



The LUCK of SAMBANG.

*A Magnificent
Complete Story,
Full of Fun and
Adventures Aboard
the School-ship,
Bombay Castle*

THE FIRST CHAPTER

"PULL his head, Pongo!"
"Shove him behind, Dick!"
"Mind he doesn't get in the water."

There was quite a lot of excitement on the bund or wharf of Amboyna, which is on the Dutch island of Ceram, one of the Moluccas, or Spice Islands.

There was no spice in the air of the little harbour, where a crowd of English schoolboys, who had just come ashore from the great school-ship, *Bombay Castle*, were trying to unload their pet goat, Horace.

The harbour smelled of drains and fever. The natives did not seem to mind, for they were crowding round the harbour to see this mad crowd of English schoolboys whose coming had been foretold by the local Dutch and Malay newspapers.

There were all sorts of mixed pickles standing on the edge of the wharf, looking down with solemn yellow faces on the two steam pinnaces and the four lifeboats which had brought the hundred boys and their masters and a few liberty men ashore from the tall mail ship which was anchored in the roads a mile from the shore.

There were Malays in their bright sarongs or kilts of figured silk; Chinese of all ages, mostly clad in blue; Dutch half-castes; traders from Ilo-Ilo and Zamboanga in the Philippines, wearing fine shirts of pina cloth and smoking black cheroots; Japs and Hindus.

Never was there such a mixed crowd. It seemed as though samples of all shades and all nations in the Eastern seas had gathered on the wharf to see the boys of the *Bombay Castle* come ashore.

Some of these loafers were fishing for tiddlers off the main drain, which was a favoured spot. These carried long bamboo fishing-poles, and were evidently playing the wag from school.

There were a lot of Chinese, Dutch, Malay, and half-caste children carrying enormous slates, which showed that they, too, ought to have been at school. But the schoolmasters of the East are easygoing, and, indeed, one fat Chinese schoolmaster had seated himself on the bollard of the wharf, regardless of the school-bell which was ringing, to watch the struggle that was going on, between these English schoolboys and their goat in the No. 3 lifeboat.

For some reason or other best known to his own goatish humour, Horace, the goat, did not want to go ashore. He was a fierce and disreputable Egyptian goat, almost as large as a donkey, with a head like a battering-ram, evil eyes of emerald green, and huge curling horns.

Struggling with him were his masters, a select coterie of the Fifth Form, known, from their sleeping cabin, as "*The Glory Hole Gang*." These were Dick Dorrington, a handsome, masterful boy, with blue eyes and fair, curling hair, which were in strange contrast

with a face burned nearly black by the sun ; there was Skeleton, a thin and cadaverous youth of gigantic appetite ; there was Chip Prodders, born in India, and a student of languages, small, quick, and resourceful ; there was Arty Dove, a huge, good-natured young giant of enormous strength ; there was Porkis, fat and short in the neck, panting from the stifling heat ; and there was Chu, a quiet, polite Chinese boy, who had been so long on the Bombay Castle that, in his school strawyard, blazer, and white flannels, he did not look like a Chinese at all.

The boys had managed to secure Horace by a line attached to his dog-collar. Now Horace was doing his best to hang himself, straining in the leash like a greyhound, butting, twisting, and turning in his efforts to remain in the boat.

Though Dick was hanging on to his tail, Horace made a dash over the thwart of the lifeboat.

"Look out, Pongo!" yelled the boys to their chum, Pongo Walker.

It was really very silly to tell Pongo to look out. Pongo Walker was looking out for himself as hard as he could, for he was hanging on to Horace's horns. With a rush forward, Horace bore Pongo down, sending him with a crash on to the gratings of the lifeboat.

Then he tore all the buttons off Pongo's blazer, put his foot on Pongo's straw hat, and started to eat it, school riband and all.

"Hoy!" yelled Pongo. "Steady on! I've got three Fishers in the lining of my tile!"

And he dragged at his hat, trying to pull the remnants from Horace's mouth.

At this awful news there was a rush on the goat.

"On the goat, School!" yelled Dick Dorrington. "He'll eat our lunch money!"

This was a fact. Pongo was the treasurer of the Glory Hole Gang, and had put the banknotes in his hat for safe keeping, for he had been warned of the light-fingered Malays and half-castes of Amboyna.

Horace, powerful though he was, was crushed to the ground—or, rather, to the gratings of the lifeboat—by the scrum of boys. The remnants of Pongo's strawyard were

wrested from his mouth, which was forced open with a marline spike, whilst Chu, who had a slender hand, and was as clever with his fingers as a pickpocket, rescued the three notes and half the lining of the hat, which was just about to disappear down the goat's throat.

Then Horace got a thump on the nose that made him sneeze, and was allowed to sit up, blinking angrily at the bright sunshine and at the curious crowd of onlookers who gazed down stolidly from the wharf.

An excited Hindu gentleman thrust his way through the crowd, waving a white umbrella with a green lining. He was neatly dressed in a suit of Tussore silk, and wore striped socks, spring-side boots, and a pink turban.

This was the famous Mr. Chatterjee Lal Tata, master of Hindustani and mathematics on the Bombay Castle. He was supposed to be responsible for looking after the Glory Hole Gang.

On the other hand the Glory Hole Gang said that they were responsible for looking after "old Tal," as they affectionately termed their master. Every scrape they got into Mr. Lal Tata was in for it as well as his pupils.

"Now, you boys!" cried Mr. Lal Tata. "Why you play fools with that goat fellow? Why are you so silly as to bring disreputable animals ashore. Why do you not leave him behind on ship with the monkey fellow?"

Dick Dorrington stood up in the boat, grinning all over his cheeky face.

"Please, sir, we had to bring him ashore, sir," said he. "It's Hobson-Jobson day aboard, and the butcher said that he would not be responsible for old Horace if we left him aboard. He said that the natives would get hold of him and wreath him in flowers, and cut his throat as a sacrifice."

"Hobson-Jobson day? What you mean?" demanded Mr. Lal Tata.

"Yes, sir, Hobson-Jobson day," replied Dick. "The butcher said so. The native firemen and some of the crew are going to have a procession, and they will throw flowers in the water."

Mr. Lal Tata closed his umbrella with a snap.

"The butcher is a fool fellow!" said he. "It is the day of sorrow for Hassan and

Hossein, two celebrated Mahomedan saints. There is no killing of goats. There are only lamentations and prayers and a procession. Do you slaughter cab horses on All Souls' Day in London?"

"No, sir," replied Dick.

"Then listen not to the foolishness of the butcher who has very vulgar ideas of Oriental customs. Hobson-Jobson Day, indeed!" fumed Mr. Lal Tata. "Bring that goat ashore, and do not talk any more of this stupid foolishness!"

The lifeboat was steered alongside the steps, and with a sudden rush and a heave Horace was rolled over its gunnel and on to the wooden stairway.

Horace landed on his back with such a thump that all the evil was knocked out of him for a few seconds, and the boys, closing round him, dragged him up the steps, cheering wildly, whilst Chinese, Malays, and Dutch half-castes scattered in all directions.

These proceedings were watched from a large prahu manned by many paddlers, which was waiting to come alongside the stairs when Horace should be pleased to get ashore.

It was a private prahu, and coiled on scarlet silk cushions in the stern was a young Malay, who surveyed the scene with a sneering smile. He had been paddled round the school-ship, examining her closely. But he had not offered to go aboard, though the large gilded prahu and its crew, clad in a sort of livery of scarlet and gold, showed that he was a personage of some consequence.

As a matter of fact, this was none other than the wastrel Prince Saru of Sambang, only son and heir of the Rajah of Sambang, who had come into "Town" to draw his annual income, to pick up the latest intelligence, and to further the many rascally schemes of his elderly and rascally father.

Over Prince Saru a couple of attendants held a huge gilded umbrella. Another attendant held a golden betel box, from which the prince occasionally refreshed himself with a chew of the betel nut dipped in lime, which had blackened his teeth.

A thin moustache was swept back from a cruel-looking mouth, and the evil slit eyes of the prince watched the boys and Horace and

Lal till they had disappeared in the crowd on the bund.

Then his rowers brought his gilded barque of pleasure alongside the stairs. A couple of Chinamen, on the look-out for this rascally young potentate, carried down a lacquered sedan-chair with golden poles.

Rising wearily from his cushions, Saru, the waster, was helped into the sedan-chair and was carried off to the house of Champagne Charley, the Chinese hotel-keeper, followed by a rag-tag and bobtail string of courtiers, each of whom carried his favourite fighting-cock under his arm.

For it was well-known that Prince Saru had drawn his yearly subsidy from the Dutch Government, a sort of conduct money, in return for which the rulers of Sambang promised to abstain from all sorts of piracy on the high seas, and from head-hunting and warfare ashore.

The allowance of Prince Saru was in the neighbourhood of one thousand pounds, and it was known that he would not leave Amboyna till he was spent up. And until he was spent up the black and tan and yellow courtiers of Prince Saru did not mean to leave him.

There was not much left now in the Prince's pockets. There would be a few more cock-fights, in which the birds of the prince inevitably lost, losing him many broad gold pieces at the same time, and the prince would smoke a few more pipes of the Black Smoke which Champagne Charley and his Chinese attendants dispensed. Then he would return to Sambang to be good till the next pay day came round again.

Any doctor looking at the bloodshot, glazed eyes of Prince Saru would have seen that he had been smoking far too freely of the opiate of hemp leaves, which is called *bhong*, and that, notwithstanding the soothing fumes of the opium pipes that he had been smoking at intervals, he was rapidly approaching that state of mind and nerves when a Malay is liable to run amok.

But Saru was quiet enough now, as his palanquin bearers carried him off to the house of Champagne Charley. He was revolving a great scheme in his head, and he wanted to

keep his head clear to talk it over with Champagne Charley. He had picked up, from the talk of the bund, that the Bombay Castle would pass through the Straits of Sambang as she continued her voyage, and already his mind was turning to piracy.

It was a bold scheme and worthy of the son, and the grandson, and the great-grandson of a whole brood of wreckers who had made their livings for centuries as pirates, till steam had ousted sail in those narrow waters, and the Dutch Government, with its inspecting gun-boats and cruisers, had, more or less, put an end to piracy.

