MYSTERY

By Stewart Edward White And Samuel Hopkins Adams

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[CONTINUED.]

Below us the bottom was clouded with black figures darting rapidly like school of minnows beneath a boat. They darkened the coral and the sands and the glistening sea growths, only the occultations and brightenings succeeded each other much more swiftly.

We stared stupefied, our thinking power blurred by the incessant whirl of motion and noise.

Suddenly Thrackles laughed aloud. "Seals!" he shouted through his trumpeted hands.

Our eyes were expanding to the twilight. We could make out the arch of the room, its shelves and hollows and niches. Lying on them we could discern the seals, hundreds and hundreds of them, all staring at us, all barking and bellowing. As we approached they scrambled from their elevations and. diving to the bottom, scurried to the entrance of the cave.

We lay on our oars for ten minutes. Then silence fell. There persisted a tiny drip, drip drip, from some point in the darkness. It merely accentuated the hush. Suddenly from far in the interior of the hill there came a long. hollow boo-o-om! It reverberated, roaring. The surge that had lifted our boat some minutes before thus reached Its journey's end.

The chamber was very lofty. As we rowed cautiously in it lost nothing of its height, but something in width. It was marvelously colored, like all the volcanie rocks of this island. In addition some chemical drip had thrown across its vividness long gauzy streamers of white. We rowed in as far as the faintest daylight lasted us. The occasional reverberating boom of the surges seemed as distant as ever.

This was beyond the seal rookery on the beach. Below it we entered an open cleft of some size to another squarer cave. It was now high tide. The water extended a scant ten fathoms to end on an interior shale beach. The cave was a perfectly straight passage following the line of the cleft. How far in it reached we could not determine, for it, too, was full of seals. and after we had driven them back a hundred feet or so their fiery eyes scared us out. We did not care to put them at bay.

The next day I rowed out to the Laughing Lass and got a rifle. I found the captain asleep in his bunk and did not disturb him. Perdosa and I, with infinite pains, tracked and stalked the sheep, of which I killed one. We found the mutton excellent. The hunting was difficult and the quarry as time went on more and more suspicious, but henceforward we did not lack for fresh meat. Furthermore, we soon discovered that fine trolling was to be had outside the reef. We rigged a sail for the extra dory and spent much of our time at the sport. I do not know the names of the fish. They were very gamy, indeed, and ran from five to an indeterminate number of pounds in weight. Above fifty pounds our light tackle parted, so we had no means of knowing how large they may have been.

Thus we spent very pleasantly the greater part of two weeks. At the end of that time I made up my mind that it would be just as well to get back to business. Accordingly I called Perdosa and directed him to sort and clear of rust the salvaged chain cable. He refused flatly. I took a step toward him. He drew his knife and backed

that knife."

"No," said he. I pulled the saw barreled Colt's 45 and raised it slowly to a level with his breast.

"Perdosa," I repeated, "drop that

The crisis had come, but my resolution was fully prepared for it. I should not have cared greatly if I had had to shoot the man, as I certainly should have done had he disobeyed. There would then have been one less to deal with in the final accounting, which strangely enough I now for a moment never doubted would come. I had not before aimed at a man's life,

baffling mystery had strung me. Perdosa hesitated a fraction of an instant. I really think he might have chanced it, but Handy Solomon, who

"Drop it, you fool!" he said. Perdosa let fall the knife.

"Now, get at that cable," I command-

"Begging your pardon, Mr. Eagen," raid he, "I want a word with you." "I have nothing to say to you," I mapped, still excited.

conciliatory manner. "I'm talking for

He paused a moment, took my sileuce for consent and went ahead.

said he, "we ain't going to do any more useless work. There ain't no laziness about us, but we ain't going to be busy at nothing. All the camp with me it had always been more the adventure than the story. My writing arms and green eyes and red glows."

cleanin' and the rest of it we'll do gladly. But we ain't goin' to pound any more cable, and you can kiss the book on that."

"You mean to mutiny?" I asked.

