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one's own intellectual eyesight, I mean—
when her pigments are such realities as
yonder bedstead, those high-backed chairs
those queer-looking frying-pans, in which
many a hearty turtle steak has hissed,
many a Friday's absorbing fare of fish has
spluttered! But to be serious, Miss Grant
will not these rooms yield us the accom-
modation we require?"
She shook her head a little dubiously.
"If we could only remove that gloomy old
bedstead—" she said.
"Oh, certainly," I interrupted. "A
little hammering of it with one of these
muskets should render it portable. Your
hammock will take its place excellently.
Then, with the skylight casement a bit
open for the fresh air it would let through
and a shawl swung from that metal rod
over the door-way, the room will provide
you with as snug a retreat as any hotel
could offer; while I should make my bed
here,"—we were conversing in the room
which I must call the kitchen—"ready at
a moment's notice to interpose, pistol in
hand, betwixt that entrance which your
presence beyond will render sacred, and
the villainous bell-ringer, whoever he may
be."
"You do not think of sleeping here to-
night, at all events," she said.
"No, since I see how reluctant you still
are. But your health is precious, and
mine, too, is precious for your sake. A
few nights of exposure to the damp of
these moonlit heavens would, I fear, tell
upon us both, breed a fever, afflict us with
the ague, disable us by some sort of sick-
ness and leave us in a very bad case indeed.
We have to get away from this island you
know; and if we design to achieve our
deliverance we must keep well."
Her good sense came to her rescue; she
perceived the truth of my words, and said
she would do as I wished, only—not to-
night. When that terrible bedstead had
been removed the place would look more
wholesome.
"Whatever I propose," said I, "is with
thoughts of your comfort, your health,
your security chiefly—indeed, nineteen
times out of twenty wholly. 'Tis a bitter
hard experience for you, and would to
God I knew how to soften it, better still
how to end it. But the thing looks us in
the face, and we must meet it as bravely as
we can. My part is that of a protector.
If I know myself I shall play it dutifully."
She glanced at me a moment as if she
would speak, then hung her head to hide
the tears which filled her eyes, while she
extended her hand, saying, "I thank you
—I thank you, Mr. Musgrave," just above
her breath.
I sat for a long while with Miss Grant;
our camp-stools in the heart of the ivory
whiteness of the tract on which I had slept
last night, and on which I was again to
sleep. Occasionally my companion would
look a little nervously toward the forest.
Now that silent night had come, thoughts
of the mysterious bell-ringing troubled
her afresh. Since it was impossible for
the bell to ring itself, she said, it must
have been tolled by human agency of some
sort. No bird or beast alighting upon a
thrusting against it could have produced
the varied ringing we had heard, and con-
sequently she was certain there was a man
hidden in the wood.
"Why should he hide?" said I, wanting
to reassure her, for some hours of moon-
light and gloom yet lay betwixt us and
the day-break.
"For fear of us, perhaps," she answered.
"If that be so," said I, "would not he
be mad to make his presence known by
ringing the bell?" She could not answer
this. "Besides," continued I, "where
could he hide himself? I searched the
forest pretty narrowly. 'Tis true he might
have a lodging in the hollow of a tree, but
you can't reconcile any motive that a man
would have in concealing himself, with his
lusty ringing of a bell at midnight—raising
about the most alarming clamor that
human ingenuity could hit upon."
"Then, Mr. Musgrave, you wish me to
believe that the bell rang of its own accord
or that it was struck by some spirit hand?"
This silenced me in my turn. For my
part I could not make head nor tail of
the matter, though spite of the clear ex-
pression of human agency that I had found
in the changes of the performance of the
mysterious bell-ringer I would have been
willing to bet all I was worth that I was
the only man on that island, as Miss
Aurelia was the only woman. But it was
not a thing to bother ourselves too much
about. It was an odd ocean puzzle,
which grew a bit wild with the deepening
of the night, and the thickening out of
the dusky shadows to the westerly drawing
down of the moon. But my mind was too
greatly worried on other considerations to
give it heed enough to render me restless
on its account.
While we sat conversing I spied the
black shape of a turtle creek with the
moon sparkling on the wet of its shell.
"I must have that lady," said I; "she
looks but a tortoise, and a small one at
that." I fetched the handspike I had
manufactured that day to prize open the
skylight casement in the said, and then
waiting till the creature had put a good
distance between it and the water's edge,
I made for it, and with more dexterity
than I should have believed myself capable
of, I slipped my pole fair between the
flippers, and with a hearty spring turned
the thing fair on to its back. I then
opened my knife and cut its throat.
