

A Narrative of the Shipwreck, Captivity and Sufferings of Horace Holden and Benj. H. Nute, Who Were Cast Away in the American Ship Mentor, on the Pelew Islands, in the Year 1832; and For Two Years Afterwards were Subjected to Unheard of Sufferings Among the Barbarous Inhabitants of Lord North's Island. Fourth Edition. Boston: Russell Shattuck, and Co., 1836.

CHAPTER II.

The situation of the survivors of the ship's company upon the reef during the night.—A canoe filled with savage natives approaches the reef; intercourse with them; and description of their persons and terrific appearance.—Their pilfering of the articles saved, and plundering of the ship.—Several canoes arrive.—Mr. Nute's resolute conduct towards the natives.—The ship's company pursue their course, in their boat, towards an island, on which they land after severe suffering.

HAPPILY, by the goodness of the allwise Disposer of events, the unfortunate can avail themselves of a thousand sources of comfort, which, by those in prosperous circumstances, are either overlooked or neglected. We were upon a barren rock, in the midst of a waste of waters, far from kindred and friends, and the abodes of civilized man; the ship which had been our home, and on board of which we had embarked with high hopes, lay within sight, a useless wreck; still we were enabled to enjoy a moment of relief, if not of actual pleasure, derived from an

event, which, though trifling in itself, is worthy of being recorded.

We succeeded in taking an eel, a few crabs, and a small quantity of snails. Having our fire-works with us, we collected a sufficient number of sticks, with a few pieces of drift-wood which had lodged upon the rock, to make a fire; with this we cooked our fish and snails; and, with a small allowance of bread, we made what we then thought a sumptuous repast! After we had finished our meal, we began to prepare for the night. We erected a tent with some of our clothes and pieces of canvas, at a little distance from the boat; and, when night came on, a part of our number kept watch, and the rest soon lost all consciousness of their misfortunes in sleep. About midnight those who had watched took their turn at resting; and in the morning we found ourselves considerably refreshed; though an increased activity of our minds served only to bring home a more vivid picture of the horrors of the previous night, and of our present condition.

Providence, it would seem, had ordained

that we should not long remain undetermined as to the course to be adopted.; for before sunrise we discovered a canoe within a short distance of us, containing twenty-two of the inhabitants of the neighboring island. They approached to within pistol-shot of where we stood, and there lay on their oars for some time, looking at us, and manifesting no small degree of fear. Thinking it best to be on friendly terms with them, we attached a shirt to one of our oars, and hoisted it as a token of a wish, on our part, to regard and treat them as friends. This had the desired effect; and they immediately rowed up to the rock. Manifesting great pleasure, they left their canoe and rushed towards the place where the principal part of our boat's crew were standing, bringing with them cocoa-nuts, and a small quantity of bread made of the cocoa-nut boiled in a liquor extracted from the trunk of the tree. At that time, I was standing near the tent, at a little distance from my companions, and was an anxious spectator of the scene. Their appearance excited my astonishment,

and I was filled with horror by the sight of beings apparently human, and yet almost destitute of the ordinary marks of humanity. They were entirely naked. Each one was armed with a spear and tomahawk; some had battle-axes. They were fantastically tattooed on different parts of their bodies. Their hair, naturally coarse and black, like that of the Indians of America, was very long, and hung loosely over their shoulders, giving them a singular and frightful appearance. Their teeth were entirely black; rendered so, as we afterwards found, by chewing what they call "*abooak*."* The reader can judge of our feelings on finding ourselves in the hands of beings of this description. Our confidence in the honesty of our visitors did not improve on further acquaintance.

No sooner had they landed, than they commenced their depredations upon the few articles, which at that time constituted all our earthly riches. The nautical instru-

* In Keate's Account of the Pelew Islands this word is written *pook*.—*Edit.*

ments, the musket, and a part of our clothing, they immediately appropriated to their own benefit. Fortunately a part of our clothing, the powder, and the cutlasses we had succeeded in concealing in a crevice of the rock. Taking with them their booty, they precipitately got into their canoe, and, beckoning to us, evidently with a view of inducing us to follow them, they steered directly for the wreck. Their first appearance, and this strong manifestation of their thievish disposition, so far from inclining us to cultivate their acquaintance any further, had given us an irresistible inclination to avoid them. Our minds were not long in coming to the conclusion, that an open sea, with Heaven to protect us, would be far preferable to a chance among beings like those. Accordingly, with the least possible delay, we launched our boat, and putting into it such things of value as we had saved, once more, surrounded by new difficulties and dangers, committed ourselves to the mercy of the waves.

The island before mentioned being now

distinctly visible, we steered in a direction towards it; though we found it necessary to go a somewhat circuitous course, in order to avoid the reef. By the time we had succeeded in getting into deep water, the natives had been to the ship, and were returning with the five muskets which we had left on board. They soon passed us with great rapidity, and evidently with the intention of escaping with their booty unharmed. The cause of their precipitancy will soon be explained.