He made a deprecatory gesture. "Put us aboard ship, sir, and let us hear the old man give his orders, and you'll find no mutiny in us. But here ashore it's different. Did the old man give orders to pound the cable?" "I represent the captain," I stammer-

He caught the evasion. "I thought so. Well, if you got any kick on us, please, sir, go get the old man. If he says to our face pound cable, why pound cable it is. Ain't that right,

They murmured something. Perdosa deliberately dropped his hammer ed again toward the sawed off Colt's

"I wouldn't do that," said Handy Solomon, almost kindly. "You couldn't I resolved to investigate. kill us all. And w'at good would it do?



"Perdosa," said I firmly, "put up that

I asks you that. I can cut down a chicken with my knife at twenty feet. pails of water. That was all. You must surely see, sir, that I could have killed you too easy while you were covering Pancho there. This ain't

There was more of the same sort. I Either I would have to abandon my yet they were wearied to death of the attempt to keep the men busy or I inaction. After a little they became would have to invoke the authority of irritable toward one another. Each row heard me. He left soon after. Captain Selover. To do the latter suspected the other of doing less than The mention of the chest had focused would be to destroy it. The master had become a stuffed figure, a bogy with which to frighten, an empty bladder that a prick would collapse. With what grace I could muster I had to

"You'll have to have it your own way, I suppose," I snapped.

Thrackles grinned, and Pulz started to say something, but Handy Solomon, traordinary, but they started guiltily with a peremptory gesture and a black scowl, stopped him short.

"Now, that's what I calls right proper and handsome!" he cried admiringofficer! You can kiss the book on it that very few crews have such kind masters. Mr. Eagen has the right, and we signed to it all straight to work us as he pleases, and w'at does he do? Why, he up and gives us a week shore leave, and then he gives us light watches, and all the time our pay goes on just the same. Now, that's w'at I calls right proper and handsome conduct, or the devil's a preacher, and I ventures with all respect to propose three cheers for Mr. Eagen."

They gave them, grinning broadly. The villain stood looking at me, a sardonic gleam in the back of his eye. Then he gave a little hitch to his red "Perdosa," said I firmly, "put up humming between his teeth. I stood head covering and sauntered away watching him, choked with rage and indecision. The humming broke into

Blow high, blow low, what care we!

But the quarter that we gave them was

to sink them in the sea, Down on the coast of the high Bar-

"Here, you swab," he cried to wood, lively! And, Pulz, bring us a pail of water. Doctor, let's have duff

to celebrate on.' The men fell to work with alacrity.

CHAPTER XVIII.

so you can see to what tensity the THAT evening I smoked in a had been watching me closely, growl- chew my cud, which was bitter. There I really think their compelling emo-Handy Solomon. I was in two minds greed. ed, still at white heat. I stood over as to whether or not I should attempt The impulse came from Percy Darhim until he was well at work, then to warn Darrow or the doctor. Yet row and his idle talk of voodoos. As turned back to set tasks for the other what could I say and against whom usual he was directing his remarks to men. Handy Solomon met me half- should I warn them? The men had the sullen nigger. grumbled, as men always do grumble

little wildly, but that was nothing. The only indisputable fact I could and bad ones. You can tame them adduce was that I had allowed my if you know how, and they will do "It ain't reasonable not to hear a authority to slip through my fingers. anything you want them to." Pulz man's say," he advised in his most And adequately to excuse that I should chuckled in his throat. "You don't beand no handler of men.

thought with a snort of disgust, but it Well, that's got a tame voodoo in it." "Begging your pardon, Mr. Eagen," had led me to another. In the joy and The others laughed. uncertainty of living I had practically lost sight of the reason for my coming. gravely.

work and the haulin' and cuttin' and was a byproduct, a utilization of what life offered me. I had set sail possessed by the sole idea of ferreting out Dr. Schermerhorn's investigations, but the gradual development of affairs had ended by absorbing my every faculty. Now, cast into an eddy by my change of fortunes, the original idea regained its force. I was out of the active government of affairs, with leisure on my hands, and my thoughts naturally turned with curiosity again-

to the laboratory in the valley. Darrow's "devil fires" were again painting the sky. I had noticed them from time to time, always with increasing wonder. The men accepted them easily as only one of the unexplained phenomena of a sailer's experience, but I had not as yet hit on a hypothesis that suited me. They were not allied to the aurora. They differed Standard Talking Maand joined the group. My hand stray- radically from the ordinary volcanic emanations and scarcely resembled any electrical displays I had ever seen. The night was cool. The stars bright.