"How shipwreck—to call our condition

shipwreck," said I—"forsooth one's hand,
I should have thought myself no more
capable of murdering yonder creature than
of slaughtering an ox. How much of
what is ignoble, of what is purely animal
comes out of one in stresses of this kind!
A man, to remain little lower than the
angels, should be luxuriantly fed and
housed, I think. His villainess grows with
his needs. The nature of beasts remains
the same in essentials, whether they be
pursy with food or mere ribs with famine.
But bring human nature down to such
destitution as an open boat, for instance,
expresses, without a crumb of bread, or a
thimbleful of fresh water, and how base,
oh, how base it will show in its instincts!"
"And all this," she exclaimed, smiling,
because you have killed a turtle! Yet I
dare say that your appreciation of the
god-like qualities of man in you would
not suffer through your chasing a hare, in
company with twenty horsemen, over
miles of ground, or killing a long afternoon
by shooting at harmless little pigeons."
She rose. "It is too late to provoke you
to an argument," she continued; "what is
the time, Mr. Musgrave?"
I brought the face of my watch to the
moonlight. "Twenty minutes past
twelve," said I.
"Have you my pistol?"
I had it in my pocket. I loaded, primed
and handed it to her; she adjusted it in
her belt as on the previous night, then re-
moved her hat, gave me her hand, as her
manner always was ere retiring to rest.
I pressed my lips to it in old-fashioned
salute, greivied to the heart to think of the
hardships that had befallen this brave and
beautiful girl, and deeply moved, too, by
the pathos I found in her uncomplaining
acceptance of our sorrowful and seemingly
hopeless condition.
While she was fairly in her hammock, I
riggered the mosquito-curtain over her, and
turned away from the beauty of her face,
contented to the marble by the transpar-
ency under which she lay, with a feeling
that made me almost wild at heart for a
little while the sense of betrayal of the
trust, whose obligation, confound it! grew
more important in proportion as it tax-
ed my weakness. I threw a rug upon the
sand, rolled up a coat for a bolster, saw to
my pistol, threw a mosquito-net over my
head and lay down. This was our second
night on the island.
I was restless and hot, and was in the
act of sitting up with the design of lifing
the mosquito-curtain high enough to bring
a cigar to my lips, when the bell hidden
away in the blackness behind us began to
toll.
"There, Mr. Musgrave! There it is
again!" cried Miss Grant, almost hysteri-
cally, and in a breath she had sprung from
her hammock, and was alongside of me,
with her hand on my shoulder, listening.
"Will you say now," cried Miss Grant,
holding my hand tightly, "that there is no
man there?"
"Be it man or devil," I exclaimed,
"ghost or goblin, it is a riddle we must
solve for our peace's sake. Wait you
here."
"What do you mean to do?" she cried,
still clinging to me.
"Why since it is impossible to see, let
drive in the direction of the sound any-
how, and listen for some squeal to follow,
that we may know the ringing is not an
hallucination; for I protest to Heaven,
the incredibility of such a thing is enough
to make one think one's self mad for hear-
ing it."
She dropped my hand, and I walked
toward the trees with a pistol in either fist.
She followed me, however, holding her
her own little weapon, but the dense tan-
gle, I knew, would stop her presently.
I had no intention of penetrating the wood
by the road I had taken when the morning
shone brilliant. If it were dark then, it
would be blacker than thunder now, which
necessarily increased the astonishment I
labored under at hearing the bell; for
unless the thing that rang it lived within
a pace of it, its power of being able to find
it was as astonishing as the sound itself.
Yet all this while the chimes continued.
Whatever the ringer might be, its mood
seemed merrier on this than on last
night. It rang heartily, with a curious
suggestion of enjoyment in the sound pro-
duced. The disturbed birds sent a hun-
dred remonstrant cries, yells and whist-
lings from the trees, which apparently
only increased the appetite of the ringer
for his labor, for 'tis not in mortal pen to
express the preternatural wildness, melan-
choly, and, I may say, horror of the sound
of that secret ringing echoing through the
island out of the central midnight fastness
and dying away out upon the silent sea.
I was as angry as I was bewildered.
The character of the sound staggered my doubts
of there being a man there. It seemed
impossible that anything but a human
hand could produce such a noise. Closely
followed by my companion, I skirted the
trees to that thin scattering of them
whence I had emerged after my morning's
hunt, and where I had tripped over the
ring in the said. Methought from this
point I could better collect the bearings of
the bell. Miss Grant soon came to a stand.
Her clothing rendered the growth imper-
ceptible by her.
[TO BE CONTINUED.]
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