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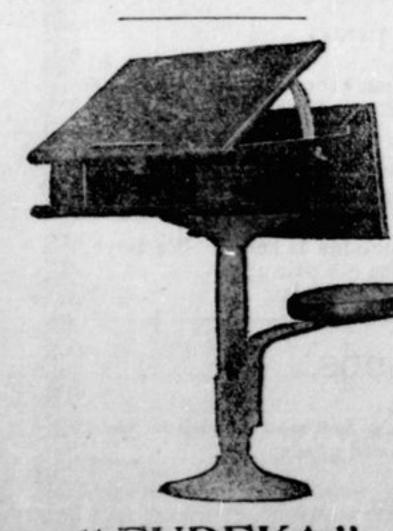
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She covertly watched his preparations. He tore a dry leaf from a notebook and broke the bullet out of a cartridge, damping the powder with water from a pitcher plant. Smearing the composition on the paper, he placed it in the sun, where it dried at once. He gathered a small bundle of withered spines from the palms and arranged the driftwood on top, choosing a place for his bonfire just within the shade. Then inserting the touch paper among the spines he unscrewed one of the lenses of the binoculars, converted it into a burning glass and had a fine blaze roaring merrily in few minutes. With the aid of pointed sticks he grilled some slices of ham, cut with his clasp knife, which he first carefully cleaned in the earth. The biscuits were of the variety that become soft when toasted, and so he balanced a few by stones near the fire. Iris forgot her annoyance in her in-

terest. A most appetizing smell filled Axle Grease and Hoof the air. They were having a picnic stumps showed that the ax had been God's goodness to herself and her com- line of the sea, not half a mile distant. seemed to be at his command.

"Can I do nothing to help?" she ex-Jenks was astonished.

plate. Luncheon is ready."

ham on a couple of biscuits and handed them to her with the clasp knife.

"I can depend on my fingers," he explained. "It will not be the first time." "Have you led an adventurous life?" she asked, by way of polite conversa-

"No," he growled. "I only thought so because you appear to know all sorts of dodges for prolonging existence-things I never

heard of. "Broiled ham-and biscuits-for instance?"

At another time Iris would have snapped at him for the retort. Still humbly regretful for her previous at- blew. titude, she answered meekly:

"Yes, in this manner of cooking them, I mean. But there are other itemsmethods of lighting fires, finding water, knowing what fruits and other articles may be found on a desert island, such as plantains and cocoanuts and certain sorts of birds."

When the meal was ended Jenks sprang lightly to his feet. Rest and food had restored his faculties. The | tent of his arm he managed to plunge girl thought dreamily, as he stood the stick into the water. Tasting the there in his rough attire, that she had drops, he found that they were quite never seen a finer man. He was tall, sweet. The sand and porous rock prosinewy and well formed. In repose his face was pleasant, if masterful. Its somewhat sullen, self contained expression was occasional and acquired.

She wondered how he could be so energetic. Personally she was consumed with sleepiness. He produced a revolver.

"Do you mind if I fire a shot to test these cartridges?" he inquired. "The powder is all right, but the fulminate in the caps may be damaged."

She agreed promptly. He pointed the weapon at a cluster of cocoanuts, and there was a loud report. Two nuts fell to the ground, and the air was filled with shrill screams and the flapping of innumerable wings. Iris was momentarily dismayed, but her senses confirmed the sailor's explanation "Sea birds."

"Can you use a revolver?" he asked. "My father taught me. He thinks every woman should know how to defend herself if need be."

"Excellent. Well, Miss Deane, you must try to sleep for a couple of hours. I purpose examining the coast for some distance on each side. Should you want me, a shot will be the best sort of signal."

"I am very tired," she admitted "But you?"

"Oh, I am all right! I feel restlessthat is, I mean I will not be able to sleep until night comes, and before we climb the hill to survey our domain I want to find better quarters than we now possess."

Perhaps were she less fatigued she would have caught the vague anxiety, the note of distrust, in his voice. But the carpet of sand and leaves on which | ly examination. she lay was very seductive. Her eyes closed. She nestled into a comforta-

ble position and slept. The man moved the revolver out of, time since the tragedy had occurred. harm's way to a spot where she must see it instantly, pulled his sou'wester utes before he perceived that the skelwell over his eyes and walked of

They were flung ashore on the northwest side of the island. Except for the cove formed by the coral reef, with its mysterious palm tree growing apparently in the midst of the waves, the ally screened the lighter bones would shape of the coast was roughly that of the concave side of a bow, the two visible extremities being about threequarters of a mile apart.

sea raced past these points that the sea crowded unbidden to his brain

fand did not extend beyond them. Behind him it rose steeply to a considerable height, 150 or 200 feet. In the center was the tallest hill, which seemed to end abruptly toward the southwest. On the northeast side it was connected with a rocky promontory by a ridge of easy grade. The sailor turned to the southwest as offering the most likely direction for rapid survey.

