

The Boston Sunday Globe

THE BOSTON SUNDAY GLOBE— MARCH 14, 1920 —SEVENTY-SIX PAGES

RESCUED AFTER 14 MONTHS MAROONED ON PACIFIC ISLAND

Malden Boy Tells the Dismal Story of Long Wait For Ship That Never Came—Clothing Gone, Nothing But Fish to Eat, One of His Two Native Companions Insane, Endless Rain and Sickness—At Last Comes Admiral Jellicoe

By JAMES H. POWERS.

Previous instalments of this story have told how Joseph English, a Malden boy, was sent as manager to Christmas Island, out in the middle of the Pacific. The cannibal workmen who had been brought to the Island to care for the cocoanut plantations mutinied and tried to kill him. He escaped, and after waiting weeks for a second attack, by sheer audacity captured the ringleaders and won over the others.

Then came the owner, who carried off the mutineers and left Mr English with only two natives, promising to return in 45 days. Months passed, provisions gave out and the two natives worked up a grudge that seemed likely to develop into murder.

THE STORY OF JOSEPH ENGLISH

It was now seven months since I had been deserted on Christmas Island, with Tiaran and Lucien; and the trio of us, reduced by the privations and lack of food — all supplies excepting the rice having run out entirely — gaunt, browned by the sun, naked and bearded like old "Santa Claus" Rougier himself, looked for all the world like some illustration of Robinson Crusoe.



THE SIGNED PHOTOGRAPH ADMIRAL JELlicoe GAVE TO JOSEPH ENGLISH

The two men continued with their mutual hatred, and, as I seldom entered into conversation with them, except to speculate as to when we might be rescued, or whether we were to be rescued at all, or to order them to go out fishing each day, that we might not come to actual starvation, we were in a sorry state.

Braving the Sharks

One day, after I had come in from inspecting the coconut groves with the pair of them, we discovered that the black boat had dragged her anchor in the heavy surf. She was well out off shore in the lagoon when we saw her.

As this was the only boat left us, save for the canoe, we could not afford to lose her. She offered us the easiest means of getting to Paris House, which I was striving to keep in a semblance of civilization with London House, my own quarters.

I ordered Tiaran to go out and bring her in. He at once became smitten with terror, and said that he was afraid to swim out into the lagoon, where there were hundreds of sharks.

Only a few days before we had killed a very ugly shark, nearly 10 feet long, spearing it clean through with a crowbar after a good battle, and now it lay buried on the shore under a coconut palm.

There was no time to argue, however, in this predicament. If we lost the black boat we would be very badly off, as the auto was by this time little more than a wreck, with tires and springs all gone. Besides, the road was barely passable and it was 45 miles around to Paris House.

If one swam properly, however, there was little danger from the sharks. As Lucien could not even dog paddle, I plunged into the surf myself, splashing a good deal to scare off any possible man-eaters that might happen to be in my course.

I reached the black boat in safety, climbed into her, found the oars lying on the bottom, and rowed back, while Tiaran and Lucien stood on the shore and waited to see me killed.

When I got to land I fined Tiaran 5 francs for his cowardice and set the item down against his account — a mild sort of revenge — for there was no indication that he or the rest of us would get any pay in the immediate future.

Appendicitis the Third Time

The nausea, from continual eating of rice, rice, rice, and fish, by this time had become overwhelming. We ate our food, such as it was, merely to keep alive, and we hated the event of meal time usually.

The diet was broadened now by another item, which we began to use out of desperation and because we thought that the brackish water from the wells was making us ill. We took to drinking green coconut water, obtained from the center of the unripe nuts.

At the month end came the third attack of appendicitis since January, and I was laid up for two days and two nights, suffering untold pains. I felt that the next attack of this sort would finish me, as the food was not nourishing enough to give me strength.

The rain had not let up, and my diary shows no less than 25 days rain out of 31 for March, with a total fall of 1620 points recorded.

