THE EVENING NEWS.

Wednesday, - - - June 28, 1871.

CAPTAIN DARREL'S WARD.

[CONTINUED.]

I at once set to work, with the help of the child, who showed a ready comprehension of the situation, to manufacture a crew for the vessel. Seamen's clothes were abundant, and in a short time every handspike was rigged up in a motley suit. These were all stuffed out into shape, and topped with hats or caps. I disposed them in the most natural positions about decks, in the various parts of the ship, so as to give the whole the most life like appearance.

I loaded all the firearms we had on board, which amounted to only three muskets; and then went aloft to loose the mainsail, which had never been set since the gale in which the crew were swept overboard. I had felt unable, alone, to control such an immense sheet of canvas. But I must have it ready for use now, in case I should want to give the vessel more headway.

While on the mainyard, engaged in loosing it, a sail appeared in sight over the point of the island. Not a canoe—one could not be seen at that distance in range of the trees—but a ship! My heart leaped at the thought that help and deliverance were within a few miles of me.

"Bring up the ensign from the cabin, Jessie!" I shouted, as I let fall the bunt of the mainsail, and hurried down on deck. I caught it from her eager little hands, bent it to the halyards, and ran it up—half-mast as a signal of distress.

I brailed the spanker, while the child put the helm up, and by the power of the foresail wore the ship round so as to be on the same track with the strange vessel. I could not steer directly at her, running the ship ashore, nor could she work to windward much against the force of the current. But my hope lay in her sending boats, as soon as those on board should see my flag of distress, and the strange trim of my sails.

I managed to swing the head-yards round, and set the foresail after a fashion. But meanwhile the savages were fast closing with me, and I had not sufficient confidence in my sham seamen to believe that I could long deceive their sharp eyes. I might gain a little time; but the trick must be discovered, and, I feared, before succor could reach me from the strange ship.

I kept Jessie at the wheel, steering as much off the wind as I dared; but I was fearful of getting embayed, and not having room to clear the point, I let fall the mainsail and gave it a kind of flying set, as well as I could. The ship felt this added power at once, and gathered head-way which I determined she should not lose; for if the barbarians once succeeded in getting on board, it would be too late for any attempt of boats to rescue us, even if we were not instantly put to death. It was no time now to think of the question whether I should ever get the sails in again. I must have the use of them now, at once; and I sprang aloft to loose the topsails.

I had only then to do this and let go the gear, so that they filled and bagged out in mid air; for of course I could not hoist the yards up. The leading canoe was now drawing very near me; and the ugly looking wretches stood staring in silent bewilderment, as the ship drove past them. I saw their gestures as they pointed at the handspike men, that they were already suspicious; probably from having noticed that they did not move about. But they rested on their paddles to confer with the next comers, and I had thus gained so much time, while I was doing what I could to push the *Warsaw* ahead.

I knew these people well enough to be sure that they would never attack, unless all the circumstances were overwhelmingly in their favor. They would move warily in reconnoitering; but as soon as certain of the true state of things, that they would make a dashing attempt to board the ship by force.

I had thus shaken off the first canoes, and left them in the wake. A stern chase is proverbially a long one, though their canoes would sail much faster than the ship could, under her bags and festoons. But other pursuers were fore-reaching upon me, and fresh reinforcements putting out from the shore as we neared the land obliquely. None seemed to care to visit the other ship; but all were attracted by the mysterious manœuvres of mine.

A large canoe, which contained one whom I judged to be a leading chief, placed herself in my track. I was obliged, necessarily, to pass her so closely that their suspicions, already aroused by telegraphic signals from their baffled comrades, were rendered a certainty. Our real weakness was now understood, and almost instantly communicated through the flotilla. All those which had been left in the rear gave chase under full power of sails and paddles; while five or six late arrivals, who had the advantage of position, disposed themselves for boarding the ship on both bows at once.

There was no alternative for me but to stand boldly on my course; and I had time, before closing with the enemy, to run up the main rigging, and cast an anxious glance towards the ship, which was hugging the wind under all sail, in the endeavor to come to my relief. Better than all, I could see that two boats had left her side, and were pulling towards me.

But a crisis must come before they could arrive on the stage. I sprang on deck again, seized a boarding-knife, a terrible two-edged weapon, which would be more effective at close quarters than any fire-arms, and took my stand on the fore-hatches, where I could jump quickly to either side. The bulwarks, as before said, had been nearly all swept away by the sea that boarded us. But this circumstance was quite as much in my favor as that of the assailants.

I watched the approach of the two canoes, which were nearly abreast the forechains, one each side. It seemed that they would both attack me at the same instant. If so, I might be overwhelmed by one party boarding in the rear, while I was upsetting the other. I dropped the boarding-knife, and seizing a musket, the only reliable one I had, I took a hasty aim at the man on the head of one of the canoes and fired. He dropped his paddle, struck, as I suppose, in the arm. I was safe on that side, at present, as the confusion and loss of headway would be sufficient to cause her to lose her chance of grappling the chain-plates.

To be continued.

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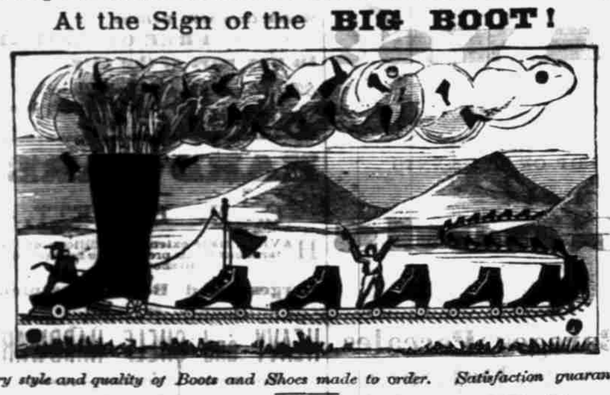

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