He was not surprised to find that the hill terminated in a sheer wall of rock, which stood out, ominous and massive, from the wealth of verdure clothing the remainder of the ridge. Facing the precipice and separated from it by a strip of ground not twenty feet above the sea level in the highest part was another rock built eminence quite bare of trees, blackened by the weather and scarred in a manner that attested the attacks of lightning.

The intervening belt was sparsely dotted with trees, casuarinas, poon and other woods he did not know, resembling ebony and cedar. A number of amidst delightful surroundings. Yes- at work, but not recently. He passed terday at this time- She almost yielded into the cleft and climbed a tree that to a rush of sentiment, but forced it offered easy access. As he expected, back with instant determination. Tears after rising a few feet from the ground were a poor resource, unmindful of his eyes encountered the solemn blue

panion. Without the sailor, what He descended and commenced a syswould have become of her, even were tematic search. Men had been here. she thrown ashore while still living? Was there a house? Would be sudden-She knew none of the expedients which ly encounter some hermit Malay or Chinaman?

At the foot of the main cliff was a claimed. So contrite was her tone that | cluster of fruit bearing trees-plantains, areca nuts and cocoa palms. A "Yes," he said, pointing to the dish | couple of cinchonas caught his eye. In cover. "If you polish the top of that one spot the undergrowth was rank with your sleeve it will serve as a and vividly green. The cassava, or tapioca plant, reared its high passion He neatly dished up two slices of flower leaves above the grass, and some sago palms thrust aloft their thick stemmed trunks.

"Here is a change of menu, at any rate," he communed.

Breaking a thick branch off a poon tree, he whittled away the minor stems. A strong stick was needful to explore that leafy fastness thoroughly.

A few cautious strides and vigorous whacks with the stick laid bare the cause of such prodigatity in a soil covered with drifted sand and lumps of black and white speckled coral. The trees and bushes inclosed a well-safeguarded, in fact, from being choked with sand during the first gale that

Delighted with this discovery, more precious than diamonds at the moment - for he doubted the advisability of existing on the water supply of the pitcher plant-he knelt to peer into the excavation. The well had been properly made. Ten feet down he could see the reflection of his face. Expert hands had tapped the secret reservoir of the island. By stretching to the full exvided the best of filter beds.

He rose, well pleased, and noted that on the opposite side the appearance of the shrubs and tufts of long grass indicated the existence of a grown over | down again." path toward the cliff. He followed it, walking carelessly, with eyes seeking the prospect beyond, when something rattled and cracked beneath his feet. Looking down, he was horrified to find

he was trampling on a skeleton. Had a venomous snake coiled its glistening folds around his leg he would not have been more startled. But this man of iron nerve soon recovered. He frowned deeply after the first involun-

tary heart throb. With the stick he cleared away the undergrowth and revealed the skeleton of a man. The bones were big and strong, but oxidized by the action of the air. Jenks had injured the left tibia by his tread, but three fractured ribs and a smashed shoulder blade told some terrible unwritten story.

Beneath the mournful relics were fragments of decayed cloth. It was blue serge. Lying about were a few blackened objects, brass buttons marked with an anchor. The dead man's boots were in the best state of preservation, but the leather had shrunk, and the nails protruded like fangs.

A rusted pocketknife lay there, and on the left breast of the skeleton rested a round piece of tin, the top of a canister, which might have reposed in a coat pocket. Jenks picked it up. Some curious marks and figures were punched into its surface. After a hasty glance he put it aside for more leisure-

No weapon was visible. He could form no estimate as to the cause of the death of this poor unknown nor the

Jenks must have stood many mineton was headless. At first he imagined that in rummaging about with the stick he had disturbed the skull. But the most minute search demonstrated that it had gone-had been taken away, in fact-for the plants which so effectunot permit the skull to vanish.