Without further delay I arose to my Without further delay I arose to my feet and set off into the darkness. Im- ASK for Coupens with mediately one of the group detached himself from the fire and joined me.

"Going for a little walk, sir?" asked Handy Solomon sweetly. "That's quite right and proper. Nothin' like a little Save them, they are walk to get you fit and right for your

He held close to my elbow. We got of the arroyo. The lights we could make out now across the zenith, but owing to the precipitance of the cliffs and the rise of the arroyo bed it was impossible to see more. Handy Solomon felt the defenses carefully.

"A man would think, sir, it was a cannibal island," he observed. "All so tight and tidylike here. It would take Main Street a ship's guns to batter her down. A man might dig under these here two gate logs if no one was against him. Like to try it, sir?"

"No," I answered gruffly. From that time on I was virtually a prisoner, yet so carefully was my surreillance accomplished that I could place my finger on nothing definite. Some one always accompanied me on my walks, and in the evening I was herded as closely as any cattle.

Handy Solomon took the direction of affairs off my hands. You may be sure he set no very heavy tasks. The men cut a little wood, carried up a few

Lacking incentive to stir about, they came to spend most of their time lying on their backs watching the sky. This got to be a war, Mr. Eagan, just be- in turn bred a languor which is the cause we don't want to work without sickest, most soul and temper destroying affair invented by the devil. They could not muster up energy enough to had plenty of time to see my dilemma. walk down the beach and back, and realize what this meant.

The atmosphere of our camp became surly. I recognized the precursor of its becoming dangerous. One day on a walk in the hills I came on Thrackles and Pulz lying on their stomachs gazing down fixedly at Dr. Schermerhorn's camp. This was nothing exto their feet when they saw me and made off, growling under their breaths,

All this that I have told you so briefly took time. It was the eating ly. "We reely had no right to expect through of men's spirits by that worst that, boys, as seamen from our first of corrosives, idleness. I conceive it unnecessary to weary you with the de-

The situation was as yet uneasy, but not alarming. One evening I overheard the beginning of an absurd plot to gain entrance to the valley. That was as far as detail went. I became convinced at last that I should in some way warn Percy Darrow.

That seems a simple enough proposition, does it not? But if you will stop to think one moment of the difficulties of my position you will see that it was not as easy as at first it appears. Darrow still visited us in the evening. The men never allowed me even the chance of private communication while he was with us. One or two took pains to stretch out between us. Twice I arose when the assistant did, resolved to accompany him part way back. Both times men reso-'Oh, quarter; oh, quarter!' the jolly lutely escorted us and as resolutely pirates cried. separated us from the opportunity of a single word apart. The crew never threatened me by word or look. But we understood each other.

I was not permitted to row out to Thrackles, "and you, Pancho, get some Therefore I never attempted to visit her again. The men were not anxious to do so. Their awe of the captain made them only too glad to escape his notice. That empty shell of a past reputation was my only hope. It

shielded the arms and ammunition. As I look back on it now the period splendid isolation while the seems to me to be one of merely pomen whispered apart. I had tential trouble. The men had not taknothing to do but smoke and to en the pains to crystallize their ideas. could be no doubt, however I may have tion was that of curiosity. They wantsaved my face, that command had ed to see. It needed a definite imbeen taken from me by that rascal, pulse to change that desire to one of

"Voodoos?" he said. "Of course in idleness, and had perhaps talked a there are. Don't fool yourself for a minute on that. There are good ones have to confess that I was a writer lieve it?" drawled the assistant, turning to him. "Well, it's so. You know I abandoned the unpleasant train of that heavy box we are so careful of?

"What he like?" asked the nigger

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Watching narrowly its effect he swung off into one of the genuine old crooning voodoo songs, once so common down south, now so rarely heard. No one knows what the words mean-they are generally held to be charm words only-a magic gibberish. But the nigger sprang across the fire like lightning, his face altered by terror, to

seize Darrow by the shoulders. "Doan you! Doan you!" he gasped. shaking the assistant violently back and forth. "Dat he King Voodoo song! Dat call him all de voodoo-all!"