If he could only put the Bombay Castle ashore in the Sambang Channel he and his crowd of yellow pirates could hold these hundred boys to ransom. They would be cheap at one thousand pounds each. What was a thousand pounds to the lords and rajahs their fathers? He might clear easily a hundred thousand pounds—a hundred years of the miserable subsidy that the Dutch Government would pay him for being a good boy.

Prince Saru did not take his father, the rajah, into consideration. What with old age, brandy, bhang, and opium, the old rajah was pretty well in his son's hands. If Saru went



"Hoy!" yelled Pongo. "Steady on! I've got three Fishers in the lining of my hat!" (See page 204.)

But Prince Saru was full of his scheme. It was a year to the next payment of his subsidy. The Dutch Government were busy elsewhere in one of its little Eastern wars. He had heard that these English boys were all the sons of rich lords and merchant princes, and the exaggerated Eastern talk of the bund and the opium shops had enlarged them till the Bombay Castle was esteemed a ship of young millionaires.

And Saru, watching the boys out of his heavy lidded, narrow eyes, had done sums in his head.

back to Sambang with his scheme arranged, his father would have to fall in with it, though the old rajah had always been shy of piracy since a British cruiser had shelled his palace into rubble.

But Prince Saru had heard by the loose and exaggerated rumour of the Spice Islands that Great Britain was already preoccupied with rebellions and other troubles. He had a very hazy idea of the naval power of the British, and listened eagerly to every cock-and-bull story that the enemies of Great Britain were spreading through the East. So, thinking these

matters over pleasantly in his fuddled braing Saru was carried through the streets in state to the native hotel of Champagne Charley, where all the pepper rajahs, Bolshevik agitators, opium runners, and disguised pirates of the Java and China Seas were in the habit of meeting to trade illicit pearls and to hatch rascality.

The cock fight was not till noon, so there was plenty of time to talk the matter over with Champagne Charley.

At first Champagne Charley, an enormously fat Chinaman of a bland but rascally countenance, did not like the idea. But Prince Saru owed him money, and it was Prince Saru who would stand to be hanged for it, not Champagne Charley.

So Champagne Charley sent his runners forth, and it was not long before two of the Chinese greasers employed in the engine-room of the Bombay Castle were waylaid in the streets and brought round secretly to the back of the Hotel of the Sweet Scented Lotus, where the fighting cocks in their cages were already crowing their defiance at one another as they craned their heads through the bars.

And, for the space of an hour, the two Chinamen, with Champagne Charley and Saru, talked and plotted; Saru drawing many plans of the tortuous Strait of Sambang and its reefs to show how easy it was to collar a whole shipload of British schoolboys and to wreck a British ship.

The two Chinese oilers fell in with the scheme as soon as they had touched gold and drunk arrack from the same bottle as the prince.

Only Champagne Charley shook his head and groaned as his fat body rolled on the matting of the dark room in which they were plotting.

For Champagne Charley knew that the British Government, though it appears to be asleep most of the time, has a long arm, and has a trick of waking up suddenly and hitting hard.

It had hit Champagne Charley once, and as a result he had spent five years in a convict establishment of the Andaman Islands, where he had to do more work than he had ever done in his life, and more work than he ever wanted to do again.

But Saru was full of his mad notion, and the more sips he took at the arrack bottle the better it looked.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

LITTLE dreaming of the plot that was to be hatched against them, the Glory Hole boys of the Bombay Castle started to take in the town and suburbs of Amboyna with schoolboy thoroughness.

The first thing they did was to buy half a dozen pineapples and a huge bunch of bananas, sixty to the bunch, to fill Horace up so that he would be less restive.

It sounds extravagant to feed a goat on pineapples, magnificent fruits that would have been worth a guinea apiece at home. But when Pongo Walker asked the price of a Chinese vendor, the Chinaman held up one finger.

"He means a quid," said Dick Dorrington. "No, John," he added to the Chinese; "too muchee dear!"

The Chink smiled blandly, and looked patient.

"S'posee boy foreign devil no wantee pay penny pineapple. S'posee pay 'apenny?" he suggested in his quaint pidgin English.

"Pineapples a ha'penny each!" whispered Skeleton in awe-stricken tones. "He's off his head! He's not well!"

But Pongo Walker, who was always practical, put in his oar.

"Half a mo', you chaps," said he. "Let's try him!"

And he held out a halfpenny to the bland, smiling Celestial, who promptly held out a splendid pineapple.

"My word, John," said Pongo, "you are the chap we have been looking for for a long time. We will buy the shop."

The shop was a huge one-wheel barrow, and the boys bought the lot. There were pineapples, bananas, coconuts, both drinking and eating, nuts, and there were durians.

Mr. Lal Tata took a seat on a stone wall and lit his cigar, waiting patiently till Horace the goat was filled with pineapple slices and bananas till he swelled like a balloon.

"Do not eat too much fruits, boys!" said he. "Too much fruits is not good for the stomachs

in these too hot climates. Skeleton, my friend, beware of the pineapple's withered branch. I do not want to put mustard plasters round your stomachs for cholera."

"That's all right, sir," replied Skeleton cheerfully. "I've only eaten a dozen bananas and one pineapple. I am just going to try one of these durians!"

And Skeleton held up a huge fruit with a green rind, which none of his chums had yet ventured on.

Mr. Lal Tata looked on, smiling.

"It is most delicious fruit, the durian," said he, "but he is acquired taste. You have to get some use to him."

Skeleton took a bite of the durian. Inside the rough-looking green rind was a pink pulp like a strawberry ice, which in its turn was spotted by crimson pips.

"What's it like?" asked Pongo Walker.

Skeleton's face was a study.

"Whoo!" said he.

And he dropped the durian, twisting his face into a contortion of disgust.

"Phew!" exclaimed Dick Dorrington sniffing the air. "Does it taste like that? Take it away and bury it."

Skeleton pulled a dozen grinaces, each more hideous than the last.

"There is a beautiful taste in it somewhere if you could only get at it!" said he. "But it smells awful. Give me another banana to take the taste out!"

"So it is with everyone who tastes durian for the first time!" said Mr. Lal Tata. "It has fetid odours but the flavour of the fruit is like strawberry, raspberry, and pineapple and clove flowers when one person accustoms himself to the smell!"

But no one would venture on a second durian. They took the smell and Skeleton's word for it.

Horace, the goat, was now comparatively well behaved. He ate all the durians that were left over, and trotted on quietly amongst the boys as they resumed their walk.

The heat was tremendous, so they hired the Chinese fruit merchant and his single wheelbarrow to carry the two cricket-bags they had brought ashore with them. This Chinese wheelbarrow was the strangest vehicle they had

seen in their voyagings, for it consisted of one large wheel, six feet in diameter, on either side of which the contents of the barrow were balanced.

Passing through a large old Dutch fort, within which were the barracks and the Resident's house and gardens, they came to a grass lawn surrounded by the Dutch houses of the Dutch officials. Then they came to a Dutch street or two which looked like a chip of old Holland gone astray into the tropics, for the gardens and orchards surrounding the houses were full of flowering shrubs and palms. There were trees of nutmeg, cocoa, durian, and bananas, and palms of coco, areca, sugar, and sago. Delightful indeed were the lanes behind the town, but the heat was so great that the boys began to pant and puff as they walked under the shade of the bamboo, kanary, fruit and palm trees, and Mr. Lal Tata, taking off his pink turban, wiped away the perspiration that was streaming down his fat head!

They strayed into the ancient Dutch cemetery, whose crumbling collection of stone and brick monuments showed the age of the Dutch occupation of Amboyna.

The Chinaman and the wheelbarrow with the two cricket bags were left outside the cemetery. So was Horace. It was decided unanimously that Horace was not respectable enough to take into any cemetery, though there was no notice up that goats were not admitted.

The first stone they came to bore a partly obliterated Dutch inscription which commenced "Herr Ruhts."

"Herr Ruhts must have died a good many years ago!" said Pongo Walker reading the inscription. "I wonder what he died of?"

"Heat, I expect," said Porkis, puffing and blowing.

"Pineapples, I should think," put in Skeleton, moodily. "And look here, you chaps, there's another Herr Ruhts buried here. I expect he was a brother to the other one."

"And here's another!" exclaimed Dick Dorrington. "Why, the cemetery is full of Herr Rerr Ruhtses. They must have owned the place about a hundred years ago."

But now, Chu, their Chinese schoolfellow, was scratching his head in a puzzled fashion before yet another grave which bore the inscription, "Herr Ruhts."

"Too much plentee Herr Ruhts bury himself along cemeteryside!" said Chu.

And it was not till they had inspected the hundredth gravestone of this endless procession of Herr Ruhts that they discovered a clearer and more modern inscription which read "hier ruht" or here lies.

The mystery was solved, and the boys had had enough of cemeteries, though Mr. Lal Tata was greatly interested in the ancient graveyard.

"We came out to see life, not cemeteries," grumbled Pongo Walker.

"Come along, you chaps. Let's come outside and see if that Chink has bunked with the barrow and our cricket-bags!"

They were nearing the gate of the cemetery, when a howl of anguish from the roadway set them to a run.

"A-hoo! A-hoo! A-hoo!"

The howls echoed through the palm trees.

"Goodness!" exclaimed Dick Dorrington.

"What's the matter!"

"Must be Horace setting about the Chink!" said Porkis, puffing and blowing with the heat as they ran.

But as they ran out on the roadway, Horace was sitting there, still tied to the wheel of the barrow, and full of pineapple and bananas. He was blinking amiably at the Chinese greengrocer, who was howling dis-

mally, with one hand thrust in the second cricket-bag, which was larger than its companion.

"Jiminy!" exclaimed Pongo. "He's put his hand in Gus's bag, and Gus has got him fast!"

This was the truth. In the second cricket-bag, the boys had stowed Gus, their pet crocodile, with the intent of giving him a run ashore after his long sojourn on the ship.

Gus did not have a very good time on the ship. He was either kept in the cricket-bag, or he was secured by a dog collar and chain to the foremast where the crew teased him, or he was splashed by the salt sprays.

