeze of wind had brought her to where she was, or she was a small vessel stemming the water to the propulsion of her sweeps or long oars.

The fire had burned out; the smoke drained dimly to the air off the smoldering embers, and was of no more use as a signal thon the flourish of a handkerchief. Then, after waiting a little while, and watching as intently as the heat and glare of the giddy atmosphere would suffer, I could no longer doubt that the vessel was drawing down the slope into the southwest; whence, as there was no wind to propel her, it was certain she was being urged by oars. In that case it would be some small drogher or coasting craft.

As I approached our secret chamber, Miss Grant came out of the opening.

"You have been a long while looking at the sea, Mr. Musgrave," she exclaimed, smiling as if to the surprise and admiration with which I regarded her.

"I have been endeavoring to signal a ship," said I.

"A ship !" she cried, approaching me close, and staring at me.

"Yes," I answered ; "she will have faded out by this time like the smoke of my fire. But no matter. The sight of her is a warrant of more to follow. All I have to do is to keep a bright lookout. We will be rescued yet, and soon, depend on it."

We strolled together to the shadow of the trees where our camptools were, and seated ourselves. For a long time she talked of nothing but the ship, and I could , I warrant my collars. see by the flush in her cheeks and the gathering light in her eyes, how useful to her spirits was the hope that my news of having sighted a vessel had brought with

"We ought to feel grateful to the crew of the 'Iron Crown,' " said she, "for having sent our baggage with us. Oh, Mr. Musgrave, how am I to express the refreshment of a complete change of apparel? It robs the island of half its terrors."

"Rather lucky," said I, dryly, "that I kicked up that iron ring, though it cost me a sprawl. Is not the privacy of a bedchamber in such a place as this almost as nice as a change of clothes ?"

"Well, I didn't like the idea, I confess," she replied, with a pretty shake of her head. "I don't like it much yet, I admit. Those tomb-like rooms are very well in the day; but when the long, dark night comes !" she added, with a slight shiver. At this I involuntarily turned my eyes

toward the forest with a glance aloft and at the trees beyond, thinking of the de-

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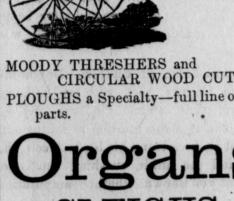
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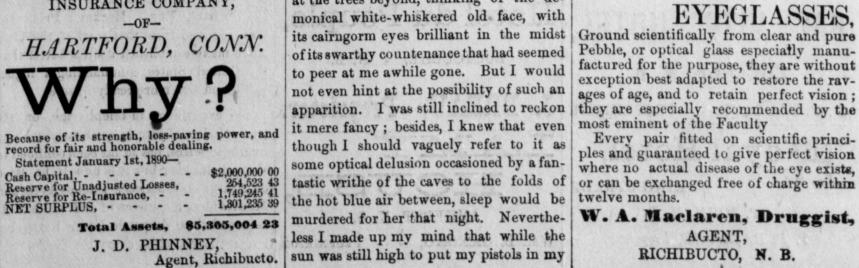


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thinking it impossible that my sight could have been deceived, I walked briskly toward the tree, and looking upward searched it as penetratingly as the greenery would permit; then seeing nothing saving a paroquet or two, I walked a little further toward the forest, still gazing upward, but nothing answering in the least imaginable degree to the object, real or imaginary, that had confounded me, met my eye. again strained my sight, sending glance after glance around, then returned to the open, and proceeded toward the hummock satisfied that what I had seen was a deceit of the imagination, though this notion did



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