Then the frown on the sailor's face became threatening, thunderous. He recollected the rusty creese. Indistinct He guessed by the way in which the | memories of strange tales of the China

"Dyaks!" he growled nerceiy. "A ship's officer, an Englishman probably, murdered by head hunting Dyak pi-

If they came once they would come

Five hundred yards away Iris Deane was sleeping. He ought not to have left her alone. And then, with the devilish ingenuity of coincidence, a revolver shot awoke the echoes and sent all manner of wild fowl hurtling through the trees with clamorous out-

Panting and wild eyed, Jenks was at the girl's side in an inconceivably short space of time. She was not beneath the shelter of the grove, but on the sands, gazing, pallid in cheek and lip, at the group of rocks on the edge of the

"What is the matter?" he gasped. "Oh, I don't know!" she wailed

brokenly. "I had a dream, such a horrible dream. You were struggling with some awful thing down there." She pointed to the rocks. "I was not near the place," he said

laboriously. It cost him an effort to breathe. His broad chest expanded inches with each respiration. "Yes, yes, I understand. But awoke and ran to save you. got here I saw something, a thing

with waving arms, and fired. ished, and then you came." rocks. A fresh chip out of the stone showed where the bullet struck. One huge bowlder was wet, as if water had

excitedly. "I was not mistaken. There extended by manual labor. Beyond was something here."

spine and passed behind his ears. At erence to the sun at that hour Jenks this spot the drowned Lascars were imagined that sufficient light would lying. Like an inspiration came the be obtainable when the tropical luxuknowledge that the cuttlefish, the riance of foliage outside was dispensed dreaded octopus, abounds in the China with. His face was livid when he turned to

Iris. "You are overwrought by fa-



Revealed the skeleton of a man.

tigue, Miss Deane," he said. "What you saw was probably a seal." He knew the ludicrous substitution would not be questioned. "Please go and lie

"I cannot," she protested. "I am too frightened.'

"Frightened: By a dream! In broad daylight!" "But why are you so pale? What has

alarmed you?" "Can you ask? Did you not give the agreed signal?"

"Yes, but"-Her inquiring glance fell. He was

preathless from agitation rather than running. He was perturbed on her account. For an instant she had looked nto his soul.

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"I will go back," she said quietly, "though I would rather accompany you. What are you doing?"

"Seeking a place to lay our heads," he answered, with gruff carelessness. "You really must rest, Miss Deane. Otherwise you will be broken up by fatigue and become ill."

So Iris again sought her couch of sand, and the sailor returned to the skeleton. They separated unwillingly, each thinking only of the other's safety and comfort.

CHAPTER IV.

CROSS the parched bones lay the stick discarded by Jenks in his alarm. He picked it up and resumed his progress along the pathway. So closely did he now examine the ground that he hardly noted his direction. The track led straight toward the wall of rock. The distance was not great-about forty yards. At first the brushwood impeded him, but soon even this hindrance disappeared, and a well defined passage meandered through a belt of trees, some strong and lofty, others quite immature. More bushes gathered at the foot of

the cliff. Behind them he could see the mouth of a cave. The six months' old growth of vegetation about the entrance gave clear indication as to the The sailor walked slowly to the time which had elapsed since a human foot last disturbed the solitude.

A few vigorous blows with the stick cleared away obstructing plants and been splashed over it. He halted and leafy branches. The sailor stooped and looked intently into the water. Not a looked into the cavern, for the opening fish was to be seen, but small spirals was barely five feet high. He perof sand were eddying up from the bot- ceived instantly that the excavation tom, where it shelved steeply from was man's handiwork applied to a fault in the hard rock. A sort of nat-Iris followed him. "See!" she cried ural shaft existed, and this had been the entrance the cave became more A creepy sensation ran up the man's lofty. Owing to its position with ref-

At present the interior was dark. With the stick he tapped the walls and roof. A startled cluck and the rush of wings heralded the flight of two birds alarmed by the noise. Soon his eyes, more accustomed to the gloom, made out that the place was about thirty feet deep, ten feet wide in the center and seven or eight feet high.

At the farther end was a collection of objects inviting prompt attention. Each moment he could see with greater distinctness. Kneeling on one side of the little pile, he discerned that on a large stone serving as a rude bench were some tin utensils, some knives, a sextant and a quantity of empty cartridge cases. Between the stone and what a miner terms the "face" of the rock was a four foot space. Here, half imbedded in the sand which covered the floor, were two pickaxes, a shovel, a sledge hammer, a fine timber felling ax and three crowbars.

In the darkest corner of the cave's extremity the "wall" appeared to be very smooth. He prodded with the stick, and there was a sharp clang of tin. He discovered six square kerosene oil cases carefully stacked up. Three were empty, one seemed to be half full, and the contents of two were untouched. With almost feverish haste he ascertained that the half filled tin did really contain oil.