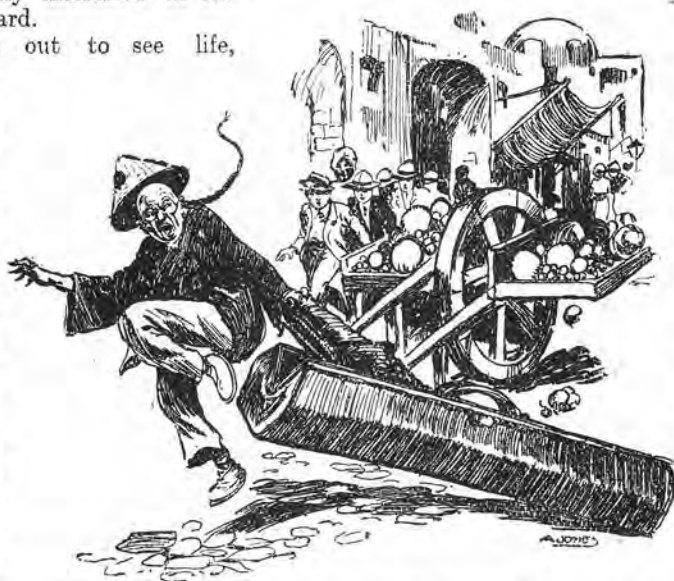
Perhaps his confinement in the cricket-bag was affecting Gus's temper, which was never of the sweetest. He had been kept in a cricket-bag since the boys had first captured him in their excursion up the Nile on the first voyage on the Bombay Castle. Gus had been

frozen in his cricket-bag north of the Arctic circle, and he had been roasted in it south of the equator.

And when the Chinese, intent on stealing something out of these mysterious long bags, had thrust his hand into the bag, Gus had nailed him like a rat-trap.

"Whoo-hoo!" yelled the Chink, at the sight of the boys. "Klicket-bat him bitee too much!"

"Well, you should have kept your hand out of the bag, Charles!" replied Dick



The Chink danced in the road with five feet of crocodile hanging to his hand and wrist. (See next page.)

severely. "Then Gus would not have got hold of you."

The boys unstrapped the battered bag, and the Chinese danced in the road with five feet of crocodile hanging to his hand and wrist.

It was very lucky for the Chink that his wrists were covered with heavy straps to strengthen them for the wheeling of the barrow. On these Gus's teeth had clinched like a rat-trap, but the boys found out that the Chink was more frightened than hurt.

"Let go, Gus!" said Skeleton gently to the crocodile.

But Gus's wicked eye glittered, as much as to say, "Sha'n't!" He was not going to let go. Gus never let go of anything once he had got a hold.

"What are we going to do about it?" asked Pongo, having had a look at Gus's irregular row of teeth. "Strikes me we had better put the Chink on a barrow and wheel him round till we can find a dentist. Perhaps if he gave Gus gas he might let go."

But Dick Dorrington had unlocked the other bag. He produced a couple of cricket stumps.

"If you lift his lips, Pongo," said he, "we can get these stumps in his back teeth, and if you, Chip, will bang him over the head with the cricket-bat, just there, on the top of his napper, maybe he'll lose his hold, and we can prise his jaws open."

These operations were in progress when Mr. Lal Tata, having finished his meditations amongst the tombs of Herr Ruhts, came bustling out of the road.

"What are you doing, boys?" he demanded. "What is this foolsomeness? How do you mean, bringing this wretched Gus fellow out and dragging him round town in cricket-bags? Ha, do you play cricket with crocodiles?"

"It's not our fault, sir, please," said Dick Dorrington. "If this miserable Chinese had not tried to steal from the bag, he would not have got his arm down Gus's neck."

They lifted Gus up between them, and tried to put the stump points between his clenched teeth.

But Gus did not want to bite on the cricket stumps. He wanted to chew the Chinese.

"Wait a minute!" said Skeleton, raking in his pocket. "If I put a bun on his nose and talk to him nicely, perhaps he will let go of the Chink and grab at the bun."

And Skeleton drew a dilapidated currant bun from his pocket, and perched it on the top of Gus's nose, talking to their pet in persuasive tones.

"Come on, Gussie!" said Skeleton, in soothing accents that might have decoyed a dove from an olive branch. "Look at the nice bun Uncle Skeleton has got for you if you will only let go of the Chinese gentleman."

But though Gus loved buns, he was not going to be caught by salt on his tail or buns on his nose.

He stood on his stubby hind legs on the dusty lane and clawed at the howling Chinese.

"Hold on a minute," said Pongo. "I'll try to hypnotise him. It is wonderful what an influence the human eye has on animals and reptiles."

And Pongo, standing in front of the angry crocodile, pulled a number of terrible faces as he stared into Gus's evil eyes and tried to mesmerise him.

Whether it was the result of Pongo's mesmerism or because his jaws were getting tired, it is difficult to say. But Gus relaxed his hold slightly on the leather wrist-strap of the Chinese.

Instantly the two cricket stumps were thrust between his back teeth, and Mr. Lal Tata, who had been assisting with his white umbrella at these dental operations, felt it slide through Gus's teeth.

"Heave, boys!" cried Dick, using his stump as a lever. "Whack him on his nut with the bat, Chip!"

Thus encouraged, Chip Prodggers beat upon Gus's thick skull with the bat.

"Whack him harder," urged Dick. "He only thinks you are tickling him, and it makes him laugh."

Chip whacked harder on Gus's skull, which was bullet proof, till at last Gus, his mouth forced open by the stumps, released his hold and let the Chinese go, with the sleeve of his blue jacket torn to ribands.

The Chinese at once turned to fly, but Arty collared him now.

"No you don't, John!" said Arty, with his pleasant smile. "We want you to wheel the barrow."

And as soon as Gus had let go his hold of the Chinese, his jaws crunched on the two cricket stumps and Mr. Lal Tata's umbrella.

The stumps were ground to splinters as Gus rolled in the dust, striking out with his claws, and Mr. Lal Tata gave a howl of anguish as he surveyed his umbrella.

"Ai! Ai!" he cried. "Look, boys! Look what your rascalsome crocodile fellow has done to my good umbrellas. It is ruined, my lovely umbrellas!"

But Lal did not have long to lament over his umbrella. Round a bend in the lane came a native driving a small but fierce-looking buffalo, of the sort that are used in the Philippines for ploughing.

There is nothing that this type of buffalo loves better than to wallow in a deep hole of black mud and water, with his nose just above the surface. And this was what this particular buffalo had been doing when fetched by his master to plough in a neighbouring pineapple field.

He looked just like a huge lump of black wet mud, from which peeped out two red angry eyes and two ugly curved horns.

The Philippine buffalo has one peculiarity. He is tractable enough with his yellow, brown, and chocolate-coloured masters, but he goes mad at the sight of a white man.

Now, though Lal was black, he was dressed very much in the style of a white man, and at the sight of him the buffalo lowered its muddy head and gave a deep bellow.

"Cave, sir!" cried Dick, who had just managed to get half of the struggling Gus back into his cricket-bag.

Lal switched round. The Chinaman had dodged behind his barrow.

The boys leaped for the cemetery wall as half a ton of mud roared down on Lal like a railway train.

"Yow!" yelled Lal, and opened his torn umbrella in the hope of shooting off the angry beast.

But he might as well have tried to stop a London and North-Western express passenger locomotive by the same means.

There was a biff and a bang.

Up went Lal and his umbrella, and his pink turban flying into the air, a huge patch of black mud on the seat of Lal's trousers showing where the buffalo express had hit him.

Lal fell sprawling in the road in a cloud of dust, and the angry water buffalo turned, skating along the road in its eagerness to turn and have another go at its prey.

But it came to a standstill, for, with a sharp pull at the line which fastened him to the barrow, Horace, the Egyptian goat, released himself and stood prepared to meet the enemy.

"Maw!" bleated Horace, lowering his great battering ram of a head to the ground, and pawing up dust with his cloven hoof.

"Maw!"

There was a note of defiance in the bleat which made the buffalo stretch forth its neck and bellow like the fog-horn of a steamer.

In the meantime, Lal, taking advantage of the situation, was climbing up a palm-tree as fast as he could go, whilst the Chinese, in the middle of the battle ground, yowled dismally under his overturned barrow.

"Moo-hoo!" bellowed the buffalo, lifting its sneering nose and dropping its horns in contempt of the new adversary.

"Maw-waw!" bleated Horace.

The buffalo was doubtful. It had never seen anything like Horace before.

Then, with an angry bellow, it charged.

But Horace was a cunning old fighter. In his time he had fought everything from a camel to a Polar bear, and he was not going to be upset by a common water buffalo.

He allowed the heap of mud to charge on to him. Then he neatly side-stepped and butted the buffalo one in the ribs in passing that sent it staggering across the lane, to fall with a heavy crash against the bank.

"Bravo, Horace!" yelled the boys from the top of the wall.

The water buffalo staggered to its feet, looking dazed. It bellowed, stamped, and lifted its sneering nose again to scent Horace, for, like all its kind, it was very short-sighted.

Then it saw Horace standing in the middle

of the road, pawing the ground and bleating triumphantly.

Away it went again, with an angry bellow. Horace dropped his head flat on the ground, as though he were trying to commit suicide under the charge of the angry buffalo.

But this was only one of old Horace's fighting tricks.

With a thunder of hoofs and a roar, the buffalo closed on him and ran over him. Then with one supreme twenty horse-power boost under the stomach, Horace lifted his heavy antagonist clean into the air so that it turned two somersaults and descended on its nose, ploughing up a column of dust.

"Well tackled, Horace!" roared the boys.

"Jollie well done, Horace!" shouted Mr. Lal Tata, looking down from his thirty-foot perch in a palm-tree.

"Hit him some jolly good hard kicks, Horace!" added Lal.

But the buffalo had had enough as it staggered to its feet. It saw Horace coming, and it turned and ran, Horace making a stern chase of it.

The native in charge of the buffalo ran as well.

Every time the buffalo tried to stop and turn, Horace charged it from behind like a battering ram.

"Whop! Whop! Whop!"

The boys could hear the thud of Horace's head echoing through the trees as the buffalo fled for its wallow of black mud and water, closely followed by its yelling master.

