

PIECES EIGHT

BEING THE AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE OF A TREASURE DISCOVERED IN THE BAHAMA ISLANDS IN THE YEAR 1903—NOW FIRST GIVEN TO THE PUBLIC.

Richard Le Gallienne

CHAPTER V

In Which We Begin to Understand Our Unwelcome Passenger.

As I yawned and looked out of my cabin soon after dawn, about 4:30 next morning, there was no wind at all, and no hope of wind.

The wind boild, put you ashore tomorrow at Spanish Wells. I like you in spite of myself. Is it a bargain?



It Was Sailor—His Jaws at a Man's Throat.

"No, sir—but someone has turned the rocks."

Who has charge of them? I said. George looked a little stupid, then defiant.

Bind them well. And throw them into the dingy, with a bottle of coffee and a loaf of bread. By noon, we'll have some wind, and can make our way to Harbour Island, and there I'll have a little talk with the commandant.

him the more dangerous. Are's not all fifty miles to go to where the narrative pointed, a smaller cove, the cove known in old days as 'Dead Men's Shoes'—but since known by another name which, for various reasons, I do not deem it polite to divulge—near the end of the long cove down which we were running.

About twilight we dropped anchor in another quiet bay, so much like that of the night before, as all the bays and cays are along that coast, that you need to have sailed them from boyhood to know one from another.

"What do you make out of this smell that's coming from him, Tom?" "Kerosene, sar," said Tom.

CHAPTER VI

In Which The Sucking Fish Has a Chance to Show Its Virtue.

The breeze was so strong that we didn't use our engine that day. Besides, I wanted to take a little time thinking over my plans. I spent most of the time studying the charts and pondering John P. Tobias's narrative, which threw very little light on the situation.

I looked well to my guns. The commandant had made me accept the loan of a particularly expert revolver that was, I could see, as the apple of his eye. He must have cared for me a great deal to have lent it me, and it was right as the things went.

"That no lie, sar, and if it hadn't been for that sucking fish's skin you wouldn't be here now."

"I didn't save me from a pretty good one on the head, Tom, did I?" "No, sar, but that was just it—if it hadn't been for that knock on the head, pulling you down just that minute, that that peckmarked fellow who would have got you. As it was, he grazed your cheek and got one of his own men killed by mistake—the very fellow that hit you. There he is—over there."

There was only me and Tobias then, and the dog, for the engineer boy had gone on his knees to the Susan B. fellows at the first crack, and begged them to take him away with them. There was no one left but Tobias and the dog and me, and I was sure my end was not far off, for I was never much of a shot.

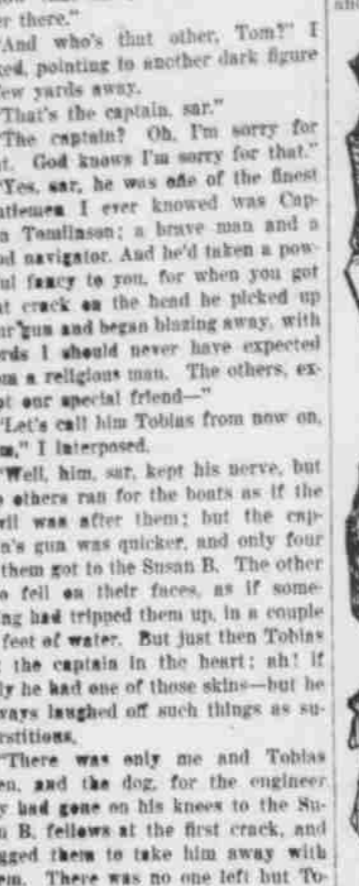
CHAPTER VII

In Which Tom and I Attend Several Funerals.

When Tom and I came to look over the ground with a view to finding a burial place for the dead I realized with grim emphasis the truth of Charlie Webster's remarks—in those snuggery nights that seemed so remote and far away—on the nature of the soil which would have to be gone over in quest of my treasure. No wonder he had spoken of dynamite.

"Which did I hit, Tom?" were my first words as I came back to the glory of the world; but I didn't say them for a long time, and from what Tom told me, it was a wonder I ever said them at all.

"I told you what I've been thinking, sar," said Tom, as we rowed ashore, and I managed to pull down a turkey



They Glided Off With Scarce a Splash.

buzzard that rose at our approach—happily our coverings had proved fairly effective—I've been thinking that the only one of the three that really matters is the captain, and we can find sufficient soil for him in one of those big holes.

CHAPTER VIII

In Which We Turned Over the Poor Captain and Carried Him as Gently as We Could Over the Rough Ground to the Biggest of the Banana Holes, as the Natives Call Them, and There We Were Able to Dig Him a Fairly Respectable Grave.

Then we turned to the poor captain and carried him as gently as we could over the rough ground to the biggest of the banana holes, as the natives call them, and there we were able to dig him a fairly respectable grave.

"We've both got one good chance against them—Tom was beginning, sucking fish."

of these unsavory birds rising in the air as we returned to the shore. We did this as well as we were able with rocks and the wreckage of an old boat strewn on the beach.



They Glided Off With Scarce a Splash.

"I've already hinted at the kind of devil's underbrush we had to cut our way through, but no words can do justice to the almost intelligent stubbornness with which those weird growths opposed us. It really seemed as though they were inspired by a diabolic will-force pitting itself against our will, vegetable incarnation of evil strength and fury and cunning."

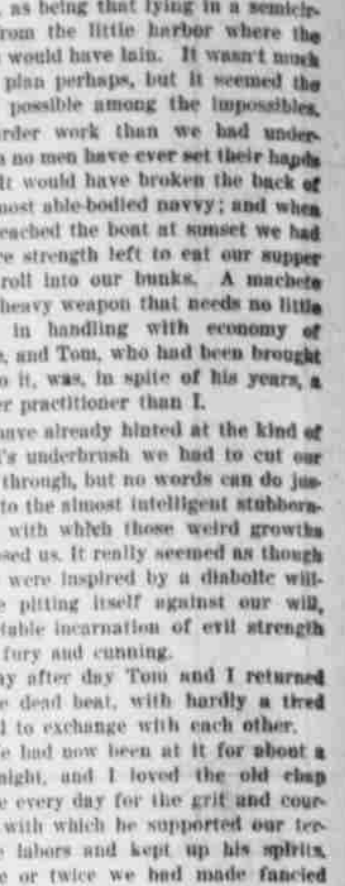
CHAPTER IX

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seek more or less at random, till we consumed all our stores except just enough to take us home. Meanwhile we would, each of us, every day, cut a sort of radiating swathe, working single-handed, from the cove entrance. Thus we would prospect as much of the country as possible in a sort of fan, both of us keeping our eyes open for a compass carved on a rock. In this way we might hope to cover no inconsiderable stretch of the country in the three weeks, and, moreover, the country most likely to give some results, as being that lying in a semicircle from the little harbor where the ships would have lain. It wasn't much of a plan perhaps, but it seemed the most possible among the impossibles.



They Glided Off With Scarce a Splash.

Harder work than we had undertaken no men have ever set their hands to. It would have broken the back of the most able-bodied navy; and when we reached the boat at sunset we had scarce strength left to eat our supper and roll into our bunks. A machete is a heavy weapon that needs no little skill in handling with economy of force, and Tom, who had been brought up to it, was in spite of his years, a better practitioner than I.

CHAPTER X

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