"What a find!" he ejaculated aloud. So far as he could judge, the cave harbored no further surprises. Returnng toward the exit, his boots dislodged more empty cartridges from the sand. They were shells adapted to a revolver of heavy caliber. At a short distance from the doorway they were present in

"The remnants of a fight," he thought. "The man was attacked and defended himself here. Not expecting the arrival of enemies, he provided no store of food or water. He was killed while trying to reach the well, probaoly at night."

He vividly pictured the scene-a orave, hardy European keeping at bay a boat load of Dyak savages, enduring nanfully the agonies of hunger, thirst, perhaps wounds; then the siege, folowed by a wild effort to gain the life ziving well, the hiss of a Malay parang wielded by a lurking foe and the last lespairing struggle before death came. He might be mistaken. Perchance here was a less dramatic explanation. But he could not shake off his first im-"What was the poor devil doing

here?" he asked. "Why did he bury simself in this rock, with mining utensils and a few rough stores? He could not be a castaway. There is the indication of purpose, of preparation, of nethod combined with ignorance, for rone who knew the ways of Dyaks and Chinese pirates would venture to live ere alone if he could help it, and if he 'eally were alone." There was relief in hearing his own

roice. He could hum and think and .ct. Arming himself with the ax, he ittacked the bushes and branches of rees in front of the cave. He cut a fresh approach to the well and threw the litter over the skeleton. At first ne was inclined to bury it where it lay, but he disliked the idea of Iris walking unconsciously over the place. No time could be wasted that day. He would seize an early opportunity to act as gravedigger.

After an absence of little more than he obtained the ax he shouldered. "You are a successful explorer," she cried when he drew near.

"Yes, Miss Deane. I have found wa ter, implements, a shelter, even light." "What sort of light?"

"CIL" "And the shelter-is it a house?"

"No, a cave. If you are sufficiently rested you might come and take pos-

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Her eyes danced with excitement. He told her what he had seen, with reservations, and she ran on before him to witness these marvels. "Why did you make a new path to

the well?" she inquired after a rapid "A new path!" The pertinent question staggered him.

"Yes, the people who lived here must

have had some sort of free passage."

He lied easily. "I have only cleared away recent growth," he said, "And why did they dig a cave? It surely would be much more simple to

build a house from all these trees."

"There you puzzle me," he said They had entered the cavern but a

little way and now came out. "These empty cartridges are funny. They suggest a fort, a battle." Womanlike, her words were carelessly chosen, but they were crammed with

inductive force. Embarked on the toboggan slope of untruth, the sailor slid smoothly down-

"Events have colored your imagination, Miss Deane. Even in England men often preserve such things for future use. They can be reloaded."

"Yes, I have seen keepers do that. This is different. There is an air of"-"There is a lot to be done," broke in Jenks emphatically. "We must climb the hill and get back here in time to light another fire before the sun goes down. I want to prop a canvas sheet in front of the cave and try to devise a lamp."

"Must I sleep inside?" demanded Iris.

"Yes. Where else?" There was a pause, a mere whiff of awkwardness. "I will mount guard outside," went

on Jenks. He was trying to improve the edge of the ax by grinding it on a

The girl went into the cave again. She was inquisitive, uneasy. "That arrangement" -- she began, but ended in a sharp cry of terror. The

dispossessed birds had returned during the sailor's absence, "I will kill them?" he shouted in an-

of death in this place already." The words jarred on his ears. Then he felt that she could only allude to the victims of the wreck.

"Please don't. There has been enough

"I was going to say," she explained, "that we must devise a partition. There is no help for it until you construct a sort of house. Candidly, I do not like this hole in the rock. It is a vault, a tomb."

"You told me that I was in command, yet you dispute my orders." He strove hard to appear brusquely good humored, indifferent, though for one of his mold he was absurdly irritable. The cause was overstrain, but that explanation escaped him. "Quite true. But if sleeping in the

cold, in dew or rain, is bad for me, it must be equally bad for you, and without you I am helpless, you know." He laughed sardonically, and the

harsh note clashed with her frank candor. Here at least she was utterly deceived. His changeful moods were incomprehensible.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Black Eyed Bobbies. The London police have a rule that allows the officers a chance to go into hiding whenever they get a black eye an hour he rejoined the girl. She saw in the course of duty. If it is not a sehim from afar and wondered whence rious one they are allowed to do night

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