And with a parting rush Horace butted the buffalo back into its tank of ink-black mud. With a second butt, he sent its master flying after it. Then he turned and trotted back amiably to the breathless group of boys, who were shoving the one-wheel Chinese barrow in chase of him, with Mr. Lal Tata seated on one side of it, and the soap-faced, frightened Chink on the other.

The native stood up in the pool shaking his fist at them, looking as if he had been dipped in a pot of indian ink. He was telling the

boys what he thought of them and their goat in the purest Malay.

"It serves you right, my dear fellow!" answered Pongo Walker. "You ought not to allow such dangerous brutes to walk about without a muzzle on. If your buffalo had left our goat alone, he would have left your buffalo alone. If I were you, I should take that buffalo, bath him, and



There was a biff and a bang, and up went Lal and his umbrella!
(See page 211.)

turn him into sausages!"

And, with this parting shot, the boys whirled the barrow away through the lanes behind Amboyna, skirting round the back of the Malay quarter, whose presence they could detect through the trees by the crowing of hundreds of fighting cocks and the strange Malay smell which Pongo called "Eau de Boulogne."

"We had better get out of this neighbourhood quickly," said Pongo Walker. "That Malay gentleman did not seem very pleasant

about his old buffalo. There are a lot of native huts hidden amongst the trees, and they do say these chaps stir out like a crowd of wasps from a nest when they are roused up. They are nearly as touchy as their rotten buffaloes!"

"Yes, boys!" said Mr. Lal Tata, gasping and waving his battered white umbrella feebly. "For sake of goodness, do hurry up and get out of this! Wheel the barrow along swiftly. I am in some funks. You are getting us into jolly lots of trouble!"

"Don't you worry yourself, sir," said Pongo, "we'll hitch Horace on to the barrow, just as they use dogs to pull them in China. He'll help to pull me along."

"Quick mister! Quick mister!" whimpered the Chinese, who was sitting on the barrow to balance Lal. "Malay man, him velley cross indeed. Listen!"

And, to be sure, there was an angry hum amongst the thick orchards and trees, to every few yards of which there was a Malay hut. The owner of the buffalo was stirring up his neighbours to come and take vengeance on this strange party who had upset his buffalo.

"That's all right, John!" said Pongo as he secured Horace to his rope and the rope to the barrow. "You leave it to us and keep up your pecker, we'll show you how to make a Chinese barrow shift in half a jiffy. All you have got to do is to hold tight to that cricket-bag with the crocodile in it. Nurse it in your arms tight. Gus don't like being shaken up. Are we all ready, boys?"

It was about time that they got a move on the barrow. The angry proprietor of the bullock, black from head to foot with mud, and brandishing a large twisty kris or dagger, had dashed out into the road behind them, closely followed by a number of his friends and relations, all of whom were part proprietors in the buffalo, which was a sort of Buffalo, Limited.

"Here they come!" said Pongo calmly. "Get along, Horace. Shove up, boys. Let her rip!"

And away went the barrow, the boys cheering and shouting, whilst Horace, excited by the noise, put down his head and charged along in noble style.

Soon the barrow was travelling down a steep lane on its one great wheel at a speed which left nothing to be desired.

They could hear the Malays howling behind them.

"Goodness, boys," gasped Lal, "we shall have terrible smashes! This is terrific speeds."

The boys were hanging on to the barrow, legging it down the hill as if they were wearing seven-leagued boots.

"You keep calm, sir!" puffed Pongo, striding along. "Those rascals won't chase us far. They will be afraid of running into a Dutch policeman. Another quarter of a mile and we shall be all right!"

The lane was rough and the single wheel of the barrow thumped and bumped as it flew downhill, the little group of boys leaping alongside it, whilst Horace tore along as though he were pulling at a fire-engine.

The Chinese proprietor of the barrow had turned green with fear. He knew that if the angry swarm of Malays behind caught them, he would probably be knifed. On the other hand, if the barrow came to pieces, he would probably be killed.

There was no time to think. The steep lane came to an end in the top of the Chinese quarter, at the head of what was called the street of Five Hundred Stairs.

This was a street of stone steps which led down to the bund from the high ground behind. It was something over a quarter of a mile in length, and before the boys could stop the barrow they were on the steps.

"Easy, Horace!" yelled Pongo as he was swung off his feet.

Bunk went the barrow down the first flight of steps. It was a terrible street that lay before them in tiers of steps.

Sometimes there were three steps in a group, sometimes there were four steps, sometimes there were flights of fifteen or sixteen steps.

Bunk! Bunk! Bunk! went the barrow down the first flight.

Horace seemed to have gone mad.

Chinese pigs rushed out of the way and dashed into the little Chinese shops that lined the street of Five Hundred Stairs.

"All right, sir!" puffed Arty. "I'll tackle him!"

And, rising to his feet, Arty closed his fists and advanced to meet the armed running man, who, with clenched teeth and staring eyes, was racing down on them. Arty had realised the situation at once. He had heard of Malays running amok, and he knew that he had got to meet, with his naked fists, a man who was as mad as a hatter and dangerous as a rattlesnake.

A superb boxer, Arty had no great fear for himself, for a man who knows how to use his fists is always a match for a man with a knife. But Arty was only a boy, and though he had a good long reach, he had to keep beyond the range of those two ugly twisty knives.

With a yell of "Deen!" (kill) Saru bore down upon him like the wind. The two glittering knives stabbed wildly at Arty.

But Arty's chest was not there when the knives stabbed with lightning swiftness. With a rapid side step he dodged the rush of the maddened prince.

Plunk!

It was a well-directed punch in the neck that took Prince Saru of Sambang in mid career, lifting him clean off the ground and turning over in a sort of somersault.

With a crash and a clatter of knives he thumped down on the roadway, his chin ploughing up the loose macadam. Then he rolled on his back and lay still, whilst Arty calmly stepped forward and collected the ironmongery.

"Ho, crikey!" panted Mr. Lal Tata, sitting up amongst the ruins of the wheelbarrow. "You have killed him, Arty! You have hit Malay gentleman running amok such kicks with your fists that you have give him spifflications. He is dead! He is no more! He is dead as hobnails!"

"I don't think so, sir," said Arty, leaning over the prince and laying his hand on his heart. "He is only winded. I have wafted him away into dreamland. He'll come round presently."

And now there was a rush of policemen to the spot. They were all very brave now that Arty had stopped the runaway, and they came running out of houses and shops and

sliding down lamp-posts in all directions; in fact, it seemed as though it was raining policemen.

They came up very excited, and they took Arty's name and address in Malay, and wrote it down in Dutch. Arty gave his name as Arthur Dove, schoolboy, of the British ship Bombay Castle.

The police-inspector took it down, "Artjee Dovjee, foolboy. Britischj Matschappie Bambooze Castlj."

Some of the policemen were fanning the prince, and they kept on fanning till he showed signs of life. Then he sat up, scowled at the boys in a dazed fashion, and allowed himself to be led off to the police-station very quietly.

Then the police-inspector, who spoke a little English, told Mr. Lal Tata that, though his Highness Prince Saru had run amok, he had not done any damage. He had not killed anyone. To run amok was not a misdemeanour. Any Malay gentleman might run amok as much as he liked so long as he did not kill anyone, and as nobody had been killed the prince could not be detained. But the police-inspector hinted that it would be just as well if he managed to keep the prince in the station till sunset, and that he hoped all the British boys would then be back on their ship safe, for a Malay gentleman, even when he is running amok, does not like to be punched in the jaw, as the Malays are a very proud and vengeful race.

The punch on the jaw had really done Prince Saru more good than a cab load of doctors. It had brought him to his senses.

But, recovering from the knockout blow and the mad frenzy of his run, Prince Saru had enough wits left to see who had administered the cure. The defeat and death of his favourite fighting cock had set him on the run. It was the last straw of many troubles. He had spent nearly all his thousand pounds, and he stood to win back three hundred or lose the lot when he had put his prize bird into the ring. But an unknown bird, a shabby, yellow-necked rooster, brought down by a gang of ragged sports and fans from Ilo-Ilo, had killed his bird in the first round.

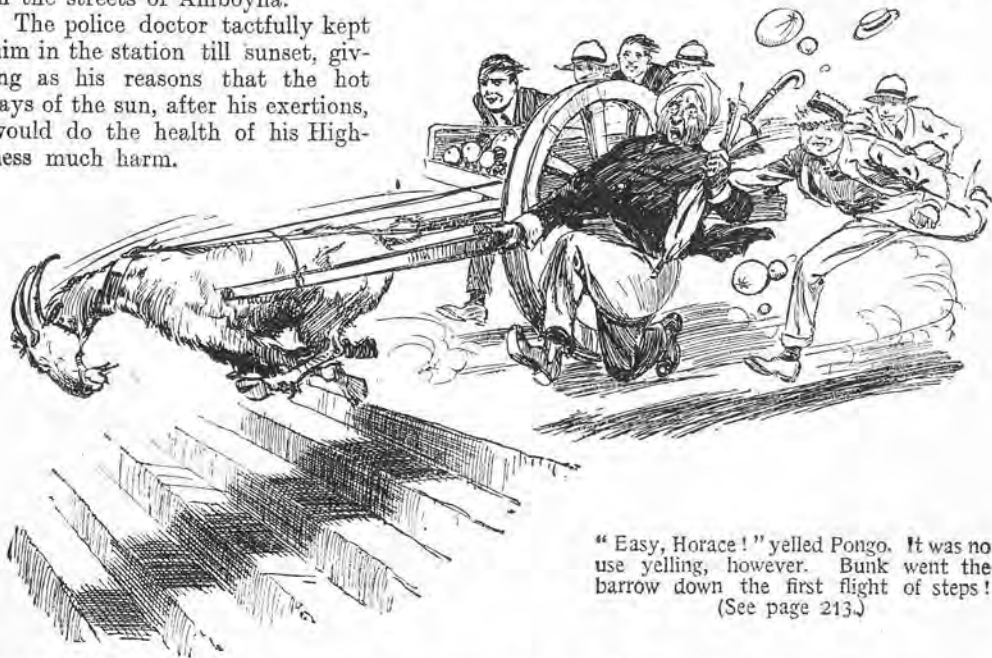
Then Prince Saru, with murder in his heart

and the red glare of bhong in his eyes, had seized his knives and had run forth to kill, with the results already narrated.