The jungle was now in bloom, and as April arrived the scent of the flowering shrubs and plants grew deliciously sweet after the showers. The birds in the groves and undergrowth were nesting, calling to one another and making a beautiful splurge of color, here and there in the palms as they presented their plumage, or circled over the lagoon.

Ship Passed Without Seeing

On the 8th of the month, while I was out at Eleven Kilometer Nursery looking over the groves and noting the strides of the weeds, I happened to look casually over the southwest arm of the land, beyond Paris Point, toward the Pacific. My heart nearly stood still.

There, in the offing, rode a tall ship. I could see that she was a four-master, and under all sail. She must have passed close to the southern extremity of the land early in the morning while we were asleep. Now, with a good 10 miles of water between us, she was headed westward, and there was no hope of attracting her attention at all.

The sight of that ship, which was the first I had seen in going on eight months, brought anew all of my speculations and hopes of rescue.

I gave over inspection and returned to London House, Where I found Tiaran and Lucien, each one of them bursting with the news, and yet constrained by their mutual hatred to silence. I almost laughed outright at the situation until I remembered the ship once more. Then I became downhearted.

It was as if a weight had been hung on my spirits and the situation was not improved by the sudden darkening of the skies and the advent of another of the incessant rain storms. The hopes that had been revived in the three of us made the next several days unusually monotonous and dreary.

Extracts From English's Diary

April 21 — Blacksmithing since morning, making rudder post for the sailboat. Out over plantations in afternoon.

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April 24 — Thunder and lightning and plenty of rain last night. Thunder and more lightning all morning. Suffering from severe cold, the first I have had in years, due to wetness and no dry clothes to put on. Thanks to that woman, Pugeault, taking my only material for clothes from the store. She had a sweet nerve.

* * * *

April 27 — Sunday, and very sick. If a ship does not visit me soon it is me they will plant instead of the cocoanuts. Rats again raising havoc; cannot get a good night's sleep with them running and gnawing around the house. Last night they ate my table cover and made a nest on the table only three feet away from my bed. Heavy surf.

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May 1 — Went to Motu Upon. Plenty of copra on the ground, which will require careful supervision, as much of it is covered with nean. All trees bearing nicely. The island is in poor shape, kurima nashu and brush having completely filled in the rows and left no trace of our three large division roads.

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May 8 — Today we came to the south settlement of No Man's Land — in other words, to Paris. We remain here for cleaning and repairing dock; rain all day.

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May 11 — Sunday — cloudy and rainy. Went on reefs last night and caught several lobsters. Do you think that Tiaran would go on the reef for lobsters? He certainly would not.

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May 14 — Both myself and Tiaran sick in bed most of the day.

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May 15 — Still sick. Rats ate the pillows under our heads while we slept.

Tiaran Goes Insane

On the 17th of the month of May there came one of the unforgettable days of the maroon. Even now, looking back upon the horror of it all through the softening perspective of distance, there is a sharp recollection of my original feeling of dismay and mental torment.

The hatred that had long been in evidence between the two men who dwelt with me !In my isolation reached the point beyond which it could go but one step further. Tiaran and Lucien had developed a grim, silent hatred beyond description, and with this point reached the strain of the situation began to weigh upon us all.

For two days Tiaran had been sick and now on the third there came a queer look into his eyes and an odd twist to his actions, and his words to me were mumbled. Tiaran had begun to go insane.

In the days that ensued, the discovery of his state of mind compelled me to watch him closely so as to guard against any violent turn to his troubles. I knew that Lucien or myself were a fair match for him in ordinary fight, but the cunning of an insane man made life for several days a living horror.

Lucien realized at once what had happened and was on his guard, needing no caution from me. The peculiar thing about the condition of the savage was that he seemed to have temporarily forgotten his animosity toward his fellow, though he did not speak.

Barbering Under Difficulties

I hid the guns when I slept, under my mattress, where now the rats were disporting themselves with entire indifference to whether lay abed or not. As I went out to work, day after day, I removed the knives and other weapons from Tiaran's reach, and carried my revolver and gun with me.