Just at this time there came in sight a number of canoes, perhaps thirty, filled with natives, who seemed no less intent upon plunder than those with whom we had already formed a disagreeable acquaintance. Their language was to us entirely unintelligible, but we could gather from their somewhat significant gestures, that they most of all desired to possess themselves of fire-arms. They beckoned to us to go with them, and seemed quite anxious to avail themselves of our assistance; but we were not less so to escape; and with the hope of being able to

do so, we continued to row towards the island. Some of them remained near us, while the rest made for the ship. At length, all, except those in one canoe, left us, and joined their companions. These seemed particularly fond of our company, partly on account, as we afterwards learned, of their suspecting that we had something of value concealed about us, and partly for the purpose of making us their prisoners, and in that way gaining some advantage over the others. After a while they offered, with an appearance of friendship, to render us some assistance by towing our boat; and after some deliberation we concluded to throw them a line. This greatly facilitated our progress, as their canoe, being made very light, skimmed over the water with incredible swiftness. No sooner was this arrangement completed than a chief, and one other of the natives, left their canoe and took their station with us; the chief with a somewhat offensive familiarity seating himself in the stern of the boat, near the captain. We were not long in doubt concerning the mo-

tive which had led them to this act of condescension. Our bread was contained in a small chest, which had been placed in the bottom of the boat; this seemed to have excited their curiosity to the highest pitch, as they kept their eyes almost constantly upon it, and endeavored to persuade the captain to give them a chance to examine its contents. He declined gratifying them, thinking it better to keep their anxiety alive, rather than to expose to them the comparative worthlessness of the little that remained with us, of either the comforts or necessaries of life.

Probably owing to this show of resistance on our part, when we had approached to within five or six miles of the island, at a signal given by the chief, the sail of their canoe was suddenly dropped; and, seizing our powder canister, he jumped overboard and swam to the canoe. His companion, following the example of the thievish chief, seized a bundle of clothing and was making off with it; whereupon Mr. Nute, who had not yet become entirely reconciled to the

fashion of going without clothes, like our new acquaintances, and conceiving that it might be well to insist upon having the rights of property respected, caught hold of the bundle and retained it. Upon this they immediately hauled us alongside, and seized upon our oars; here again we had occasion to offer some resistance to their supposed right to plunder us, and we succeeded in keeping possession of these; the only remaining means of saving ourselves from premature death and a watery grave.

They had by this time become so exasperated, that we considered it altogether desirable to get ourselves out of the reach of their war clubs, spears, and battle-axes; and we took measures accordingly. We were still held fast to their canoe, and so completely within their reach that it required not a little courage to make any attempt to leave them; but Mr. Nute, whose resolution had been wrought up by the previous contest, took a knife and deliberately cut the line. Our intention was to throw ourselves astern, and then by tacking directly about,

and steering in the wind's eye, to escape from them, or at least to give them, for a time, some better employment than that of robbing their poor and suffering victims. This we succeeded in accomplishing; not however without the expense of much toil, and some blows, which they dealt out at parting, with so much severity, that we shall not soon lose the recollection of their barbarous conduct towards us. Mr. Nute, by his intrepidity, seemed to have rendered himself an object of their particular dislike; they beat him unmercifully, for his resolution in retaining the bundle of clothes, and sundering the only cord that bound us to our tormentors.

Having but three oars, our progress was by no means as rapid as we could have desired; but perceiving that in going against the wind we had the advantage of our pursuers, and knowing that our only safety was in flight, we exerted our utmost strength, and soon had the satisfaction of leaving them at a safe distance from us. They seemed determined not to part with us,

and continued to pursue us till about four o'clock, P. M. It was with the greatest difficulty that we kept clear of them; at times it seemed impossible; and in this situation we could fully realize the force of the scriptural sentiment, "all that a man hath he will give for his life." Finding them too near us, and evidently intent upon taking vengeance for the crime we had committed in attempting to escape, though our wardrobe had been reduced to a few necessary articles of clothing, we resorted to the expedient of parting even with these, by casting one thing at a time upon the water, rightly judging that they might be detained in picking them up, and hoping by this management to keep our distance from them.

After they left us, we continued our course, which was directly into the open sea, until about sunset, when we discovered land ahead, apparently at the distance of forty miles. We continued to row on till about three o'clock in the morning, when we found that we were in shoal water, and near breakers. We contrived to throw the bight

of a rope over a point of rock which was about eight feet under water, and we there remained until daylight. We then let go our hold, and pulled for land. At about four o'clock in the afternoon we succeeded in landing on a small island distant from the main land about half a mile, and drew our boat upon the beach. By this time our strength had become much exhausted, and we were suffering beyond description from the want of water. Our first efforts were made to find some means for quenching our thirst; and, to our inexpressible joy, we soon found a spring, which, in that extremity of our sufferings, was of more value than a mine of gold. Poor Sedon was left lying in the boat in a state of complete prostration. We carried him some water, and he soon revived.