It was with a different feeling of murder in his heart that he allowed himself to be laid on a bed at the police-station, where his attendants fanned him and rubbed his feet.

The hot madness which had sent him amok had died out of his veins. But he vowed vengeance deep and dire against the British boys who had laid him low and who had made a laughing-stock of his reign of terror in the streets of Amboyna.

The police doctor tactfully kept him in the station till sunset, giving as his reasons that the hot rays of the sun, after his exertions, would do the health of his Highness much harm.



"Easy, Horace!" yelled Pongo. It was no use yelling, however. Bunk went the barrow down the first flight of steps! (See page 213.)

At the same time the inspector posted a couple of armed sentries at the door, partly in honour of his distinguished, if unwilling guest, partly to hold him down if he should show further signs of madness.

But Prince Saru lay quiet on the bed all through that hot, drowsy afternoon. Then, at sunset, he was escorted politely and officially to his great gilded prahu, which paddled off over an oil-smooth sea for Sambang.

They picked up a tow from a Dutch tug boat and travelled fast through the night, and

early on the following morning the prahu entered the Straits of Sambang on a tide that was running like a mill race.

By eight o'clock the Prince Saru was in the palace.

With a brow black as thunder he stalked through the crowd of anxious and obsequious courtiers to the innermost temple of the palace, and here, dragging back a heavy curtain of cloth of gold, he entered the large, silent hall which was floored with mother-of-pearl. Standing on a pedestal of onyx at

the end of the hall stood a hideous figure, lit only by a small red lamp of scented oil.

It was Balum, the good joss or Luck of Sambang, the figure of a huge orang-outang carved in wood by one of the superb Japanese artists of the olden days.

The lips of the hideous creature were drawn back revealing teeth of ivory, and the eyes were formed of two balas rubies of enormous value, which glowed red in the gloom of the dim hall.

Balum had been brought to Sambang by the first raiders who had started this pirate

settlement which had gradually developed into a petty principedom.

Earthquakes had cracked the palace. A British cruiser had bombarded it in the old days. But Balum had never taken any hurt.

And gradually about this terrible orang-outang figure had grown up a tradition which caused it to be worshipped as a god and even to become the object of human sacrifice. It was the Luck of Sambang, and the only thing that Prince Saru, in his dark soul, believed in. Otherwise, he would soon have prised the ruby eyes out of the joss and would have pawned them.

But the rubies were safe from Saru and from the eight hundred Chinese and flat-nosed yellow men who formed his subjects.

All these did poo-jah to the Luck of Sambang and burned joss sticks before it. On a small lacquered table were plates of rice and pickled fish and food, offerings which were daily renewed.

Even Saru dropped on his hands and knees and crawled across the mother-of-pearl tiles of the floor to the foot of this awful statue.

Then, prostrate on his face, he vowed that, ere another moon had waxed and waned, he would offer human sacrifice at the altar of Balum.

And Prince Saru, whispering to the floor at the foot of the idol's pedestal, particularly mentioned a huge fat British boy who was called Artec, and who hit blows with his hands like the kicks of a donkey.

Long years had elapsed since there had been human sacrifice in the Temple of Balum. And all the time the prosperity of Sambang had been declining. Steamers had knocked the bottom out of piracy, for they were independent of the calms and fierce tides of the Straits of Sambang, and the private junks could no longer tackle them.

But the rajah, Prince Saru's father, was very old and failing, and Saru was full of new ideas. He would start the piracy business again on novel lines, and, with a human sacrifice or two to inspire his followers, he would bring a new era of prosperity to Sambang.

And these were the thoughts of Prince

Saru as he lay prostrate on the floor before the idol which glared down on him with its baleful ruby eyes.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

IN the meantime our friends, having collected the remnants of the barrow, and having presented the Chinese owner of the fragments with ten shillings as a consolation prize, felt that they had had a thoroughly enjoyable and exciting morning.

Skeleton was hungry. So they got away from the admiring crowd which surrounded them and sought refuge in a Chinese eating-house, where they ate many strange things and asked no questions.

It was blistering hot now, so, at Mr. Lal Tata's advice, they decided to rest in the long cane chairs in the matted verandah of the hash joint, and here they reclined, drinking cups of weak, straw-coloured Chinese tea, till the sun declined towards the west and it was time for them to go on board the ship again.

When they reached the port, they read with dismay a notice posted by Scorchers Wilkinson, the Sixth Form master, who was in charge of the boat routine.

"No boy," ran the notice, "will be allowed to bring more than one pet on board.—By Order."

"Crikey!" exclaimed Pongo, dolefully looking round the fair which had been established at the port. "I suppose Gus and Horace don't count. But I was thinking of taking half a dozen of these big white parrots off to the ship and teaching them to talk and to fire cannons and to do all sorts of stunts. They're dirt cheap at ninepence each."

They were magnificent birds, not unlike the Australian cockatoos. But they had pink crests and great curling moustaches of feathers. And perched alongside there were hundreds of painted screaming lories, and any amount of Java sparrows, cut-throats, slaughter-jacks, golden-puffs, Ikey Moses, Black-eyed Susans, and other rare cage-birds which were to be had for the reasonable price of two a penny.

There were also silver monkeys and huge

baboons. You could get a baboon as big as Lower School fag for one-and-six. There had been a regular rush of baboons into the market when the news had gone forth that the school-ship was coming to Amboyna. So baboons were a drug in the market.

The Lower School kids, who were already heavily laden with bags of wonderful seashells and corals, were in despair when they read the notice.

"Scorcher is a rotter!" exclaimed one sadly. "I bought a hundred birds for five shillings this morning. Now I've got to leave them all behind. And I could have got five shillings apiece for them in London."

Then a bright thought struck Pongo Walker. In ten minutes the boats would shove off and the masters had already gone on board the Bombay Castle.

"Tell you what, boys!" he called. "If we are only allowed one pet apiece, let us have a good one. None of your Java sparrows or poll parrots. Let us all buy a one-and-sixpenny baboon. Let me do the bargaining. If we buy a hundred, we ought to get wholesale terms, tenpence each."

The baboon dealers were all listening intently, though they did not understand much what Pongo was saying. They were eager to get rid of their stock, for there is a secret in selling a baboon, just as there is a secret in selling a horse.

The baboon is a savage and unruly beast, and every one of the hundred and twenty sleepy beasts that were on the market that afternoon was quiet and well behaved only because he had been dosed early in the day with a small pill of opium. In an hour or two the effects of the drug would be gone, and the baboon would reveal himself in his real character, which is like that of a lot of unpleasant human beings, half monkey, half pig.

Pongo soon made his wants known. He pulled a monkey face, scratched himself, and gave a perfect impersonation of a baboon, to the great delight of the baboon merchants. Then he held up his hands, showing his fingers and thumbs ten times, indicating thereby that he wanted a hundred baboons at rock-bottom prices. The market price was indi-

cated by showing a penny and ten fingers and thumbs.

The baboon man tried to explain in Chinese Malay that one-and-six was the baboon quotation. Amidst loud laughter he offered Pongo a sick baboon for a shilling.

But Pongo turned to the parrot market, and at the sight of his movement the bottom dropped out of the baboon market.

In another hour or so the whole lot of baboons would want another opium pill to keep them quiet, and a baboon needs two-pennyworth of opium to take any effect on him.

Pongo handed over the money, and the baboon merchants handed over their tenpenny baboons, of which they were well pleased to get rid.

As a matter of fact, baboons were merely vermin. They came down from the hills and snaffled the nutmegs off the trees in the nutmeg orchards, and one baboon in a nutmeg orchard could do a pound's worth of damage in a night's pilfering and wasting.

The natives were jolly glad to see the last of the baboons. Nobody liked killing them, because it was like killing a human being. So they were always glad to send a baboon away on a ship if anyone would take him.

Some of the Lower School kids were half afraid of their purchases, which were as big as themselves. But Pongo marshalled the whole school up, and ordered each boy to take his baboon by the hand.

Then two by two, baboons and boys, they marched down to the boats and steam pin-naces that were waiting to take them off to the ship.

Mr. Lal Tata shook his head as he looked round the boats and saw a baboon sitting next to every boy, a horrible, dissolute gang of ruffians with thunder and lightning colours in their faces.

"You see," said he gloomily, "there will be jolly rows about all these monkey fellows. Captain Handyman will not want his lovely ship crowded with hooligan monkey people."

The sun set with tropic suddenness, and the purple dusk of the Eastern night had already fallen as the boys trooped up to the hurricane-deck to fall in for roll call.

The muster roll was always called when they came off from the shore, and the Bombay Castle was to sail that night.

There was a great shuffling of feet on the hurricane-deck as the hundred lined up by Forms, all toeing the seam of one long deck plank, and all holding a baboon by the hand.

The sailors were splitting with laughter, and the quartermaster, who had to sound the bugle to announce that the muster was all ready, could hardly blow his bugle.

Then Captain Handyman and Scorchers Wilkinson turned the corner of the deckhouse and came to a standstill as they saw one hundred boys and one hundred huge baboons lined up to answer for their names.

"Hey! What's this?" exclaimed the captain. "Do these young rascals think that I am going to have my beautiful ship turned into a monkey raft, or—"

The words were hardly out of his mouth than the boss baboon of the pack, the first to get over the soothing influences of his opium pill, gave a chattering bark at the sight of Scorchers Wilkinson in his cap and gown.

Pongo, who affected to understand monkey language, said that the old baboon called, "Cave!"

At any rate, the baboon gave a sudden snarl and snap at Arty, who was holding him, and tore his paw from Arty's grip.

At the call of their leader the whole pack of baboons seemed to wake up. They struggled away from their schoolboy companions and gathered in a barking mob round their chief.

And in another second they were off down the deck in a mad rush, barking like a pack of hounds in full cry.

"Look out, boys!" yelled Pongo. "The baboons are loose."

The parade broke up and rushed along the decks after the mob of infuriated baboons, who took to the upper or boat deck.