When he had recovered from his sickness fully, Tiaran was as simple as a child; but the threat of his going' completely and desperately mad kept Lucien and myself forever on the alert. I took to sending him off to do odd jobs by himself, which he seemed to like, which was possibly one of the strangest freaks of his mental state, for he had been everlastingly lazy and rebellious ever since I had first known him.

Late in June, my beard having grown so long that it was becoming troublesome, I hunted about till I discovered an old razor and I decided to try and win back some of my appearance as a civilized man.

It was a terrible job. I clipped and hacked my whiskers with a knife and at last got them down close enough to shave. But the razor was dull and the shave was no great success as it nearly pulled the hair out by the roots.

However, I found the effort diverting and kept at it for several weeks.

Now Tiaran suddenly remembered his aversion for Lucien and we had considerable worry again until I perceived that his derangement had apparently ceased its progress, and that he was now simply "queer."

From the 'English Diary

Excerpts from the English Diary

June 20 — Decidedly not well, but cannot stay in bed, Took account of stock, then went through Plantations north of Puna.

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June 21 — Sail boat to Paris. All O K except that the rats continue their depredations in the mattresses there.

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July 7 — Clearing auto road. These two boys have not spoken a word for months. It is interesting again to note the hatred between them.

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July 8 — Rambling around nearly dead for want of food.

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July 15 — Arrived again at Paris. In "Lady" Pigeault's bed I find nest of four little rats.

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July 18 — Watching for ship again. It is all that I can do.

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July 25 — This morning at 10:15 we heard a distant sound like the report of a heavy gun. The sky was cloudless, and I am curious to know what that sound was caused by.

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July 27 — One year ago today Captain Jones ran the "Ysabel May" on the reefs, may the devil take him. Were it not for that same Jones I would now be enjoying good health at home, instead of starving and freezing here, without food or clothes,

Nothing but Fish

How August went I scarce remember, save for one incident, The montony had begun once more to get on my nerves and I was growing into a state of continual ill health from headaches, neuralgia and hunger,

Then one day Lucien decided to take a sail and he was nearly drowned, The treacherous wind swept down upon him in the Lagoon and he was helpless, as he could neither manage the boat nor swim.

He was upset and thrown into the water and clung there, loudly calling for help and thrashing to keep the sharks off. I forced Tiaran to help me drag out the canoe and we went to his rescue.

Now we were reduced to catching fish for every meal time. Once in my tour of the plantations I came upon a large fig tree with a great cluster of fruit on it, and we celebrated. At another time we discovered Kavika eggs and ate ravenously

But these were rare occasions. For the most part our breakfast, dinner and supper had to be caught and cooked for every meal, We fell to eating green cocoanuts, Which made us ill, all three, and became careful.

Then came a day when, as I was walking through the heavy undergrowth, a piece of nean struck me in the eves, and I suffered the most excruciating torture for hours, completely blinded.

And, to add to the troubles that seemed to be mounting up for us, for the first time since I had come to Christmas Island I found that there were mosquitoes.

Wasted to a Shadow

September was the 12th month of the maroon, and it began with myself flat on mv back in bed in another fever and with Lucien and Tiaran moping around, separately, in the outbuildings.

My work during the preceeding months, with the two men, had been on the roads about the island and they were now in excellent condition once more.

But the Wilderness had won its battle,. The crabs had eaten down the pawpaw tree over at Paris, and the banana tree there, which we had been watching with such eager hopes, disappointed us with but a small bunch of fruit. The other parts of the island were run riot now, and T wave up the battle.

My sickness took a turn which I may not describe, save to say it was frightful, and I began to fall away to a mere shadow. Even the dilapidated pair of trousers which I had stored away for the day of our liberation, flapped ridiculously about my limbs when I tried them on.

It mattered little to me, hopeless as I was, that I should find when I took the black oat out of the water, to scrape and repair and paint her for the 'fifth time, that the bottom was worn 'through now, and it would be Impossible to use her any longer.

