

The Last Cruise of the Galatee.

From Demorest's Magazine.

CHAPTER VI.

On landing they found a rude wooden hut, which was empty. They discovered no other signs of life on the island except the gulls which flew screaming over their heads as they climbed the side of the hill. The boats make frequent trips back and forth during the day; they brought fire-arms, carpenters' tools, provisions, and all the individual luggage. Meanwhile the Galatee had careened over on her port side, and lay helpless, like a wounded bird.

The days were warm and pleasant, the nights glorious; and as the castaways were plentifully provided with blankets, and were able to make daily trips to the vessel to get whatever they required, it seemed almost like playing at being shipwrecked.

Lempriere, however, chafed at the delay. A week passed and another, and no sail came in sight. Just before day-break on the morning of the 16th day, Arthur started from a deep sleep with a ringing sound in his ears like the church bells of St. Malo as he heard them calling to the vespers the evening before the Galatee sailed. He strained his eyes through the darkness and dimly discerned a shape near a pile of rocks a few feet from where he lay.

"Marguerite!" he whispered. It came nearer, and as the first streaks of dawn showed in the east he saw her face. It was not now pale and drawn with terror as he had seen it that last night on board the Galatee; now it was wreathed in glad smiles, and Marguerite held out both hands to him. He sprang up from his blanket, spread on the sands under the stars, and went toward her. She led the way up the side of the rocky point near the harbor.

Arthur hurried on after her, calling, "Marguerite! Marguerite!" Sometimes he stumbled and fell; but he never once took his eyes from her face. At the summit of the cliff Marguerite stood poised a moment, her back to the water, her eyes smiling upon Lempriere.

The edge of the sun showed itself above the horizon, and in the light of the morning the vision faded away. Lempriere rushed with a cry to the verge of the cliff. He flung himself on his face and peered down at the water, as though he must see her below. In vain: there was nothing but the dancing waves. He raised his eyes and then uttered a cry of delight. In the flood of light from the risen sun he saw a schooner with all sail set, bearing toward the southerly end of the island. He snatched a handkerchief from his pocket, waving it over his head and shouting with all the force of his lungs. Immediately the schooner put her head about, showing that she saw him. Arthur waved hat and handkerchief high in the air and scrambled down from the cliff to tell the glad news to the camp.

In a few minutes they were all assembled on the strip of sand at the foot of the rock. The schooner came to anchor a mile from the shore, and as a boat was lowered a

shout went up from the crew of the lost Galatee.

The schooner was a coaster, bound from Valparaiso to Valdivia. She had sighted the wreck of the French cruiser the evening before, and was cruising about looking for the castaways. In three days they were again in Valparaiso.

The steamer Proserpine, which sailed out of the bay of Valparaiso a week later, bound to St. Malo, carried with her the officers and crew of the Galatee. The captain mourned the loss of his beautiful vessel, but all were thankful that their lives were saved, and that they might again hope to see the shores of France.

On a soft hazy morning in November, the Proserpine cast anchor under the cliffs of St. Malo. Two men on board the vessel had been possessed with a terrible, nameless dread since the morning of the wreck of the man-of-war. Arthur Lempriere, standing in the bow, straining his eyes through the mist; saw at the end of the distant pier two female figures. Silently he drew Captain Moreau to the rail and pointed to the pair.

"Thank God! My child is safe," said the captain, baring his head. "And there, by her side," said Arthur, "is my sister who has come from Blois to meet me."

In a few moments a small boat dropped over the side of the Proserpine. It contained six oarsmen and the young physician of the Galatee. He rushed up the long flight of wooden steps. Marguerite, her beautiful eyes swimming with tears, modestly drew back until Arthur should have greeted his sister. Then, how it happened he never knew, but while Virginie held his hand clasped in hers Arthur was folding Marguerite to his bosom, and before all the people on the pier he pressed a kiss upon her forehead.

"If you only knew," she sobbed, "how I have suffered for you,— what frightful dreams I have had! But there was one, one night, when I saw a flood of light and a sail; I cried out to you in my joy that you were delivered; since then the dreams have not returned, and I have been in peace."

"My beloved," said Arthur, solemnly, as he gazed into her radiant eyes, "for us the night of dreams is forever passed. Henceforward, please Heaven, we two shall live in reality of our own great love."

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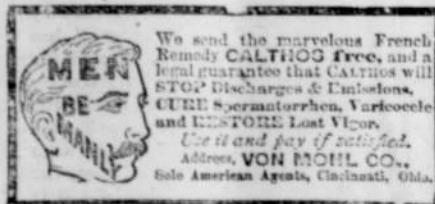
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