The pack followed their leader, who dashed up the funnel stays and led them all to the rim of the mighty funnel. There they stopped, chattering and barking, whilst Captain Handyman, looking up, wrung his hands in despair, for the funnel of the Bombay Castle was festooned with monkeys. And some of the baboons had picked up cobs of coal from

the coal bags for the steam pinnaces which were kept on the boat deck.

With these they started bombarding the groups of boys on the boat-deck, buzzing the coal with considerable accuracy and force.

Porkis got his head cut open with a lump of coal.

"Wait a minute!" called Captain Handyman. "I'll soon have the crush out of that!"

He ran to the bridge and pulled the wires both of the great steam fog-horn and the steam syren.

"Boo-o-o-o-o-m!" roared the fog-horn; "whoo-whoo-whoo-whoo-whoo-c-e-e-e-c-e-e!" wailed the siren, hiding the mob of infuriated baboons in a mob of steam.

The duet of the two steam blasts echoed in the dark hills behind Amboyna. The crowd of apes clapped their paws to their ears, stunned by the deep bass of the big foghorn and the whooping falsetto of the steam syren.

Then the whistle was too much for their nerves. They fell from the funnel in an avalanche, some shinning down the stays, others tumbling down forty feet with a thump on the decks.

One elderly baboon was so horrified by the blast that he fell down the funnel and climbed back covered with soot.

He was the last in the pack as it raced to the side of the ship. Alongside there was a Chinese water-boat which had just finished pumping in its load of fresh water into the tanks of the great steamship, and the furled sail and spar were rubbing against the rail of the Bombay Castle.

Greatly to Captain Handyman's relief, the pack raced down this spar full cry, swarming down in heaps on the deck of the water-boat, whilst the Chinese crew rushed down into their cabin, persuaded that it was raining baboons from the darkness above.

"Cast off that boat!" ordered Captain Handyman as the last of the baboons, the sooty old gentleman, had rushed off the ship by this exit.

And the water-boat was cast off, the tide taking it swiftly astern into the gloom with its load of jabbering, barking apes, who looked like a crew of demons in the half light of the dusk.

"Now, young gentlemen," said Scorchers Wilkinson sternly; "now that you have had your little jape, and we are free of that Simian crew, we will take the call over. After that you will assemble in the class-rooms and you will write me an essay, 'My Day in Amboyna, and What I Did with It.'"

"Jiminy!" murmured Dick Dorrington. "That's a stinger. It'll take hours and hours. And we'd better leave out all about the buffalo and the wheelbarrow and the chap who ran amok."

Otherwise we might get our leave stopped at the next port!"

And the boys were all writing busily as the Bombay Castle heaved up her anchor and stole quietly out over the calm sea, making a long detour round miles and miles of far-reaching coral reefs before she bore up for the entrance of the narrow Straits of Sambang.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

ALL that night the Bombay Castle steamed very slowly through the Java Sea, coming to an anchor at about four in the morning, and lying where she anchored till nearly breakfast time, for there were banks of mist on the sea, and these waters were treacherous and full of reefs.

But as the sun gathered strength the sea

mists rolled up like a veil of gauze, and it was a lovely afternoon as the ship waddled quietly along through a sea that was like blue paint for colour and a mirror for smoothness.

The day school was over. Scorchers Wilkinson had joined the captain on the bridge. Mr. Lal Tata was sitting down in the forewell-deck, his dark face beaming as he watched Arty Dove, the strong boy of the school, knocking the stuffing out of a Millwall steward who fancied himself as a sort of Isle of Dogs Carpenter.

Swinging by his arms to a rope, Cecil, the ship's orang outang, swung over the heads of the cheering mob of schoolboys and stewards who surrounded the boxing ring, the gentle rolling of the ship sending him from side to side like a pendulum. Cecil loved boxing above all things,



Pongo sat up amongst the ruins of the barrow, rubbing his head in a dazed fashion. "I should think we are in a muck!" he exclaimed. (See page 214.)

and this rope had been swung from the boom by the quartermaster specially for Cecil's benefit, for if he got amongst the crowd of boys round the ring, they always managed to step back on his toes, and that made Cecil cross.

"Break away there! Break away!" the boys were yelling. "Bravo, School! Sock old Pattypans one in the kisser!"

"Look at old Cecil!" said Captain Handyman, puffing at his Burma cheroot. "He's

enjoying the scrap as much as anyone. It's wonderful how keen that orang is on boxing."

"I've never seen Cecil look so well, sir, since we've been aboard the ship," said Scorcher Wilkinson, as he walked up and down the bridge keeping step with the captain.

"That's because we are getting back into his own climate and country," said Captain Handyman. "Stands to reason there's no place better for you than the place where you were born. I was born in Nelson Street, Portsmouth myself, and I've sampled most of the air in the world from the North Pole to the South Pole. But there's no air suits me better than that of Nelson Street, Portsmouth. I feel a new man as soon as I turn round the end of the street by the baker's shop. But look, young Arty Dove has deflated that steward chap!"

A yell of delight went up from the boys.

Herb Miffin, feather-weight champion of Millwall, was reclining on the deck, panting, whilst the referee counted him out, and Arty stood over him, ready to shake hands when he felt better.

Then Arty was led away to his corner and fanned and sponged, and a blank look settled on the faces of the Chinese firemen, who had come up from the depths of the ship to see the fight.

The Chinese are born gamblers, and they had put all the stokehole money on the steward. Captain Handyman glanced approvingly at the mob of cheering boys in the well deck below.

"The boys are all fit as fiddles," said he. "Dr. O'Sullivan hadn't got a case—not even a toothache or a little finger ache on his sick return for this morning. It's this craze for boxing that's doing them all good. It prevents 'em overeating and stodging lollipops in this hot climate. There's nothing like a turn with the gloves for boys and men."

"The engines have slowed since noon, sir!" commented Mr. Wilkinson.

Captain Handyman nodded.

"There's two reasons to that," said he. "Mr. MacStaggers is getting trouble with his condensers, and I'm wanting to hold her back to run the Straits of Sambang by night."

"Why is that, sir?" asked Mr. Wilkinson.

"The night tides are slacker," replied Captain Handyman, "and it's a passage that's safer to run by dark than by day, for there's a flaming baby volcano called Bula Tongi that's as good as a street-lamp through the strait. You can get all your bearings by Bula Tongi at night, but by day the prevailing east wind blows all its smoke down the strait as often as not, and one or two steamers have been put ashore by finding themselves in a sudden fog. That is why I prefer to run the Sambang passage by night."

"Sambang!" mused Mr. Wilkinson. "Was that not once a great resort of pirates? I think I once remember my uncle, who was captain of a China ship, telling me that he was attacked by pirates whilst becalmed near the Straits of Sambang."

"Pirates!" replied Captain Handyman. "Those Sambang people were always pirates and always will be pirates, though they are supposed to be looked after by the Dutch Government. What's bred in the bone comes out in the flesh, and I should not like anything to happen to my ship to-day in the Sambang channel. There's a Rajah of Sambang who would very soon be after any pickings that there might be. Why, it's only last year that he picked the bones of a Japanese Maru ship that hit the coral going through—cleaned her out till there wasn't a bit of brass or copper left in the ship. There was quite a lot of talk about it. That's what makes me a bit anxious till we are on the other side of Sambang. I feel responsible with these hundred boys on board, and last night I dreamed that the Rajah of Sambang had collared the lot of 'em."

Scorcher Wilkinson smiled grimly as he kept pace with the captain in his turns up and down the bridge.

"Speaking as their schoolmaster," said he, "I should be sorry for the rajah if he collared Dick Dorrington or his chum Arty Dove, or Pongo Walker, or Chip Prodgors, or any of that crowd that we call the Glory Hole Gang. I have a notion that they would make Sambang hotter for the rajah than he could make it for them!"

Captain Handyman smiled grimly.

"That's a fact, Mr. Wilkinson," said he.

"I am supposed to be a good disciplinarian, but I'd sooner handle the roughest gang of roustabouts from the crimps of the Barbary Coast, 'Frisco, than some of those young gentlemen of yours. Look! There's Skeleton putting the gloves on, and, by Jingo, they're pulling the gloves on the orang!"

Cecil had swung himself down from his rope into the ring, indicating that he, too, wanted to have a turn with the gloves. And Skeleton had expressed his readiness to give Cecil a few rounds.

Captain Handyman leaned on the rail of the bridge, and looked down at the excited crowd of boys.

"I say, Wilkinson," said he, "I suppose there is no chance of that orang turning rusty if he gets a left-hander on his boko? He's an ugly customer.

But Mr. Wilkinson laughed and shook his head.

"If it were a boy outside the Glory Hole Gang, I would stop it," said he; "but Cecil is perfectly safe with any of them. He is tremendously attached to Skeleton and his chums. Look, they are putting gloves on his feet."

Skeleton stood in the middle of the ring, whilst Cecil, retiring to his corner, crouched, then leaped into the air.

Skeleton did not have a chance as Cecil hurled himself upon him, hitting him and cuffing him with four boxing gloves simultaneously. He was rolled head over heels. Then Cecil chased the referee round the ring, giving time for Skeleton to regain his feet once more.

This time Cecil sparred up to him from the ground his long arms flying like windmill sails.

But Skeleton launched out, and by a lucky chance hit Cecil square on the nose. At the same moment Cecil, attempting to hit out with his left foot, punched himself behind the ear.

Shrieks of laughter went up from the boys as Cecil lost his temper with his own feet, and sat down in the ring to see about it.

He looked at the boxing gloves which covered them. Then he punched himself in the nose with his foot. In a second Cecil was all over himself, fighting with his gloved hands

against his gloved feet till, finally becoming frightened of the shower of blows that he was raining on himself, he leaped suddenly out of the ring, climbed up his rope, shinned up the mast, and sat on top of the foremast headlight, chattering angrily.

And he stayed up there till the sun began to sink in the west and distant mountain peaks above the horizon showed that the Bombay Castle was beginning to approach the dangerous Straits of Sambang.

It was not till dark that the great steamer approached the entrance of the narrow and tortuous channel. Rounding a dark point of land, Captain Handyman found his street-lamp burning, for the baby volcano of Bula Tongi was burning brightly, a red flare twenty miles away.

With two men in the chains the ship crept slowly into the channel, a swift tide rippling round her in races, reflecting the lights of the steamer in long swirling lines.