We watched the turtles wandering about the Lagoon, and we managed to catch a small one without fishhooks or spears, on the shore. The larger ones escaped easily, and we could not hope to make a capture for lack of a boat, unless we were to steal up behind one on the sand, which was difficult.

Darkest Hour of All

On Oct 18, the second anniversary of my arrival on Christmas Island as manager, I was reduced to loitering about the shore, feeble from hunger and illness and desperate in the eternal sight of the open reaches of the Pacific, where never a shadow of sail or smoke broke the monotony.

Above us arched the clear Autumnal skies, blue as glass. The waters of the sea rolled away, forever, to the edge of the world, or they came crashing in 'foam upon the reefs below the point.

The birds swept circles over the blue Lagoon, where now and then a fish leaped, or the sharp fin of a shark cut the surface in the sunlight. It was ghastly.

That was the darkest hour of all my maroon. I grew rapidly too weak to walk about much and sat despondent on the edge of my cot, wondering how much longer it would be before I should die.

I hoped for death. It seemed a kind 'release for me, and something that would prove a blessing, I knew that we could not stand another Winter here, and the other men were as desperate as I, though Tiaran did not seem to understand now.

After 14 Months

As I sat, flattened out by the throbbing at my temples and the weakness in my limbs, late on the afternoon of the 19th, Tiaran gave a shout and came running in to me from the point, where I had sent him to fish for our supper.

"There is a great ship," he jabbered, laughing hysterically. "A great ship .. . much smoke."

I crawled to my feet and went outside. There was nothing in sight. My heart fell. But these natives have wonderful eyesight. I returned with my glasses and swept the horizon once more. He

was right.

There, headed eastward, though still in the offing, a great steamship was standing in landward. Eagerly I focused the glasses on her. . . . The two men were dancing with wild joy, nearly mad with excitement. After 14 months here was the ship coming at last.

As she drew nearer I saw that she was a very large ship, I began to wonder why she was coming to this out of the way place. Then I picked out the line of a gun turret, and I saw the slim muzzles of a broadside battery jutting over the water, A warship!

Dressing for the Occasion

I climbed to the roof and sat there with the glasses glued to my eyes, and soon I could pick out figures on her decks, and all the life of a great man-o-war was before me.

I had a sudden recollection. . . . Von Horst in 1914 had sailed down upon Fanning Island under the French flag and with his crew in French uniform, and when he got into port, he had blown the settlement to pieces.

I began to temper my joy with wonder. Suppose this was a trick and we were to end it all by being taken captive.

I went down and dressed for the occasion. I put on that pair of trousers, that were cut off at the knees and worn out behind. I had no shirt.

Then, taking my two men with me, I lifted my revolver and slipped it through my belt, picked up my shotgun in my hand and stood at the point, watching the warship drop anchor and lower a great boat with about 30 men in it.

The boat swept toward the entrance to the lagoon, and when she got within hail I motioned them off, for if they should try to make the straits they would have fetched up on the rocks.

The boat turned and came toward 'the outer wharf. . . .

And then I saw what amazed me completely and made me look hastily over my scanty raiment . . .

There was a lady aboard that ship's boat, a white lady!

They came along, and I shouted . . . filled with doubts still, despite the flapping of the British ensign.

H. M. S. New Zealand

"What do you want here? What ship is that?"

"This is His Majesty's ship New Zealand," came back the answer, while the seamen rested on their oars and the boat floated a stone's throw away.

"What do you want here. . . and what have you got a woman aboard for if you are His Majesty's ship New Zealand?" I retorted.

A short figure rose in the boat, a figure clad in a coat covered with gold braid and silver lace. His voice came to me clearly above the slapping of the water at the wharf below me.

"This is His Majesty's ship New Zealand. . . . with Viscount Jellicoe, Admiral of the fleet, on official tour of English possessions," he shouted.

So it was true, then. My legs shook under me as if I had the ague I dropped my gun with a clatter on the wharf.

And I began to laugh as Tiaran had laughed, as if it were a huge joke.

TO BE CONCLUDED NEXT SUNDAY.