He stared wildly about in the darkness as though expecting to see the night thronged. There was a moment of confusion. Eager for any chance I hissed under my breath: "Danger!

I could not tell whether or not Darthe men's interest.

"Well," Pulz began, "we've been here on this spot for a long time." "A year and five months," reckoned

"A man can do a lot in that time."

"If he's busy." "They've been busy."

"Yes." "Wonder what they've done?" There was no answer to this, and

the sea lawyer took a new tack. "I suppose we're all getting double

"That's so." "And that's say four hunder' for us and Mr. Eagen here. I suppose the old man don't let the schooner go for noth-

"Two hundred and fifty a month," said I and then would have had the

They cried out in prolonged aston-

"Seventeen months," pursued the logician after a few moments. He scratched with a stub of lead. "That makes over \$11,000 since we've been out. How much do you suppose his outfit stands him?" he appealed to me.

"I'm sure I can't tell you," I replied

"Well, it's a pile of money anyway." Nobody said anything for some time. "Wonder what they've done?" Pulz asked again.

"Something that pays big." Thrackles supplied the desired answer. "Dat chis' "- suggested Perdosa. "Voodoo"- muttered the nigger.

"That's to scare us out," said Handy Solomon, with vast contempt. "That's what makes me sure it is the chest." Pulz muttered some of the jargon of

"That's it," approved Handy Solo-

mon. "If we could get"-"We wouldn't know how to use it,"

interrupted Pulz. "The book" - said Thrackles.

"Well, the book"- asserted Pulz pugnaciously. "How do you know what it will be? It may be the philosopher's stone and it may be one of these other things. And then where'd

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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Model Earth Road. While American road are as capable of constructi roads as those of any con the old world, they have as loyally supported as th those countries in maintai highways after completon deplorable state of many thousand miles of road is counted for. County and officials may at the outs the expense of having a re but they strenuously obje asked to provide funds t the road that has been al go to ruin.

It is important that learn of the benefits to be from good earth roads; the boards be impressed with of a proper maintenance same, and that road bui overseers learn how bes for the roads in their char The persistent and pow

mies of earth roads are narrow tires, and the const of the men in charge of should be to guard agai destructive effects and re damage as quickly as The simple implements wh been found to be of great tance in this work are the drag scraper, the whee the road grader and the drag. With a sandy soil and a

clay. or clay and gravel, d

ing so as to raise and mi

with the surface soil and

prove beneficial. The con forms a sand-clay road a expense. On the other h road be entirely of sand will be made if it is ploy clay can be added. Suc would merely deepen the at the same time break u amount of hard surfac which may have forme subsoil is clay and the sur in sand or gravel, plowi not be resorted to, as it sult in a clay surface ra one of sand or gravel. man must know not on plow and what not to how and when to plow. is of the kind which ac the above instructions plowed over its whole best method is to run th row in the middle of th work out to the sides, th a crown. Results from ing are greatest in the

early summer. In ditches a plow can good advantage, but sho lowed by a scraper or make wide, deep ditch better than the ordin scraper has yet been de hauls under 100 feet, or "fills" it is especially s It is a mistake, howe tempt to handle long ha with this scraper, as scraper is better adap work. For hauls of me feet a wagon should be

The machine most gen

in road work is the gra

machine. This machin cially useful in smo crowning the road and ditches. A clay subso thin coating of soil sh disturbed with a grader a mistake to use a g criminately and to pr from ditches upon a sar Not infrequently turf, from ditch bottoms are middle of the road in ing mudholes a certain portant in using a gra building up the road one time. A road gra up by frequent use of will last better than at one operation. frequently thinks his high in the first instan up material from 10 inc in depth only to learn,

packed by roller or the next is added. A take is to crown too h road machine on a nar The split-log drag sl to fill in ruts and smo when not too badly drag possesses great m simple in construction tion that every farmer one. A special article

lished later telling h

and use the drag.

rival of the first rain,

furnished the material

inches of mud. All ma

be brought up in thin

layer well puddled