Up on the bridge, the captain and his officers were gathered together. The boys stood in groups on the decks, for the whisper had gone round that the straits of Sambang were a danger point of the voyage.

But Captain Handyman seemed to know where he was in the dangerous, reef-strewn passage through which the tide was ripping like a mill-race. First the land would loom up on one bow. Then the steering-engine of the ship would be heard clanking in the silence, and the Bombay Castle would tack across to the other shore.

The boys looked with interest at the low volcano of Bula Tongi, which burned steadily with its red flare. First it seemed on one side of the ship, and then the other, as she twisted and turned up the tortuous channel.

"Jiminy!" exclaimed Pongo. "We seem to be dancing all round that old volcano. But we are getting nearer and nearer all the time!"

The ship was about half-way through the Straits when Cecil, who was standing on deck with the boys, began to cough and choke.

"Old Cecil is getting cold," said Skeleton. "We don't want him laid up with bronchitis. Run down to the cabin, Pongo, and fetch my large ulster and a scarf or two."

Pongo did as he was bid. He brought up a large coat and pushed Cecil into it. Then he tied up Cecil's face in a scarf and clapped a school straw hat on top of his head.

"There you are, Cecil," said he. "Now you can't catch cold!"

Cecil grunted his approval. There was nothing he liked better than being wrapped up warm, and there were generally some brandyballs to be found in the pockets of Skeleton's overcoat.

Cecil loved brandyballs, and he was not disappointed when he thrust his paw into the pocket of his new coat. There was a fine paper of sticky brandyballs and Cecil pouched the lot, paper and all.

But the cause of Cecil's choking was not cold. His delicate nose and throat had been the first to pick up the waft of sulphur which a change in the wind had brought down the Straits from the volcano.

Had Captain Handyman noticed this, perhaps he would not have held on to run the most dangerous part of the narrow channel which he was approaching.

But it was not till ten minutes later that the flare of the burning volcano was hidden in a red glow, and in a few minutes the ship was surrounded by a thick fog which set all the boys coughing.

"Crikey!" exclaimed Porkis. "What a whiff of matches! It's like those French ones that burn blue. Sulphur—oh—wow! Honk! Honk! Honk!"

And Porkis, who was fat and chesty, and short in the neck, leaned on Cecil and coughed violently in the sulphurous fumes.

Cecil stroked his hand sympathetically. Cecil was always upset when any of the boys coughed or was ill.

The smoke grew thicker, enveloping the ship. The change of wind which Captain Handyman had feared had taken place, and Bula Tongi was pouring out enormous volumes of volcanic dust and gas which made the air thick as a London fog, and soon covered the decks with a fine sand.

All they could see of the volcano now was a dull red glare, and the boys looked at it awed.

"It's like the last days of Pompeii!" said Pongo Walker.

"Looks to me like the last days of the Bombay Castle if we don't have a bit of luck!" replied Dick Dorrington grimly. "This is where the captain wants to see his way a bit. We are near the narrowest part of the straits, and there's coral reefs on either side of us."

"Hallo!" he added. "What's that?"

The boys knew every noise in the ship now and its meaning, just as any old sea engineer listening to his engines can tell if there is anything wrong in their running.

And there was something wrong in the sound of the steering-gear on the bridge. Instead of the steady run-over of the engine, and the response of the great steel tiller-head astern, there was a jarring, irregular sound. Then followed a jangling of bells in the engine-room.

"What's up, Hodges?" called Pongo to a quartermaster who went racing astern.

"Up!" replied Mr. Hodges. "We're in a proper old frapp—jus' where we didn't want it. Steering gear's broken down! We're going to gear up the hand-steering! Rudder's jammed."

But before Mr. Hodges and his assistants could couple up the hand steering-gear and force the jammed rudder over to centre, there was a gentle rasping sound under the keel of the ship. A quiver seemed to run through the whole length of the gallant old Bombay Castle as, with her engines running fast astern, she seemed to be doing her best to fight off the reef that was waiting for her.

But it was too late. She came to a stop in the thick, sulphurous fog, with the tide ripping past her like a mill-race.

She was on the coral!

And the sulphurous mist, clearing a bit for a moment, showed them that she had a dismal neighbour. About four hundred yards away loomed the dim outline of a large steamer's funnels, upperworks, and masts. It was the Tokyo Maru, the ill-fated Japanese steamer which had stuck there and had been looted by the pirates of Sambang.

And the boys, peering through the mist, heard shouts in the blanket of smoke. Then, one, two, three, four, five, six—the outlines of large junks, swirling down on the tide, swarming with men, showed like a shadow-

show in the red glow. They heard shouts from the bridge, grapnels were thrown and hooked cleverly in the rails and davits of the stranded Bombay Castle, as junk after junk came bumping alongside.

The pirates of Sambang had not forgotten their cunning at the game.

As Captain Handyman afterwards told the boys, the handling of the junks in that swift tide was a masterpiece.

But all the boys knew about it was that over the rails leaped hundreds of yellow men, swarming on the deck of the steamer.

"Pirates!" gasped Arty, the first of the stupefied boys to realise the situation.

And up went his fists, hitting a yellow man in the face with a kerplunk that spread his nose all over his visage, and sent him shooting along the gritty deck.

But Dick, wiser than Arty, held his arm.

"Stop it, Arty!" he gasped. "We can't fight hundreds of armed men! Dodge back here!"

And he dragged his chum behind a fresh crowd of Chinese and Malays who poured over the rail, giving the Bombay Castle the aspect of a Chinese pleasure steamer.

Luckily the Chink who had received Arty's blow was so taken aback that he did not see who dealt it.

"Keep together, Glory Hole!" called Dick, as the pirates seized them. "We are all here. Stand by Cecil and keep him quiet!"

The pirates showed the boys no violence. They merely grabbed them by the shoulders, indicating that they were to climb over the rail and down to one of the junks.

When they hesitated they were shown a knife.

Cecil was grabbed with the rest. In the big ulster, with his head wrapped up and a school strawyard clapped down on top, he was not very distinguishable from the rest of the boys.

And he went very quietly, for he had got his mouth full of Skeleton's brandyballs, and they had stuck his huge jaws together.

They found themselves in a junk, which rapidly shoved off from the rest. They had a glimpse of the great hull of the Bombay Castle with all her lights burning, her masthead lights showing above the reek of the sulphurous fog which drifted along the face of the waters. Then the men rowing the junk bent to their sweeps with a deep-chested Hi! Ya! and the boys knew that they were being rowed ashore.

"My hat!" exclaimed Pongo. "We are nabbed! We are being taken to the pirates' home!"

They could not see much for a while. All they knew was that the junk was fighting her way across a stiff current through the fog, and that a fine rain of volcanic sand from the crater of the volcano was sifting down on the decks of the junk.

But soon the air cleared, and they saw the shadow of land ahead, whilst the rush of the current slackened.

A few minutes later, and the junk shot into a small harbour, surrounded by tall areca and coco palms, where the air was heavy with the scent of clove and nutmeg-trees.

Lights were sparkling ashore, and tom-toms were beating in the shadow of the trees, whilst in the

gloom they could see the white outlines of stone walls that looked like a fortress.

The junk bumped into a wharf of crazy bamboo piles. Then the boys were roughly ordered to get ashore, a powerful armed guard surrounding them.

"These chaps don't seem to want to kiss us!" remarked Arty. "I wonder what they've got up against us, and who their boss is?"

And little did Arty dream that the boss of their captors was none other than the infuriated bhang-soaked native he had bowled over but yesterday on the bund of Amboyna.



Prince Saru dropped before the awful statue. (See page 217.)

They passed through a high gate of masonry, and through gardens that were dark and mysterious under the stars. Before them they saw a huge house with a Chinese roof, with curly eaves and round windows.

There were more armed guards loafing here who raised a shout of exultation as they saw the boys marching between their captors. But nobody made a sign of threatening them.

Through the great gates of this palace, or castle, they passed to find themselves in a great, dark hall, which dimly showed pillars of gilded wood and huge glass candelabra. Then they were hurried through long passages of carved stone till, at last, they came to two great gates of teak, clamped with bronze, and secured by a huge lock.

These were thrown open, and they marched into a second great hall. Then the doors closed behind them with a clang, and the key was turned and bolts were shot on them.

"Crikey!" exclaimed Pongo. "What-ho! We have found it! It is the palace of the evil genie, and look—there's old Cecil's brother!"

He pointed through the gloomy space of the hall. There, lighted by a single sinister red lamp, standing on its onyx pedestal, was Balum, the orang god of the Pirates of Sambang.

The boys were not awed by the grim-looking carving. They marched to the idol and surveyed it closely.

"Carved wood!" exclaimed Pongo. "And look at its eyes! Real rubies! My hat! Isn't it fine! It's as near like old Cecil as makes no dif—"

Pongo had never a chance to finish his

remarks. He had been holding Cecil's hand when they had entered the great hall. But he had released it when he tried to slide across the mother-of-pearl tiles with which the floor of the Hall of Balum was paved.

But now there was a snarl and a growl behind him.

Cecil had spotted the figure of the other orang on its tall pedestal of onyx.

In a second he had crouched behind the boys. In another second he had stripped off Skeleton's overcoat, and had thrown his scarves and strawyard with the school riband on the floor. Cecil was going to fight, and he

did not like to be lumbered up with clothes when he was going to engage in mortal combat. He was wearing a pair of white flannel trousers, but he took these off by tearing them into ribands with one clutch of his mighty paws.

"Stop him, boys; he's going for the idol!" cried Pongo.

But he might as well have tried to stop an

earthquake. With one enormous bound Cecil leapt over the heads of his friends. With another he leaped up on the pedestal, his huge paws grabbing the carved figure by the throat.

The boys saw the two oranges, real and carved, rocking on the pedestal. Then down they went behind the altar with a crash.

Pongo groaned as he surveyed the empty pedestal of onyx.

"That's done it!" he exclaimed. "That's put the lid on! Cecil has done in their idol! There will be a row about this!"

The boys rushed round behind the pedestal. In his pocket Dick had an electric torch.



With a roar of rage, Cecil leapt down from his pedestal and caught up Prince Saru in his terrible grip. (See page 227.)

He flashed this on the scene, and they found Cecil, greatly surprised, nursing the wooden head of his supposed antagonist and staring into its red, jewelled eyes. The rest of the figure was broken into three pieces.

"Oh, Cecil, Cecil!" exclaimed Pongo. "You've done it! You've bust up their joss! Come, give Uncle Pongo that head! You don't want it; he does!"

Cecil gave up the head of his enemy with a snort of disgust. He had torn up his trousers to fight *this*!

"It's nobby work!" said Pongo, admiring the carved head. "But what are we going to do about it? These chaps will be mad; they might turn on us. Here they capture us from a stranded ship, and before we are in their place five minutes we've bust their old idol. I think we'll stick to the head, anyway. Those eyes shine like real jewels!"

"Him ruby!" said Chu, pointing to the eyes.

"Rubies in a wooden head, eh?" exclaimed Pongo. "Well, they must be worth a lot of money, and if we get out of this safely, we'll sell the rubies and we'll have the biggest blow-out there's ever been in the history of the Glory Hole! But some of these chaps will be coming back soon. What shall we do?"

"I've got it!" said Dick. "Cecil's torn up his trousers and he's bust up their old joss. Let him take its place. They won't be able to spot the difference in this light!"

"Brainy notion!" exclaimed Pongo, with approval. "Up you get, Cecil!"

He pointed to the pedestal.

"Good boy!" he whispered. "Stand still, for goodness' sake! Brandyball!"

Cecil knew what the magic word "brandyball" meant. He was used to standing to be photographed and sketched, and brandyball meant that if he stood still long enough, he would be rewarded with his favourite sweetmeat.

He hopped up on the pedestal, and the boys gave a cry of wonderment.

The Japanese artist who had made the original idol of brown lacquered wood had studied the orang-outang to a hair, and as Cecil stood in the place of the idol, the red

lamp shining on to his eyes and his white fangs showing, he assumed the exact pose of the original.

He stood steady enough. Cecil could stand for hours without winking or moving, if he were so disposed.

"What about the other chap?" demanded Dick.

"There's a niche in the wall there," said Pongo. "We'll stow the broken bits away there, and cover them with Skeleton's overcoat till we see what's doing. But I'll stick to the head. I'll wrap it up in my silk handkerchief."

And Pongo suited the action to the word, carrying the head of the idol under his arm like a coconut.

Only a few minutes elapsed before there were shouts and clamourings outside the door.

Chu, listening, said that the Chinese guards were talking. Things were not going so rosy with the pirates. After these first boys had been taken off the ship, men had suddenly rushed up from below with red-hot iron bars and hoses that squirted steam, and the Burra Malum, or first officer of the ship, had leaped amongst the pirates, shooting with revolvers and hitting their faces with his fists, which were like hammers, and kicking them with his boots. Three of the junks had been set alight with petrol cans which had been thrown into them by the ship's people, and were drifting down the Straits of Sambang in flames.

Chu translated this news to his chums.

"Hurrah, boys!" said Pongo, sliding across the polished mother-of-pearl flooring. "Let's cut out a slide in their old temple. The captain is giving 'em what Paddy gave the drum! It's a pity we did not know; we could have put up a fight or bunked down below!"

Chu shook his head.

"Pilate men kill us, for sure," said he, "s'pose we no come?"

The jabbering outside died away. Then came quick footsteps, and the great teak doors were unlocked, grating heavily on their hinges.

The boys stood back as a dozen men,

carrying lanterns and swords, marched into the temple.

They were headed by a glittering figure, gorgeous in a gold turban and a sarong of cloth of gold, who, advancing directly to the pedestal on which Cecil stood motionless, threw himself on his face, the men with the lamps gathering round him.

"Who is this rooster?" asked Pongo, in a whisper. "He looks as if he had walked out of a pantomime!"

Then the light of the lamps fell upon the evil face of the man, as he bowed again and again to the pavement before Cecil.

"Crikey!" whispered Arty. "It's the chap I slugged yesterday—the Malay bird who had run amok! What's he saying, Chu?"

Chu's face had lengthened.

"He make bad talkee!" he whispered. "He say idol cross along him. He going to give us to idol. Cut throat belong us!"

"Oh, he's talking about cutting our throats, is he?" muttered Pongo, as they looked on spellbound at this strange scene. "If he tries that on he'll find, maybe, that his old idol is a bit more cross than he thinks!"

"He t'ink because him cut throat, him win ship!" whispered Chu.

The glittering figure of Prince Saru rose to its feet. His evil face was grinning in triumph as he pointed to the little group of boys, for he had recognised Arty.

Arty was to be the first sacrifice to the evil joss of Sambang.

Two guards staggered across the floor, carrying a huge stone basin, which they placed on the floor before the supposed idol.

Cecil's eyes, shining like carbuncles, glittered curiously; but the guards all studiously kept their gaze from the dread god Balum.

At a word from Prince Saru, they threw themselves on Arty, dragging him across the floor to the foot of the pedestal.

The rush was so sudden that Arty was taken by surprise. But, wrenching himself from the grasp of one of his captors, he gave the chief guard an uppercut that caused the crack of his jaw to echo through the hall, sending him and his sword clattering to the floor.

"At them, boys!" cried Dick.

The boys rushed forward. But there was one who was on the spot before them.

This was the god Balum himself. With a roar of rage, Cecil, at the sight of Arty struggling with the guards, leaped down from his pedestal and caught up Prince Saru in his terrible grip.

One wild shriek from the pirate chief rang through the hall.

Then the guards bolted, leaving Cecil standing with the limp figure in its cloth of gold sarong and golden turban lying in his arms.

Cecil, growling and snarling, looked around to see that all the boys were safe. Then he turned the limp figure of Saru over in his arms wonderingly.

"Crikey!" exclaimed Skeleton, in awed tones, "I believe the chap is dead!"

"Good job if he is," replied Arty, examining the limp body. "If he hadn't died some of us would have gone west pretty quick. Those chaps who have bunked were out on business. But what's killed this chap? I didn't see Cecil maul him. Put him down, Cecil; put him down, old chap. I'll give you a brandy-ball!"

And thus commanded, Cecil rendered up his prize.

Saru was dead right enough. Chu leaned over him and touched his limp hands.

"Him too much dead!" said Chu. "Him too fright when he see monkey come to life."

And this was true. Saru had died of shock as the huge orang god, as he thought, had leaped on him from its pedestal. His evil heart, weakened by long indulgence in the fatal bhang, had ceased to beat.

The flying guards had left the door wide open. They were rushing through the palace, spreading panic everywhere, yelling that the Luck of Sambang had come to life and had strangled the Prince Saru.

And as the boys marched out, Cecil leading them, shadowy figures raced before them, begging for mercy of their angered god.

They pushed on through the palace and through the gardens, and down towards the wharf they heard cheers with the crack of revolvers and the smack of sticks.

They, too, hurried on, cheering, and, at a bend in the garden walk, they came suddenly upon Mr. Lal Tata, who, with a length of lead pipe in his hand, was flogging on a fat and unwilling Chinaman.

"Ha, you scoundrels!" Lal was gasping. "Show me where you have taken our boys! We have given you jolly good thrashings. We teach you to tinker our steering gear and" (whack!)—"put our grand ship on shore"—(whack!).

And Lal nearly burst out crying when he saw the boys all safe. He told them how they had caught the two Chinese on board who had tampered with the steering-gear, and how they had beaten off the pirates and were now come ashore with the steam pinnaces and lifeboats to rescue the captured boys.

And in a minute or two, Captain Handyman himself, heading a strong crush of white leading stokers, stewards, and quartermasters, raced up.

"Thank heaven, boys," he exclaimed. "You are all safe, and your ship is all safe! She'll pull off on the rising tide. Now, all that is to be done is to set this buzzard's nest alight before we leave it. It was a wrecking job. Wire hawsers and tangles of fishing-net all across the channel to tangle our screw-propellers. She cut through them, but it was two rascally Chinks aboard who jammed our steering. Where's this Prince Saru who's at the bottom of all this?"

"Dead, sir," replied the boys. "Cecil jumped him, and he died of fright."

"So much the better for him," said the captain. "Get to the boats, boys. Quartermaster, bring along the petrol. We'll show these rascals a flare that'll beat their volcano into the middle of next week."

And Captain Handyman was as good as his word.

As he marched his men back to the boats, thick curls of fat greasy smoke and licking tongues of flame were showing at the roof of the palace.

And as the boats steamed off in tow of the pinnaces to the Bombay Castle, this nest of the pirates broke out in a flare which rivalled the red glare of Bula Tongi.

The wind had changed now as the boys

climbed up to the deck of the stranded steamer, and the Straits were clear of smoke. Ashore, the palace of the Rajah of Sambang was burning fiercely. Down the Straits the junks were flaring like fireships.

The pumps of the Bombay Castle were thumping fast, pumping out her ballast-tanks, and the capstans were tightening on the warps astern.

Captain Handyman knew his waters. There was a record tide running in the Straits. The water was piling up fast. The stern was free, the hull of the ship was uninjured, and the rudder was working again.

Down in the engine-room Mr. MacStaggers, the engineer, and his stokehold staff were working like fiends getting the ship ready to float off on the tide. And the moment came at last.

The engine-room bells tinkled below. The great engines running astern worked up from slow to half speed, from half speed to full speed.

Then a cheer went up from the crowd who were leaning over the side watching the churning of the broken water.

"She's going! She's coming away!" cried a hundred voices.

And when the Bombay Castle came away she came in style.

With a swift slide astern she was free. Her great bows swung round with the current, and the engines stopping, went to full speed ahead. She was off!

"It was the Luck of Sambang that did it," said Pongo, as he nursed the hard wood head of the idol and watched the glare of the burning palace dying away astern, whilst the Bombay Castle, as though rejoicing in her freedom, forced her way through the roaring currents with the full strength of her eight thousand horse-power.

"It was the Luck of Sambang," he added. "And when we have sold these rubies for what they are worth we'll have the finest dormitory feast that the Glory Hole has ever seen. Now, what about supper, boys? We are through the Straits, and there's the open sea. Come on, Cecil, you shall feed in the saloon to-night."

THE END